THE DIRECT AND FUNDAMENTAL PROOFS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

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An Essay in Comparative Apologetics

BASED UPON THE
NATHANIEL WILLIAM TAYLOR LECTURES FOR 1903
GIVEN BEFORE THE DIVINITY SCHOOL OF YALE UNIVERSITY

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TO

THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER

WILLIAM EATON KNOX, D.D.

PREFACE

An invitation to give the first course of lectures on the Nathaniel William Taylor foundation before the Divinity School of Yale University, with the subsequent request for their publication, furnished the occasion for the preparation of this volume. In addition to the lectures as delivered, it contains sections which were omitted because of the limitations of time.

Apologetics may strengthen the faith of believers who occupy still substantially the old ground, but who desire that objections should be answered, difficulties removed, and the traditional arguments restated. This is its ordinary task. Or it may enter completely into the modern view of the world and show that Christian truth remains. The viewpoints are so divergent that the two cannot well be united; the first minimizes intellectual changes and takes for granted much which scientific men deny, while the second ignores or surrenders much which traditional theology holds as essential. This essay takes the second course and adopts the modern view of the world. It does not attempt to

defend theology, but seeks the principle which is independent of it and yet underlies it. It does not meet the difficulties which are most apparent to the majority of Christians, nor does it adequately represent their faith. No attempt is made to set forth my own faith in its fulness, for all of it, excepting its fundamental principle, is, for the purpose of this argument, what Professor James calls "over-beliefs." My question here is simply, Is the Christian religion true to men who accept unhesitatingly the modern view of the world?

The essay would have become a treatise had I added footnotes and references. The very few introduced do not indicate the extent of my indebtedness, but on the whole it seemed best to let the argument be uninterrupted and speak for itself. It is more ungracious not to name my friends and colleagues, who have aided me greatly by suggestions and advice.

G. W. K.

The Union Theological Seminary,
New York, August 11, 1903.

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I

THE CLASSIC ARGUMENT

THE "direct and fundamental proofs" of the Christian religion change with changing views of the world. For religion has to do with man's attitude to the world as a whole, and nothing which affects this attitude can be without consequence for faith. Sometimes for generations one world-view continues, and controversy centres in details of authenticity and historicity, of special miracles and prophecies, of cosmology and logic, all the disputants accepting the same presuppositions and constituting, intellectually, a single school. A classic line of argument is formed which is repeated in substance for decades, or even for centuries, the modifications being only in emphasis and details.

But as an individual in the course of his education sometimes comes half unconsciously to occupy a new point of view, and is astonished to discover

that his faith has vanished or been transformed, so is it with communities. Multitudes pass through this process and a new intellectual age is formed. The classic argument no longer convinces even men who still hold the ancient faith. It is not that it is refuted, but that it is ignored, all the disputants alike seeming to be on ground which is no longer occupied by living men. In our day the change is greater than ever before, greater in the thoroughness of the transformation which has come over the face of nature, and greater in the number of persons who occupy the new point of view. Therefore apologetics cannot repeat the old arguments, for they are not merely weakened, so that they may still win victories if reinforced here and there and accommodated in this point or that, but they are concerned with questions no longer discussed, and so appear wholly to miss the point. Hence apologetics considers the faith anew and does not discuss further these questions, however important they may seem, but attempts to set forth its fundamental proofs from the modern point of view.

As preliminary to such a discussion, and as illustration of the greatness of the change which has passed over the minds of men, let us begin with a

review of the classic argument for the truth of Christianity, and follow it with a brief statement of the modern view of the world.

The greatest of apologists, Bishop Butler, has given me the title for this essay. To him miracles are "the direct and fundamental proofs." [1] He recognizes indeed collateral proofs, "a long series of things reaching, as it seems, from the beginning of the world to the present time, of great variety and compass;" but however considerable these may be, they "ought never," he says, "to be urged apart from the direct proofs, but to be always joined with them."

The argument accords with the great divisions of the standard systems of theology, Roman and Protestant, as they follow the lines laid down authoritatively by Thomas Aquinas. For man's knowledge is of two kinds, of reason and of faith: the first by demonstration, and the second by authority. On the basis of the first is reared the broad plateau of natural theology, and above it, let down out of Heaven, is the superimposed peak of supernatural revelation, its summit lost in the mystery of the Divine will. It is not discoverable

[1] "Analogy," ii., vii. Butler joins the completion of prophecy with miracles — but the same presuppositions are implied.

in nature (the kosmos) nor by nature (man's reason) but, strictly supernatural, it is accepted on authority by faith.

Reason proves the existence of God: by the cosmological argument he is shown to be the first great cause; by the teleological argument his wisdom and purpose are made known; and by the moral argument we establish his righteousness. By other processes we come to the same result. Analyzing our concept of a perfect being we set forth God's attributes, or ascending from the world without and conscience within we find him omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, and holy. These terms denote limitlessness; not abstract infinity or the absolute, but that which is great beyond our powers of thought. Thus from conscience we learn his righteousness and from external nature his wisdom, but, as always, when men go up from nature to nature's God, his first and differentiating characteristic is his power.

He is ruler of the universe, outside of it, above it, before it; his power governs every part and his will establishes its laws. We are "under his government in the same sense as we are under the government of civil magistrates," [1] and though

[1] Butler, "Analogy," i., ii.

God desires man's happiness, yet his justice must prevail. So our feelings in his presence are awe, reverence, and a certain "fearful looking-for of judgment." For reason establishes the immortality of the soul and a future state of rewards and punishments, and as God has written his law upon the heart, prudence, temperance, fortitude, justice, giving understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, "conscience doth make cowards of us all." The very inequalities of men's conditions, as the wicked often prosper and the good suffer, point to a future state where an impartial justice shall be rendered to every one.

Sin distorts the natural knowledge of God and renders it insufficient. Conscious of guilt man does not like to retain this just God in his thoughts, but substitutes the creature for the Creator and invents false religions and an evil worship. The rare exceptions, like the Greek philosophers and specifically Aristotle and Plato, prove the rule. Their knowledge is correct so far as it goes, but it is insufficient, for it reveals no way of escape from offended justice. At its very best natural theology must be supplemented if man is to be saved, and hence we find the need for a supernatural revelation of redemption.

Revelation republishes the truths of natural theology and the moral law, and this constitutes its larger part; for "presupposed and embodied" in it are the "doctrines and precepts of natural religion, facts of history which are not peculiar to it," and a long "series of events" connecting it with a sound philosophy, cosmogony, and anthropology. Thus revelation fits the truths discovered independently and subsequently by reason, as the ball fits the socket. But revelation "does more than remove a veil from things essentially existing in the world; it acquaints us, by direct communication from God, with things not existing in the world, — even the deep, infinite things of God, of which independently of this revelation, no one would have had an idea, though all the secrets of nature had been disclosed to him." "The Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence; the Divine-human character of Jesus of Nazareth; the salvation of mankind by the blood and intercession of the Lord Jesus, . . . these are the peculiarities of revealed religion, . . . things altogether extra-mundane, having no place in man or nature, the world within us or without."[1] "With

[1] Thomas H. Skinner, "Am. Presb. & Theol. Review," April, 1863, p. 178.

this supernatural doctrine is a supernatural morality, not 'morality in the abstract,' or in so far as it is common between Christianity and natural religion, but that peculiar and ineffably glorious type of morality which consists in the concretion of the ethical element in the miraculous facts of the great mystery of Godliness."[1] Love, faith, and hope belong to this sphere.

Man, therefore, cannot discover the mystery of salvation, nor can he comprehend it. Its source is in the hidden recesses of the Divine will. God must be just, — so we learn from conscience and nature, — but we do not learn that he is merciful, for redemption is of his free choice and man can only accept, "believing where he cannot prove."

Such a salvation is accepted through the supernatural work of God in our hearts, the testimony of the Spirit to our spirits being the final and convincing proof; but this takes us altogether beyond the field of apologetics, for it has to do with the natural man, and it must present to him proofs sufficient to leave him without excuse.

These proofs are two, collateral and direct. The collateral have to do with "a long series of things reaching, as it seems, from the beginning of

[1] Thomas H. Skinner, *loc. cit.*, p. 187.

the world," but they can be summed up briefly, as the correspondence of revelation with the results of right reason in philosophy, cosmogony, and history. For revelation, republishing the truths of natural theology and ethics and embodied in a miraculously preserved and protected history, is in marked contrast to the follies and fancies of heathen teaching, and corresponds point by point with the results of sound research. For God, who made the world and guides its history, keeps his messengers from errors, and if discrepancies appear it is because the revelation has been misinterpreted, or more likely because reason is mistaken in its facts. The established harmony is sufficient to make us content to wait for the perfect and final reconcilement.

As thus the Bible fits and supplements the truths discovered by man's reason in the natural sphere, its supernatural doctrines complement our natural theology. They do not contradict reason, but surpass it. Could we find contradiction, were the doctrines of Christianity irrational or immoral, they would be disproved, for the God of redemption is the Creator of reason and of conscience. But these negative conditions furnish difficult criteria, for how shall I, ignorant and sinful, judge

abstract wisdom and justice? My course is implicit obedience to a message from God.

The object of the proof is not the contents of the message, then, but its medium, the prophet who speaks with a Divine authority because he manifests a Divine power, the God who is above nature, whose Being is omnipotence, reversing or suspending the natural order. At the word of the prophet the rod becomes a serpent, the shadow turns backward on the dial, fire falls from heaven, and the dead are raised from the tomb. Confronted by such proofs men reject the message at their peril, for in it are the issues of eternal life. The Roman Church still claims the present witness of miracles to its authority, but Protestants accept Holy Scripture on historic evidence. In both the main concern is with the medium of revelation, and in Protestantism the battle has raged around the proposition that the Bible is the Word of God.

The rationalism of the British clergy in the end of the seventeenth century minimizing the doctrines of grace, their attacks upon the Roman miracles as offspring of priestcraft, with the new astronomy and the rediscovery of China, brought on the Deistic controversy, the first of the great modern discussions as to the truth of Christianity.

How can we identify the God of the heavens and the earth with the Jehovah of a Semitic tribe? If the Chinamen have lived so long without the gospel, how can it be necessary for any one? And if the miracles of the Roman Church are the result of trickery, why should we ascribe another cause to Biblical wonders? In these questions we find already the beginnings of the inquiries which still occupy men. All the evidences are attacked in turn, the collateral evidence and the direct proofs.

Apologetics made a valiant defence of the faith. It showed that revelation demanded nothing which the Deist did not himself claim for natural theology, and it triumphantly vindicated the scriptural writers from the charge of fraud. The argument as to miracles may be briefly summed up in this: the witnesses were competent and disinterested; they had nothing to gain but all to lose by falsehood; they taught the highest morality, and they sealed their testimony with their lives. No other historic fact is better attested, not the death of Julius Cæsar, and false miracles like other counterfeits prove the existence of the genuine. When it was urged that a God of wisdom and power needs not to interfere with the workings of his great machine, it was replied that miracles are not

afterthoughts, but were included in God's plan that he who is supreme cannot be bound by the nature he has made; that a God of redeeming love is more worthy to be called God than one who retires from his work and idly sees it go; that our finite minds cannot judge what is worthy; that all presuppositions are valueless in the presence of the smallest fact, and that miracles are facts. When Hume set forth the uniformity of testimony against miracles as an argument against accepting any in their favor, Paley replied with his presuppositions: a God intent on man's happiness, this world a world of probation, the fall of the race, and the necessity of a revelation.[1]

A common world-view was held by the disputants. Notwithstanding the Copernican astronomy, men's imaginations were still geocentric. China was seen, after all, dimly, and the nations of the distant East, like the nations of the distant past, were described as if they belonged to the Europe of the eighteenth century. Time was short, from its beginning, and the whole history of man was intelligible, for as he is he has ever been. In particular, reason is everywhere the same, with the same logic, the same starting-points for argument,

[1] Works (Ed. Phil. 1836), pp. 271–2.

the same universally valid truths, the same certain conclusions to be reached by the same processes, — Chinamen, Red Indians, antediluvians made on the model of the modern Englishman, and he on the model of God; so that the Creator is an extra-mundane, manlike Being of surpassing power. Miracles, naturally, can be proved like other incidents, if there be disinterested witnesses. In short, the traditional cosmogony, history, and theology were not yet dislodged, and the modern views of nature did not influence the minds of men, nor was their meaning understood even by those who accepted the discoveries which led on to the new heavens and the new earth.

With such presuppositions the battle was fought and won. The Deists granted so much that they might, well enough, grant all. Their position was not tenable, but the conflict was only a preliminary campaign in a contest which continues yet.

It is not that the apologists have been refuted formally, — against the Deists the argument still holds, — but gradually a change has taken place which destroys the presuppositions of all the antagonists alike, so that in our day Butler and Paley are not combated, but ignored. Therefore we shall not stop to attempt an estimate of the

value of the argument, but, recognizing its historic importance and the masterly ability of the great men who gave it classic form, proceed to consider the new view of the world which has destroyed its force.

II

THE MODERN VIEW OF THE WORLD

ALREADY Spinoza and Hume indicated lines of thought which destroyed the positions of Deist and Churchman alike, but their books made almost no impression in this conflict.[1] Here and there some one like the elder Mill showed how Butler's argument could be turned to the most radical account, but only after generations and in the crisis produced by the publication of Darwin's theory was it understood that the basis of natural theology was threatened.

The doctrine of evolution is supposed, popularly, to have effected the change, revolutionizing the view of the world and making the ancient arguments obsolete, but the supposition is not wholly nor precisely correct. Physical science in general has carried on the process begun in the seven-

[1] The impression made on some men was great and of the highest historical importance, but not within the range of mind interested in the Deistic controversy; and far into the nineteenth century Hume was ignored, or mentioned only as a man of straw, easily refuted.

teenth century, and has enlarged the boundaries of the known universe until it no longer seems a place governed after the analogy of a province. Limitless systems surpass measurement, and impress men with the sense of a power past finding out. All formulae prove insufficient for its expression, and all analogies inadequate for its comparison. Notwithstanding the magnificent triumphs won by the intellect, men are sceptical as never before as to all ultimate and authoritative explanations. All things seem possible and nothing is fully explicable, so that the difficulty is to find starting-points on which we can agree as themselves unquestioned. In the old cosmogony the heavens seemed above the earth, and the flight of the soul to its true home was upward. But in the new universe there is no longer a heaven above, nor any east nor west, nor north nor south, nor up nor down, and the mind knows only its little daily path and beyond it neither any way nor destination; and in like fashion the argument seems to have lost at once its starting-place, route, and destination.

The universe not only extends marvellously in space, it stretches back endlessly in time; even the extravagant chronology of the East, so contemptu-

ously rejected in the past, is inadequate to modern demands, for in place of the manageable Biblical chronology an eternity of time, to be paradoxical, seems unrolled. But still more, science fills up the portion of the world with which we have to do and enters ordinary life, so that it is not the affair merely of the laboratory and student, but affects every-day matters of home and business. Thus, in a general and indefinite way, men who are not specialists come to look upon it as the supreme force in the modern world and to accept its results unhesitatingly. So that it is not so much the substitution of the greater universe for older conceptions as this all-pervasive scientific atmosphere which affects the masses of men, who sum up their impressions in belief in evolution and the inviolability of natural law.

Evolution and the inviolability of natural law are supposed to be proved, but the scientific man knows that so far from being proved they are merely the popular expression of the presupposition of scientific proof, the law of continuity, with its consequences. For with the principle of continuity assumed, development in some form is the necessary outcome. Hence attacks on any particular form of the doctrine of evolution are beside

the point. Apologetics cannot profit by them, for if any special doctrine be overturned it is only that it be replaced by some more thorough-going theory, since the law of continuity is fundamental to the modern view of the world. Thus the universe takes on the aspect, not of a manufactured article, but of a growing organism. With biological analogies predominant it no longer appears evident that the world needs a maker.

This result is only expressed in a different way by the newer conception of causation. Not so very long ago a cause was defined as outside of and before the effect, and the illustration suggested inevitably was a chain. Now, a series must have an end, a chain a starting-point, and for the world the long series of causes and effects came to an end, the long chain was fastened, in God, who was external to and before all else. Finding him, the First Mover, the First Cause, the mind was content. But, in our day, causation is not looked upon as a chain, but as a network. The cause is not before the effect and external to it, but simultaneous with it, and jointly concerned in it, at once cause and effect, acting and acted upon. It is only our imperfect knowledge which singles out any element as cause or effect, by ignoring the

rest, — a procedure which has its practical and immediate advantages and even necessity, but which has no logical force as a theory of the universe. Thus, instead of a First Mover, or Great First Cause, we get an ever present power in everything, and without a time relationship.

Philosophy, influenced profoundly by German speculation, contributes to the same result. It will not rest content with Paley's notion of an infinite which can be defined merely as great beyond our measurements, but, combining forces with the limitless extension of the physical universe in space and time, and with the conception of an all-present, timeless power, it discusses the metaphysical Absolute and tries to determine the meaning of Infinite and Eternal as antithetical to finite and temporal. So that when God is accepted by the reason it is no longer the theocratic God, before and beyond the world and only a little larger than the angels, but the theanthropic God, around and within; so that theology must discuss the relation of phenomena to noumena, of the finite to the infinite, of the relative to the absolute, and of particular causes to the *causa causarum*. The question is no longer primarily of a God coming down from heaven, of

Deism and Theism, but of Pantheism and Pan-en-theism, of the fine distinction between the assertions that all is God and that God is all. Spinoza more nearly represents the modern point of view than does any eighteenth-century theologian, orthodox or Deistic.

When thinkers, on the other hand, refuse to follow speculation to its delicately discriminated end, they confine their attention to the more immediate and seemingly more practical problems of physical science, or under the supposed influence of Kant's great Critique protest that the mind can find no atmosphere for its support at such dizzy heights and must confine itself to the plain levels of experience. Thus they become theoretically or practically agnostic and positivistic.

The science of knowledge adds its contribution. The older discussions assumed a crude realism and took things for the most part at their face values: men, gods, and the world. But we have learned to be critical and to scrutinize knowledge itself, so that all is interpreted in terms of consciousness, and nothing is taken as it appears, nor can anything be thought under the old canons of reality.

The particular sciences contribute their quota to the same general result; ethnology, for example.

It is no longer the empire of China only, dimly and imperfectly known after all, but the races and generations of men everywhere and from the beginning which must be considered. This vastly increases the difficulty of finding a standing-place for argument in "common consent." It is not only that such common consent is more difficult to discover so far as definite propositions are concerned, but that when so discovered it offers no certainty; for what men have always and all and everywhere believed is shown to have been mistaken in striking instances. As matter of fact, the Deist can no longer point to the agreement of even the highest minds in regard to religious truth since the discovery of great religions like Buddhism, which finds the ultimate facts in some relentless law of cause and effect; or like Confucianism, in a principle of order; or like Hinduism, in the all absorbing "It;" or like the vast variety of nature-worships, in a multitude of spirits higher and lower than man. Reason does not appear to go by a straight line up from nature to nature's God, but by various lines up and down to various gods, or even to no god at all. Common consent is reduced to a feeling of dependence, or to a common intuition of supersensible realities, with-

out explicit agreement as to their nature, powers, or estates.

All this affects the doctrine of authority so important to the older apologetics. In science the disproof of theory does not lead to the acceptance of anything by faith, but to a re-examination of the facts. Thus, for example, the overthrow of the Darwinian theory would not lead scientific men to accept the doctrine of special creation on faith, but to some new theory more nearly in accord with all we know. It too would be tentative and partial, for the scientific habit of mind is indisposed to accept any theory as established once for all. This does not lead to scepticism, but to the recognition that man progresses in knowledge, and that he makes many false starts and has often to retrace his steps; but this return upon his footsteps is evidence, not of doubt as to the final goal, but only as to the direction we have followed for a while. So that authority, if we may use the word, is established by submitting itself to the sharpest scrutiny, and by readiness to surrender if a better claimant appear. The highest authorities have been men who have seen most clearly the difficulties of their own positions, and who have stated the adverse argument in all its fulness.

Men find it impossible to lay aside this habit of mind when they turn to the department of knowledge which is supposed to be most important, having to do with our eternal welfare, and to accept on faith that which they cannot test. This is not because of pride or self-confidence, but it is the outcome of a life-long training, which teaches that knowledge is to be trusted which submits to tests and offers itself to the severest examination. But this is only to say that in science authority in the strict sense has no place.

It follows that the special proofs offered for the Christian religion as God's revelation lose their force. When the Deistic controversy was at an end Hume appeared, and his attack still remains; for he gave up the common ground occupied by the former disputants, challenging the positions of all alike, and he only of his century appeals in any degree to the scientific specialists of our day.

It is not that his argument is technically correct, — even Huxley and Mill point out its obvious fallacies, — but his presupposition, and not Paley's, now occupies men's minds. It is not that *a priori* it is certain that miracles cannot be proved, but that the reign of natural causation is so extended and insisted on that its converse seems unthink-

able. Any explanation appears more rational than that the laws of nature have been suspended. On the other hand, the presumption urged by Butler and Paley has lost its force. With the extension of the universe in time and space it is no longer to be assumed that God will interfere with universal laws for the sake of guaranteeing his revelation to man, or that man's happiness is so exclusively an object of the Infinite's concern. On the contrary, the world process seems to show that happiness is only an incident, or an element, and that, if there be

> "One far off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves,"

it cannot be, from our evidence, the happiness of the individual nor even of the race. Besides, modern psychology cuts the ground from the whole utilitarian school by showing that happiness and its desire play a far less important part than they had supposed even in our present conscious life.

The burden of proof is shifted.[1] The apologist can no longer demand that his opponent explain his phenomena on some other ground or accept the

[1] Butler put it on his opponents: "Analogy," ii., vii., "It lies upon unbelievers to show why this evidence is not to be credited."

theory of miracles. The old alternative was reality or fraud, and the case was won through a "trial of the witnesses." But many another alternative presents itself to-day, and even the ethnic faiths are allowed their marvels without assaults on the good faith of their founders. And if all hypotheses fail science puts the item to its long list of facts which are as yet inexplicable, and is not inclined to allow the one explanation which seems the most incredible. It is not that the miracles are disproved, but that they cease to be considered. So strongly is this felt that many Christian writers attempt to bring the miracles into line with scientific conceptions and to explain them by various devices, thus saving the historicity of the narrative at the expense of its apologetic value. And when thus the apologetic value is surrendered many scientific men are willing to attend to the evidence for the wonders. For their repugnance is not to the marvel, but to the alleged suspension of natural laws. They know that the mysteries of nature have not been all explored or discovered, and that no limits can be put to the possible. Should one be born without a father, or should one raise the dead, it would be only a new extension of our knowledge of facts, something more to be ex-

plained with a further comprehension of the scope and meaning of natural laws.

Granting the marvel it is asked, Why should God be its author? — there is something incommensurate between the wonder and the Absolute. Or, more simply, How does the marvel establish truth? Were some teacher to do in fact what a magician on the stage appears to do, take off his head and replace it upside down, how should this carry conviction to the mind of anything beyond a new extraordinary fact added to our store of physiological and anatomical and universal knowledge?

The further evidence urged fares no better. The science and philosophy of revealed theology as set forth in the past no longer fit the science and philosophy of the present. The miraculous adaptation of revealed to natural knowledge, like the ball to the socket, is not apparent. Scripture and the older knowledge were both alike uncritical, naïve, and in accord with common-sense. Science regards both as from a common source, the uncritical observations of unscientific men, and both to be corrected by a science which no longer sees the sun move across the heavens or measures time from the beginning as some six thousand years. The correspondence shows merely that the scriptural

writers partook of the common views of men of their times. The special doctrines of the Church, the Trinity for example, are treated in the same way. Historical criticism, pointing out the effect of Greek philosophy upon early Christianity, and the rediscovery of the same philosophy in the middle ages, ceases to wonder that the completed product agrees with and supplements one element which was concerned in its own formation.

Thus the men who teach scientific subjects in our universities, edit our scientific periodicals, and in general influence the thinking of our times, so far from accepting the miracles as the "direct and fundamental proofs" of the Christian religion will not so much as consider the evidence offered in their support, but treat them as Protestants deal with the Roman miracles, or as orthodox Christians the wonders of spiritualism and Christian Science.

Apologetics ceases to urge miracles as wonders in themselves, and shows that they are not mere marvels, but works of love and mercy, thus shifting the ground of the contention. For now the appeal is not to the sense of the wonderful, but to our higher nature, to our appreciation of a Divine goodness, — no longer to the supernatural, but, as

in natural religion, to the rational judgment of our minds. Christianity is still usually identified with the supernatural; and the unique historical importance of Christianity, with its long line of saints and heroes, its good works and central position, is put as proof, as leading to the dilemma that if it be false the highest good comes from falsehood; and "what kind of reflection is it upon the Maker and Master of the universe if we conceive him as consenting to this thing? Nay, in what sort of light does it set reason if we imagine it capable of being so deluded and deceived, seduced to martyrdom or compelled to enthusiasm by a mistake?"[1] Evidently the miracles, even the incarnation, are no longer the fundamental proof, but the history of Christianity and its inherent excellence take that place. The miracles are believed for its sake. It appearing as supremely good, the source must be like itself, else is it "the most insolent and fateful anomaly in history." Thus miracles are no longer aids to faith, but its object; and men show the robustness of their belief by testifying to their unshaken confidence in the strict historicity of the narrative. The situation is transformed, miracles taking their place among the doc-

[1] "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion," Fairbairn, p. 15.

trines to be believed and passing into the discipline of systematic theology.

Half unconsciously the Church occupies the new position, but it hesitates, fails to discriminate, and confuses the old and the new. Of the "Evidences for Christianity" it says with Coleridge, "I am weary of the name." It almost ceases to attempt to win the consent of the enlightened leaders of thought. It prefers practical work, or appeals to the emotions through ritual and sermons. But the attitude is not possible permanently, for Protestant Christianity cannot consent to become the religion of the ignorant and the thought-weary. It must face its situation and again set forth its "direct and fundamental proofs."

Three possible courses offer themselves, each with advocates. We may defy the new. Identifying Christianity with particular views of history and cosmogony, we may make their truth fundamental. But this is to confess that Christianity has no essential message to men who hold the modern view of the world. Or we may modify the older argument and compromise, retracting, restating, adding, omitting, mediating, — a method often necessary, and with its advantages as it substitutes gradual change for revolution. But it has

only a relative value, and chiefly for believers who occupy still substantially the earlier positions. It does not meet the situation nor really attempt to discuss the fundamental issues. Or, finally, we may accept the modern view of the world, and study anew the problem. The classic apologetics was consistent and effective since it met its antagonists upon their own ground. Modern apologetics must do the same or confess that in the full light of modern thought it has no reason to offer for its faith.

Therefore we ask, What are the modern methods of proof? What is religion and how may it be proved? What is Christianity in its essential characteristic, and what can be the nature of its proof? Let us begin at the beginning, with reality and proof.

III

REALITY AND PROOF

When we say the Christian religion is true we mean that it is not merely subjective, that it is not a fancy, nor a state of feeling, nor an hypothesis, but that it accords with an established order of facts, for this is what men mean by reality. In formal treatises methods of proof appear intricate, and in statement recondite, but in ordinary life the matter is simple. The necessity for proof arises when the correspondence of any proposition with the facts is questioned. When thus a doubt arises one goes closer to the object, inspects it, touches it, smells it, hears it; then, if doubt still remain, he repeats his observations and brings competent judges to aid in the decision. Or, if the object of the doubt be intangible and not to be tested through the senses, an attempt is made to repeat the experience again and again, and to get others to make the tests, until the question is settled and the doubt is resolved. Or, if the fact

cannot be verified, even though one testify to the certainty of his belief, the doubt remains and we may not speak of proof. But though one may still believe what he cannot prove, for the most part that is regarded as a reality which can be demonstrated to one's self and to others as corresponding to an established order of facts. One can distinguish usually well enough between that which is merely real to himself and that which has reality for all. For example, a certain landscape is often visited in dreams. As dream it is real, but as landscape it is unreal, for it represents no established order of facts of land and sea. The experience cannot be verified by repetition, nor can another be directed how to reach it. It is subjective, and is dismissed as imaginary. Now the plain man understands reality to be this conformity to an established order; and while the psychologist has his own way of explaining this reference, for our purpose it is all summed up in this: that which is real can be verified by the repeated experience of myself and others. Could I, as in Du Maurier's romance, repeat my dream experiences night by night and introduce my friends to them at will, I should at last lose wholly the distinction between the dream and the waking world and both would be alike

real, for I could verify my dreams and prove them true by experiment.

Science has the same conception of reality and the same methods of proof. It also starts with a question, but it differs in the formation of its questions in that it collects many specimens and then, on their basis, asks its questions. It regards premature theories as hurtful, and hesitates longer before it makes its tentative assertion or clearly frames its question; for, while the plain man is easily satisfied by a simple examination, science must interrogate its facts by various and repeated and delicate processes. Then finally it comes to its conclusion and states it.

Reality and its proof are the same in principle for the plain man and the scientist, but with the latter theory plays the larger part. The plain man's knowledge terminates with concrete facts or with a few rude generalizations, but the scientist aims at establishing "laws." From his collection of facts he draws an inference, makes a guess, and then verifies his guess by experiment. Finding it verified he publishes it, inviting the scrutiny of other scientific men, and when it obtains common consent it becomes "a law" of nature by which the universe is controlled. Thus his procedure

begins with a thought and concludes with an objective "law," which separates itself from his mind and appears as guiding the nebulous mass before the worlds came into being. He insists upon his own originality, and quarrels for it; it was his guess, his hypothesis, his concept, and now, established and accepted by universal scientific consent, it is no longer his, though called still by his name, but is become a natural law which existing from eternity God himself cannot change. Ultimately it may be held a truth so certain that the mind cannot think its contrary. Gravitation is an illustration of such a law, which existed first as a mere surmise.

Sometimes an hypothesis is used as mere theory for the laboratory, without further thought of its establishment. It is a working hypothesis, to be cast aside when it has served its purpose. It is distinguished from a natural law as purely subjective and temporary. But neither the employment of such devices nor the more important fact that hypotheses which are supposed to be laws are often finally rejected shakes the confidence that the powers which really rule may be made known. Indeed scientific men come to pride themselves on their repeated rejection of theories which failed

because of their relentless vigor of investigation, and to point to these very failures as a kind of negative guarantee of final success; for scientific faith survives all errors, all inadequate theories, and triumphs in the face of contradictions which seem overwhelming and final.

In science thus theory is the chief thing. Once established it is more certain than concrete facts. That is, the experimenter does not question the truth of gravitation but of his observations, when facts seem to contradict the law. But though in science a question is the beginning and a theory the end, still, none the less, concrete facts remain the final test. If a theory refuse this test, if it cannot be submitted to the experimentation of competent observers, or if, though established for centuries undoubted, concrete facts are discovered which contradict it, it is rejected like the landscape of my dreams, as having no touch with our waking lives, however fascinating and complete and alluring it may seem. A theory which cannot be tested, or which is contradictory of the only facts which can be tested, is pseudo-science, without relationship to reality.

But while science appeals to experience, it limits its appeal to the few who are competent. So does

the plain man. He does not care for the judgment of one who is color blind as to a mooted question in shades of green, nor for the judgment of a deaf man as to the sounding of the dinner-bell. It is only those who are competent who may speak, and the testimony of a man of keen sight or hearing will outweigh that of a dozen who are weak in eye or ear. So in the scientific world it is the few who decide. The masses count for nothing. All Asia and Africa count for nothing. The intelligent and highly educated in other fields count for nothing. The law is held as established and orthodox when the verdict of the few who are competent to judge is in.

Let me repeat briefly. The plain man regards something as real when it conforms to his thought, when his thought and it agree. It is such a shade of green, he says, and proves it by careful inspection and the judgment of others. Such is the law of nature, the scientist declares, and proves it by careful inspection and the judgment of competent men. When the concrete fact and the scientific law are approved by all who have the right to an opinion, they are established as real.

Idealist and realist agree in recognizing a distinction in our mental processes. Sometimes we

deal with thoughts which we can manipulate as we will; we build castles in Spain without reference to geography or physics; or we construct a transcendental geometry on the assumption of a space of more than three dimensions. The two illustrations are of the same kind of process, though the latter is elaborate, with established rules and starting-points, so that it is a game which many can play and which can be extended indefinitely. But men, scientific, philosophical, and uneducated, usually mean by reality that which is not thus constructed by our minds and in our minds. Facts are what they are; we are to find them and study them and form our science according to them. Or, if we cannot yet find them, if we admit they are still thoughts, yet we suppose that under different conditions we shall be able to find and verify them.

Indeed, so far is this pressed that a notion of reality arises which finds it in something quite separate from our consciousness, and makes knowledge to consist in finding out how it exists wholly independent of our perception. So we distinguish between what is and what appears, between things-in-themselves and things as they act upon us, and suppose that real knowledge is of the es-

sence, the noumenon, the unchangeable something which is, whatever we may think or feel or know. This, however, gives us ontological metaphysics as true knowledge, and it is as far as possible from that which men in general mean by reality. For this is found precisely in things as they appear to us, and act upon us, and enter into relations with us.

Our purpose is not to discuss these questions, but to point out our common agreements. The realistic explanation differs widely from the idealistic, but both agree in the notion of reality we have set forth. The classic challenge of the realist to the idealist to hit his head against a stone, with its answer that the proposed test proves only the impenetrability of the realist's own head, at least shows that both agree in accepting as real an established order of facts and in interpreting it by its effects upon ourselves. We should no doubt add the word "normal," — by its normal effects upon ourselves. The abnormal appearance is real of course, in a sense, but we mean by reality that which is usual, and we find it by putting ourselves in a normal condition and observing the phenomenon repeatedly. Our assurance is increased when others agree with us and we feel that neither we ourselves nor the phenomena are abnormal. So

that the two factors are a consciousness, and an appearance to it; the consciousness the same in all rational men, and the appearance describable in common terms by all.

The older logic relied wholly upon the appeal to common consent. It started with axioms of thought supposed to be accepted by all reasoning men; it shut its eyes and its ears and proceeded by the processes of logic, testing its conclusions solely by their clearness and self-consistency. But when these conclusions were proclaimed as true they were supposed to agree with the established order of concrete facts as truly as does the plain man's judgment or the scientist's law. That is, the *a priori* philosopher did not suppose that he was framing a system which, like my dream landscape, has only subjective existence. But he assumed that the order of being and the order of thought are one and the same, and therefore that if a consistent system could be thought out it would truly represent the real world of facts. Thus he assumed the very thing modern science attempts to prove, the agreement with facts. The scientist too brings his theory to the facts, reads it into them, but none the less submits it to them. He does not assume in advance that they conform to

it, however clear, self-evident, and convincing it may seem, but by laborious experiment verifies it.

A theological example illustrates the older procedure. We have the idea of a perfect being; perfection implies necessary existence; necessary existence implies actual existence; therefore the perfect being exists. The aim is not a syllogism, but the demonstration of God's real and to me objective existence. But the scientific test is wanting; no such perfect being can be tested, verified by experiment, or shown to have any but a purely notional existence. Existence doubtless is part of my definition of a perfect being, but beyond the consistency of my definition the proof has no value. The argument appeals for its demonstration in the scientific sense to some future time, when it is supposed that we shall enter God's presence and see him as he is.

It is not that metaphysics is an impossible branch of knowledge, nor that it is unimportant, nor that its materials and subjects transcend knowledge, but that its canons of proof have led to no conclusive result. Its theories have been formed *a priori*, its logic has been deductive, and its sole tests have been clearness and self-consistency of thought. It therefore cannot be proved scientifi-

cally. If the thought be so clear that reasoning men cannot think the contrary when once it has been explained to them, then it has the same evidence of truth which belongs to pure mathematics. Such an *a priori* philosophy would rank with geometry, as Spinoza expected his system would do, but even so it would not follow that our perfect being should have existence save in our thought, as the demonstration that the three angles of triangles equal two right angles does not show that any real triangle with perfect angles exists. But *a priori* metaphysics has a twofold difficulty: it cannot, like pure mathematics, so put its conceptions that all competent men agree in them, nor can it, like physics, show that its laws conform to and express the relations of the world of concrete facts. Hence metaphysics seems unprofitable and stale to many scientific men. But there is a newer metaphysics, which does not differ in method from physical science. It studies its facts and builds up its proximate theories in psychology and the science of knowledge. On these as basis it attacks the more fundamental propositions and tries to form a theory which shall be all-embracing. It starts with concrete facts, and concludes by submitting its theories to facts as final tests. It does

not differ from physics in method, but includes it, for it is the science of sciences dealing with the conceptions which all sciences use. Its conceptions, theories, are fewer but more fundamental than the conceptions of the particular sciences, and seem more remote than they from concrete facts. But in truth this is not so, for, as fundamental, the conceptions of metaphysics belong to all facts and may be tested by the results of the special sciences. With the acceptance of the scientific method we may look for a growing agreement, and the coming of a time when competent men shall agree at least as fully as in physics, when metaphysical theory shall be accepted by students, and shall be seen to explain the fundamental facts and faiths of all knowledge. One need not add that such a metaphysical understanding will go far towards healing the divisions in the theories of the other sciences.

But a complete agreement is far in the future, and science, including metaphysics, is content with fragmentary hypotheses as instalments of truth. Men know that the most all-embracing theory is formed only by abstraction, by selecting parts of the fulness of reality, and that no theory can exhibit the completeness of any single concrete fact.

Thus, all theories are only temporary and partial expedients, instalments of truth. The theories of the past were guesses, incomplete and unsatisfactory, sometimes misleading. But by them were advances made on the path which has led to the fuller knowledge of our day. Therefore these dim gropings after truth, if haply it might be found, are not scorned nor derided, but are studied, that the growth and method of knowledge may be understood. In their light, for example, we learn that our own best theories and most certain knowledge may be superseded, and that the science of to-morrow may look upon to-day as we upon yesterday. Men are aware that they do not know all the facts, and that every generalization based upon partial information is subject to revision when all the facts are discovered. None the less, science holds its theories as true, as instalments of truth, and conceives of a higher truth as doing better what we do now, and of absolute truth as accomplishing perfectly in view of all the facts what we accomplish imperfectly with our fragmentary view of things. We may be sure that such absolute and final truth will be established only as we are true to the facts as given, and to the truth as we see it, and are, at the same time, ready to give up

the science which explains in part for the science which shall better explain a larger part.

Thus far we have followed the plain man in the tests to which he submits his question, and we have attempted to show that scientific and metaphysical tests of reality do not differ in principle from the simplest proofs of the simplest fact. But other elements enter life and constitute its larger part. These elements also submit substantially to the same tests and are governed by the same method, for knowledge in all its varieties and parts is one. We have asked what is — but this is followed by the question, what should be?

My real landscape may be tested in many ways, among them as to its beauty. My dream landscape, too, has this quality, but it can be known only by myself, and by others only indirectly through my words. But when I submit the real landscape to the judgment of others, there is room for difference of opinion; most beautiful to me it may be less beautiful, or even not beautiful at all, to them Many elements enter into this judgment: the indefinable personal equation, differences of viewpoint, of education, of sensibility to mass and form and color. But though differences are more irreconcilable here than in mere matters of fact, it

is these judgments, "worth estimates," that bring together the elements which give content to life: pleasure, pain, and our feelings in general. All judgments to a degree partake of this nature, for the mind acts as one, and never as pure intellect or as pure feeling; but in worth estimates distinctively, our feelings, the fundamental part of our nature, are more immediately concerned. What here is the standard and the method of proof?

In general the proof and its standard do not differ from other proofs and standards. Certain feelings satisfy me, and these feelings I seek to have confirmed by the judgment of others. They, too, agree that this is sweet, or beautiful, or grand, or harmonious. When this agreement is reached, I take my judgment to be true, and when all men agree, I have the highest possible proof. But "all men" is here, as in the other cases, qualified to mean all men competent to judge, so that, as the scientist is not disturbed by the adverse judgment of the ignoramus, the musician is not disturbed because the man on the street prefers rag time to Bach or Wagner. The standard in all cases is the opinion of a relatively small society, the plain man being content with the traditions of the community in which he lives, the scientist with the con-

currence of his circle of experts, and the musician or artist with the commendation of the few he counts his peers.

In any case, if one finds himself alone he is, likely enough, shaken in his judgment, or if not so shaken, if still confident, one against the world, he appeals to the future, to the world sober against the world drunk, or to the world instructed and competent against the world incompetent and ignorant. Thus, in some fashion, future or present, the appeal is to the judgment of the world. But such appeal to the future is of the nature of faith. Sure of my own judgment, though now, owing to the prejudice or incompetence of others, I cannot prove it, I look to the future for my vindication. Strictly speaking, I can speak only of a future proof and of a present faith.

But faith may actively labor to realize itself. It may instruct the ignorant and persuade the prejudiced. It opens schools and art galleries, it gives concerts of good music and distributes good literature, certain that this which satisfies and gratifies its own taste ultimately must gratify all. It thus creates the very standard to which it finally appeals for its confirmation. Thus in worth estimates there is an objective reference of a peculiar

kind: they seek to externalize themselves. My plan of a landscape differs from my dream. My dream ends with itself and the gratified memory which remains, but my plan tries to modify the actual unæsthetic landscape which stretches before my door, and to make it conform to my ideal. The highest activities of life are of this nature. Science itself is first a selection of material from the formless mass in accordance with a thought; then, when it passes out of the domain of pure science into applied, it is the careful selection and disposition of material, so that that which has been only idea may take form and shape and enter the domain of actual fact. The domain of nature is shaped by art, and thought, externalized, takes its place henceforth in the domain of natural law, and of the universe of facts. In such activity man's whole nature is involved. The intellect suggests the concept, the feelings approve, the will carries it into execution.

This is the process in politics, social theories, and ethics; an ideal, first, which must be approved by practice, embodied in institutions, and accepted by all mankind. The thought of the philosopher becomes the dominant force of communities and nations and the race. First it takes possession of

the soul of the individual, commending itself as good and just and true. But while his only it is incomplete; so he teaches others, who carry on the missionary labor, until widening circles feel its influence, and it becomes at last the standard for a denomination, a tribe, a people, a race, is embodied in institutions and rules conduct, and is real in the highest and fullest sense. It is a worth estimate become externalized, the justice, the law, the right, of men. It may be the guide to further truth.

Fundamentally, I repeat, the tests of truth are the same in the whole range of our experience. Does it on repeated experiment satisfy me? Do competent observers concur in the judgment? Does it agree with the facts? We may add, does it afford a starting-point for further investigations and discoveries? Some judgments declare that the concept concurs with already existing facts, but others that facts can be made to concur with them. The first appeal to concrete facts collected, the second to facts to be formed and framed. Until so formed and framed the appeal is still to faith, for the test is that the theory work. As soon as it thus works, it takes its place among established facts and submits to the ordinary tests.

These worth estimates, to be realized through

conduct, demand therefore an act of will. It is not "the will to believe" but the will to do. It is not that the evidence is insufficient, and that therefore I force myself to a decision, but that, satisfied myself, my ideal must externalize itself and take its place among the objects known by all. Such activity brings me into contact with reality, and separates my true thought from my dreams and mere ideals. If it will not work, if it cannot arouse my will, or if, my will aroused, I find the vision fades and that it cannot be realized for myself or others, it is a mere fancy of my mind, to be put with the landscape of my dreams. Only when one carries his belief into practice or verifies his theory by experiment, does he know. That which refuses this test is not fruitful knowledge, nor susceptible of proof.

As already indicated the distinction made by the term "worth estimate" is artificial, since all judgments partake of this nature. Our feelings are fundamental in consciousness, and to gratify them we move and think. But we find obstacles in the way, for an order not ourselves seems to thwart us. So we set ourselves to learn and to master it. Even if we seek knowledge "for its own sake" still is this a worth estimate by men whose

strongest feeling is the desire to know, and whose deepest gratification is the solving of a puzzle. But for the most part other motives predominate. Men study the world that they may use it, that is, that their desires may be gratified. Could it be shown that knowledge is useless, that its results are not gratifying but the reverse, so that the more men have of it the worse is their condition, — that is to say, if the final judgment were that the world is fundamentally evil, so that illusion is better than truth, — science would come to an end, for men would no longer investigate. So that in all science, even in pure science, a worth estimate is expressed or implied.

Worth estimates move the will and are the chief agents in the progress of the race. From them come the differences of barbarism and civilization, as ideals advance, as men come to desire higher ends, and attempt to realize these ideals in conduct. These estimates do not classify, merely, the facts of nature, but use these facts as material for their own embodiment. Nature is the field for their employment, as descriptive science furnishes material for applied science. Through them man seeks in nature for the realization of his will. He learns the laws of nature that he may triumph

over it, for by learning first its facts he achieves realities which are more wonderful than the highest flights of his uninformed imagination, than the strangest marvels of his dreams. As thus he labors to fulfil his purposes and to gratify his desires he reveals not only the possibilities of external nature, but himself. As he wills, he is, and we know him as we learn what has supreme value in his estimates of life.

The world is thus twofold, — a natural order which man learns, and a supernatural order which he imposes. The first can never yield the second, and the second cannot be realized without the first. Nature is known as man brings his thoughts to it, and nature is transformed as man brings his will to act upon it. The highest proof which can be offered of any theory is that it thus transforms the world, that is, that it works.

Where now shall we find reality in religion, and where shall we look for proof? Is its reality in conformity to an established order, and if so, to the order which is or to that which shall be? Is our worth estimate in religion derived from nature, or is it a protest against nature and prophetic of a new heavens and a new earth? Is its proof to be found in visions and marvels extra-

natural, a breaking through or a reversing of nature, or is it to be found in the transformation of the world? To answer these questions we must investigate it, and this, in the next chapter we shall attempt to do by the aid of the results attained in the science of comparative religion.

IV

RELIGION: ITS DEFINITION, DEVELOPMENT, VARIETIES, CONFLICTS, AND PROOFS

THE science of comparative religion has shown that man is religious by nature and that the exceptions prove the rule. Naturally attempts are made to explain the fact, for its importance is undoubted, since religion affects man in his whole being and through him powerfully works upon his environment. The change of attitude is remarkable among scientific men, the subject now primarily exciting, not conflict, but investigation.

But, as with most studies, it has not proved easy to set forth its precise limitations, nor exactly to define its materials, and no definition commands general consent. Religion is man reacting upon his environment in a definite way, but when we ask for the characteristic of this definite way we get various answers. In view of the wide diversity one hesitates to set forth his own view, but I must venture, since we cannot discuss religion without defining it.

"Religion is the recognition of super-sensible realities as superior and worshipful.

"(*a*) Religion has to do with the invisible and the intangible. The merest peasant who worships the rock out of which a tree grows does not worship it as rock. Nor when he restrains the sacrilegious globe-trotter from throwing a can down the crater of a volcano with the exclamation, 'It is God!' has he any notion that the mountain *quâ* mountain is divine. It is not the stone nor the tree, nor the image, nor the cave, nor the mountain, nor the sun, nor the river; but all these are sacred because they are not merely rock, river, or tree. Let the peasant be convinced to the contrary, that is, let him believe them to be so much brute matter, and *ipso facto* he ceases to worship them. In the visible, which he does not worship, he is conscious of something more, which he does worship.

"And this same consciousness continues in all stages of religious development. The peasant conceives it under semi-materialistic forms, for so only can he think, while the idealistic philosopher calls it the transcendental and attempts to free it from all phenomenal elements; but in both alike is the feeling of a somewhat other than this

visible and tangible world with which our senses have normally to do. In this, religious feeling differs from the æsthetic, for could the universe be shown to be, all in all, only a great machine, religion would vanish, but æsthetics, I take it, would continue, in part at least, as before.

"(*b*) This supersensible somewhat is recognized as real; indeed, while in religious mood, as the highest reality. To the peasant its presence is mediated by things of sense, but it is more real than they and gives them their value. The conception varies, of course, with education until a Matthew Arnold thinks of 'a stream of tendency,' and different as his thought is from the semi-materialistic fancy of the fetish worshipper, yet he too conceives this 'stream' not as mere ideal but as real.

"(*c*) It is worshipful. The peasant bows before it, mutters his prayer, and feels in its presence awe, wonder, maybe fear, and worships. The philosopher may use no outward form, utter no word, and yet, putting this as highest, worship in spirit and in truth.

"(*d*) It is good, that is, it meets the desires of the worshipper. The pacification of bad gods is a perversion of the religious sentiment, though

the misconception from which it arises is natural enough. Even a religion avowedly pessimistic, like Buddhism, holds goodness fundamental. For the evils of existence may be escaped and the teaching of Buddha is a joyful message of salvation. But the belief that man may be saved is faith in ultimate goodness, else the last word would be, 'Which way I fly is hell: myself am hell;' and from despair comes no religion.

"(*e*) And finally, this supersensible presence is believed to 'respond' to the worshipper. Religion is not conceived as one-sided, beginning and ending in ourselves, but is communion with the transcendent and the divine. The 'response' also is of course conceived variously, including the vague feeling stirred in the heart of the peasant, dreams and visions, the multiform phenomena of possession, the ecstasy of extreme emotionalism variously stimulated, deliverance through miraculous interference, communion with a personal God in Theistic religions, and the beatific vision of the philosopher who feels his individual self swallowed up in the Infinite and finds the peace which passeth all understanding as he perceives God to be all and in all.

"These five elements, then, are constituent of

religion: the unseen, the transcendent, recognized as real, as worshipful, as good, and as 'responding' to us. In all religions from lowest to highest they are found, and together form an inclusive definition.

"It follows that religion does not spring from fear (observe how dear to his heart is the religion of the devotee), though fear doubtless often stimulates and quickens the religious sense. Nor does it arise from the sense of dependence, though this is often closely related to it. But man worships, sometimes, that on which he does not recognize himself as dependent. It is not merely with prayers for help that the worshipper goes to his god, but fully as much with adoration and praise. The religious man, so to speak, instinctively worships, without needing further reason. Nor is religion the offspring of ignorance, though it is true the ignorant man ignorantly worships many things afterwards recognized as unworthy symbols of the Divine Being. But this successive purification and correction no more prove that religion is essentially the offspring of ignorance than does the progressive rejection of hypotheses and insufficient generalizations prove that science is the offspring of ignorance. Religion is not negative, but posi-

tive, and to the religious man increase of knowledge means increase of worship, so that he shall worship most who knows most. Neither is religion the offspring of animism, nor of fetichism, nor of ancestor worship, nor of totemism. As well might one suppose it the offspring of Methodism, or of Presbyterianism. These are various expressions of the religious consciousness, which is deeper than them all and source of them all. Nor is religion one with theologies, in any form. It does not come from our instinct of causality, or of personality. Theologies are philosophies or cosmologies, crude or profound, explanations of phenomena, varying with each grade of man's evolution. Theology none the less, as matter of course, influences religion and this at every stage. For our separation of the religious feeling from the theological concept is more or less artificial, since consciousness always contains feeling, thought, and will.

"Could philosophy demonstrate the unreality of the being worshipped, not by this worshipper or that, but in general, so that material elements would represent the all, religion, as we have seen, would cease. Could theology establish an absentee God who had at some time revealed his will but had now

withdrawn himself, again religion would disappear. There might be the obligation to believe certain statements touching such a God, but none to worship, and by hypothesis no communion with him. At best there would be a belief in such communion in some future world. But, apart from such extreme views, theology must modify the content of the religious consciousness at every point. Our theology varies with every variation in our general view of the world, and therefore it is vain to look for agreement in the developed contents, but only in the vague and primary feelings as above interpreted. For example, if we begin with our open-mouthed peasant in Japan going on a pilgrimage, we shall get from him no answer which is articulate. The wonderful to him is God, mediated to him by the unusual in nature and in man and in art. When educated in certain schools of Chinese philosophy he will speak of *rei*, meaning some mysterious personage, and of *ki*, a mysterious power. Trained by a priest he will speak of the *hotoke* (Buddhas), and of gods many and diverse. With these differing conceptions, theologies, he will narrate a differing experience. That is, he interprets his religious experience in terms of his theology and by means of his theology brings new experi-

ences under the head of religion, rejecting old expressions and experiences as no longer adequate. At the lowest he will worship the wonderful, at the highest, trained now in Chinese philosophy, he will give up native gods and shrines, will reject Buddhist images and temples, and will say, 'Fear the will of Heaven. When man leaves all else and is humane and true he accords with Heaven; it surely cherishes and embraces him.' At the starting-point is a feeling vague and almost indescribable, and a theology equally vague and inarticulate, with a worship unorganized and of simplest form. But as the conceptions grow in clearness, so does the experience. In well-defined polytheism are direct communications from the gods, direct answers to prayers, a priesthood, sacrifices, temples, and an experience mediated by all these, itself elaborate and complex. So through all forms, henotheistic, monotheistic, pantheistic, the religious element remains, but varies, is impoverished or enriched, ennobled or debased according to man's stage of culture and his general view of the world. Even in the highest abstraction, in the pantheistic view which seeks oneness and not communion, there is still language which can be interpreted only in the tones of all religious experience, and

man may be God-intoxicated while denying God. Like the peasant, though from the other extreme, he too can find no words to express that which he feels and knows.

"We separate, then, the two elements, the religious instinct present in all forms, and the developed religious consciousness dependent upon our general view of the world and modified directly by our theology. From this the inference is obvious, viz.: that we can make few statements as to religion in general, but must discuss religions in particular, if we would go beyond these vague and general points all have in common. For example, we ask, Is religion beneficial? But we can only answer, What religion? From its emotional nature religion lends itself readily to immorality and to superstition. To immorality because the religious feelings are akin to other feelings, and unless carefully discriminated are associated with sensuality, fear, anger, cruelty, and the like. Religion then gives its sanction to these passions and forms a combination of terrible strength and evil. The religious feeling, like all others, longs for gratification, is of great strength, and may readily be misled into supposing itself gratified through the stimulation of other passions. It lends itself with

equal readiness to superstition, for it precedes a reasoned view of the world, lays hold uncritically of objects and teachings which seem to offer it a basis, renders its objects sacred, objects to their criticism, and thus remains in the past while the science of the present moves on to other viewpoints. Thus results the never-ending conflict, not only of science and theology, but of science and religion in so far as the religious experience clings to and finds expression through the conceptions of the past held sacred in theology. No religious feeling is 'pure,' but each is in part offspring of concepts which are joined with these feelings from the beginning, and therefore at no stage has this conflict been escaped excepting when for uncertain periods man's view of the world has remained unchanged and in harmony with the cosmological teachings of the prevalent religious faith." [1]

Doubt arises when ritual or theory appears to fail. In the simplest instance when the peasant who has reverenced a tree as possessing divine and deadly powers finds himself unharmed within its sphere of influence he concludes that the tree has

[1] Extract from a paper prepared for the New York Philosophical Club, and printed in the "International Journal of Ethics," April, 1902.

lost its divinity. Possibly, when more intelligent, he questions the theory and asks himself whether the tree ever contained supernatural presences and occult powers. By and by he accepts the denial and rejects all trees, then all inanimate objects, and finally all finite things as the abodes of gods. When thus belief at the command of reason surrenders its immediate objects religion itself seems destroyed, but it only retreats to some more inaccessible stronghold, whence it resumes its sway, for it cannot be banished from the world since it belongs to the nature of man. Thus the rejection of particular beliefs may come from two causes, — the values suggested not being obtained, or the theory set forth as explanation being doubted. Men come to test their beliefs critically, to submit them to the judgment of others, and to hold them more tenaciously than before or to give them up.

The fundamental fact is the experience itself. When one has it he relates it to his neighbor, who probably accepts it, since belief is easy, for "all men yearn after the gods." But a single experience does not suffice, and belief on testimony excites desires for a first-hand acquaintance with the facts. So the experience is repeated and "the practice of the Presence of God" grows up, by which

truth is verified and the religious sense is gratified. Ritual, temple, grove, mysterious light revive the feelings of awe and reverence, and of some invisible but dimly tangible presence. Prolonged devotions and concentration of mind, with ascetic deprivations, make apparitions real, and reliance upon a Divine power stimulates the marking of coincidences. This art of religion is fitted to its theory, and revives and verifies its experience. But the three, theory, art, and experience do not exactly correspond. The theory is often an afterthought, the attempted explanation of the experience, and neither represents nor explains it exactly. So too it often comes to include far more than the experience contains, because of the system-building tendencies of man. Gathering to itself much which in origin is quite foreign to religion in any phase, it works on its formulæ until at last the intellectual acceptance of the system becomes the important matter, and the experience is distrusted as enthusiasm or mysticism, and a cold intellectual belief is substituted for religion. Such systems cannot be true, for they neither express the experience itself, nor are they the outcome of a really careful study of the facts, but they are composed of loosely attached facts, theories, and fan-

cies of heterogeneous origin. The end is paradox, which cannot be explained nor understood, and faith becomes its acceptance in spite of the protest of the reason. An apologetics then is formed which perhaps emphasizes the incomprehensibility of the doctrine, or labors by various expedients to explain away the most obvious difficulties, or turns back to authority and asserts that the critic should accept the teaching of the greater men who formulated the doctrine.

Or the ritual may be so elaborated and made sacred that its performance is the chief thing, giving us an empty ceremonialism, as the other gives an empty faith. Sometimes too, in highly developed and self-conscious forms of religion, the attempt is made to force an experience in accordance with the developed doctrine, with results which are artificial to a high degree. But in all these instances there is wide departure from the normal religious type, in which the living experience is its own evidence.

As this evidence is found in all religions which are alive, it cannot be the exclusive proof of any. In apocalyptic the things of sense mediate the things of the spirit, the visions of saints conform to the earthly environment, and the angels and

heavens of Chinaman and European differ as do their worldly habitations and experiences. Thus, while the visions of things normally invisible seem conclusive to the believer, they have no further authority, — else would Buddhist, Christian, and Hindu all have claims to the reality of the worlds disclosed, but one hardly can suppose the heavenly world divided according to the manners and customs and political divisions of present living humanity. So apocalyptic cannot be appealed to as proof, since it is common to many forms of religion and varies with each, though an argument has been suggested from the phenomena as a whole as showing a realm variously interpreted according to the individual's surroundings and culture. Such an experience could be proved only were it verified by experiment and open to tests by all.

But when subjective experience is of a higher nature, when the experience does not express itself in tales of visions and marvels, but in words which testify of ecstasy or of profound emotional satisfaction and happiness, it is intelligible even only to those who participate in a like experience, and it finds its parallel in widely differing faiths, so that it too cannot be urged as definite and particular proof of any. It is like the music of Asiatic and

of European, each satisfied with his own appeals to it, without convincing the other. Were there such an experience open to all, and acknowledged by all, then it would have as high a degree of proof as belongs to any subjective state, and its reference to an outer order or reality as source would be the task of philosophical theology, but not of apologetics. Religious experience, in this sense, may well, then, give rise to a theology, but it cannot be urged as primary religious proof.

For the most part religions do not seek universal proof. They are content with the testimony of their own circle of adherents. Indeed, even if the claims be universal, men are content with the testimony of some little community, and substitute the testimony of family, village, nation, or church for that of all mankind. In the varied relations of life this question of universal validity seldom arises. But a few religions, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity force attention to their claim to be absolutely and exclusively true. How shall such claims be tested, or how shall one religion prove its truth to the believers in the others? Buddhist and Christian both claim a profound and present salvation, a peace which passeth understanding, which satisfies the deepest longings of the soul.

But the Christian leads us to God the Father of spirits and to Jesus Christ his Son, while the Buddhist denies God and proclaims an abstract "law" as the ultimate truth and reality. Each claims certainty in his immediate experience, and the experience of each is inaccessible to the other. Were either experience to become universal, so that all who submit themselves to religious conditions should know it, proof could be claimed; but it would be needless, as no rival would combat its pretensions. So it is in isolated communities, but in the modern world all communities mingle and the question seeks its answer. An absolute worth estimate is found, in music, art, or religion, when none disputes it, — *securus judicat orbis terrarum*, a universal experience yielding universal consent. Meanwhile to the individual his own experience may be decisive. If vivid and original he does not wait for common consent, but sets himself to create it. He becomes the preacher and prophet, and by and by men who cannot verify his experience will yet die for his doctrine. But when men are content to accept doctrine at second-hand, without a personal experience, their religion is considered debased and unreal; and this is as true in Confucianism and Buddhism

as in Christianity. It is in vain that one believes that God spake unto Moses and the prophets if himself insensible to the Divine presence and gifts. The teachings of the inspired men of the past may be regarded, indeed, as the necessary means of access to him, but the fact of present access is fundamental. When, therefore, the evidence for a religion is put chiefly in the past, it is the sign that the faith is dying. So certain forms of Buddhism confess that in the evil present there is no attainment, but only the word of the Law without power. The apologetics which puts historic evidence as to miracles in the chief place belongs to this class,[1] for the appeal is to a display of power which long since ceased, and to a supernaturalism which no longer submits to tests. To the unbeliever who asks for proofs, the claim of supernatural enlightenment for Gautama, or of superhuman discernment for Confucius, or of a heavenly origin for the Koran, adds nothing to the strength of the case for these religions. Since the supernatural wonder in all the instances alike has ceased, the fundamental proofs can be found only

[1] Paley and his school reduce the special contents of the Christian religion to the lowest possible terms. Compare him with a Wesley, who finds the chief proofs in a living experience.

in the contents of the teaching, and not in arguments as to its source. And if there be transcendental doctrines in the books these cannot be proved in any true sense, but depend upon the plain matters of fact, the truths which can be verified by experiment and can be tested by all. Thus, if the essential truth of any religion is found in some teaching which takes one wholly outside of experience, such a teaching cannot be the object of apologetic reasoning, for this confines itself to teachings which can be verified.

Hence in the doctrines of any religion it is not the mysteries but the plain truths which submit themselves to proof and are determinative. The religion is determined by its doctrine of God no doubt, but not of God as incomprehensible or mysterious, but of him as presented to the reason. For in advanced stages of culture religion is the worship of that which is best and highest. If, therefore, God be described unworthily it is impossible to worship him, and men refuse to call him God who is unrighteous or unwise or untrue. The teachings of most religions we reject at once without serious examination. They affront our intelligence, or our taste, or our moral sense. If they offer, none the less, prodigies of power as

proof we turn away indifferent or contemptuous. In this the religious test does not differ from the scientific. The specialist will not concern himself with proofs for theories which are absurd upon their face, however earnest and sincere their advocates may be, and however large the array of so-called evidence in their favor.

In religion so strongly is this felt that men of the highest religious attainment have often been described as atheists, because they begin with emphatic denial of the popular symbols and teachings. Sometimes, by men of high reflective power, this process continues to the end. Thus in the "Greater Vehicle" Buddha is the symbol of a reality higher than the gods, and of a salvation compared with which residence in heaven for a great *kalpa*[1] is not to be desired. The supreme deity of the Hindu is so exalted that it can be described only by denying all which we should account best, — not wise, not good, not loving, for these, the highest attributes man can think, are unworthy to describe that which passes all limitations of word and thought.

The highest men can think varies. For the

[1] A *kalpa* is a period of prodigious length — just short of limitless.

most part man is a realist, and he ascends by visible steps from nature to nature's God, taking man and nature and God in a simple sense and a child-like way, so that the highest is still commensurate with himself and may be described in like terms. But to philosophers such descriptions seem unreal and unworthy. What the plain man worships as noblest seems too imperfect and limited and petty, while to the plain man the Absolute of the philosopher seems vague and unreal in its turn, unsatisfying to mind and heart. Man varies thus in his worth estimates in all departments of life, in his art and music and politics and civilization and ethics, as in religion. So many religions meet, seemingly, so fully the needs of such multitudes of men, how amid them all shall we speak of the direct and fundamental proofs of any one?

But we need not stop with so dismal an outlook. It is not every one's judgment of values which has claims upon our attention. Music in its rudest forms has its place in savage life, but we do not therefore surrender our judgment that the symphony is better and higher. Religion normally renders man free from fear, and makes it possible for him to do his work in the world. Even the religion of the savage accomplishes this

in its imperfect way. He thinks himself surrounded by demons, which are the imaginary causes of real dangers from which he cannot flee, but in spite of which life becomes possible in the belief that the demons may be propitiated. Though his religion fosters the very fears it would dispel, yet is it essentially a way of salvation. Man in his lowest condition finds religious faith essential, but so is it at the highest stage of his development. He must have some faith which rids him of fear and makes life worth living and work worth doing; and even he who insists that science only shall be his creed believes that truth can be discovered, and that being discovered it shall prove to be better than all which we now know. As the scientific seeker after truth disdains none of man's honest efforts after truth, no matter how mistaken they have proved to be, and though he acknowledges that his own attempts are subject to future revision and even contradiction, yet does not conclude that therefore all science is vain and that there is no standard by which his truth may be shown to be superior to the fancies of the past which were held with an equal tenacity, so the religious man may feel deepest sympathy with the beliefs of the past, with man's blind gropings

after God, and yet hold fast the faith of the present as manifestly higher and truer, while admitting that still he knows in part and prophesies in part, and that by and by, when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. His highest and best is represented by his religion, and his underlying faith is that the full truth shall be better than his best. What he now knows he holds as true, but as only an instalment of the truth. He has too the same conviction which moves the scientist, that this which appeals to himself as true shall be accepted as true by all men if only they can be got to see it.

But the scientist appeals not only to the persuasive nature of his truth, its self-evidencing character, but to the order of established facts. In like fashion does religion in its higher forms turn to outward facts for proofs. It does not remain a bare emotion or an unutterable rapture, but it embodies itself in deeds. It reveals itself and finds expression in architecture and ritual and worship, and in morals and the whole conduct of life. What should be our conduct towards the gods is a question which arises long after religion has expressed man's instinctive behavior towards them. To worship, to pray, to praise, to offer

gifts are instinctive expressions of the religious emotions. And the expression corresponds to the nature of the god: if he be mysterious we shall wonder and adore; if he be cruel we shall send our children through the fire or offer up our daughter in return for his aid; if he be licentious his cult shall minister to our passions; if he love beauty we shall adorn his sanctuary; if he be holy we shall enter his presence with clean hands and a pure heart. Thus religion necessitates a code of morals, it may be only towards the deity, or it may be also towards man.

If its code has to do chiefly with worship its test can be only in its efficiency in producing the emotions it is designed to stimulate. But if it include, and especially if it make foremost, duty towards our fellows, then it offers itself to a test which may appeal even to those who have not the experience and do not believe in the theology. Like other worth estimates which have to do with society, the question is, does it work? This is a proof not far away in heaven nor deep in the heart of the individual man, but nigh at hand and, like all other theories which have to do with practical life, subject to simple and decisive tests.

Thus religion offers itself to be proved. As

religion it says, "Test me and find in me the satisfaction of your needs." As ethics it says, "Judge me by my fruits." The first test is only for those who feel the need of religion; the second offers itself to all.

If the religion in question claim universality a comparative proof must be offered that it best satisfies man's needs and works most perfectly in all the varied relationships of all the varied societies of men. It is not possible to speak strictly of proof. The universal judgment is of faith, and the reason must be content, as in all science, with judgments which admittedly are relative and partial.

To sum up: Religion belongs to man. It is his instinctive recognition of a reality invisible and intangible, though mediated by the things of sense. Its substance is communion with God, hence an art of religion is formed, the "practice of the Presence of God." But the art is imperfect and the result is seldom pure, for the feeling of worship unites with other feelings, attaches itself to wrong concepts, and the religion becomes debased, immoral, and an obstacle to man's development. Men come to doubt it and to renounce it in the name of righteousness. Religion

is variously explained and the theory of religion, theology, is developed. It is in part a traditional explanation of the facts, in part a syncretic absorption of current philosophy and science, in part the direct attempt to explain and justify the phenomena. When the world-view changes it too is doubted, perhaps because of its adventitious elements, perhaps because of its real substance; for men outgrow religions as they outgrow philosophies. Higher ideals assert themselves, higher standards are set up, and men put away childish things. Were such development uniform conflict would not arise, for the process would be natural and harmonious; but neither in the community nor in the individual is progress uniform, so that conflict arises not only between parties but in ourselves as the new struggles with the old. The decision is found in the twofold judgment as to the highest in ourselves and the highest in the community of men. Which religion most truly satisfies the religious needs, and which justifies itself in conduct? An historic illustration chosen from the Far East and free from our own prejudices, presuppositions, and faith will make the process clear.

V

THE CONFLICT OF RELIGIONS AN INSTANCE

RELIGIONS of an advanced type claim religious attainment, control over the lives of men, and absolute truth. Necessarily conflict ensues when such faiths come in contact. With many elements in common each has its distinguishing characteristic, and this characteristic is tested in a struggle for supremacy.

Religions may be divided into tribal and personal religions, or into natural and ethical religions, which gives us the same line of cleavage. The division is not scientific, but it answers our purpose.

Personal or ethical religions go back historically to individuals as their founders, and they magnify the ethical element as essential. Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, and Islam present themselves at once as illustrations. Each begins with a great personage, each makes morality characteristic of

the way of salvation, and each claims particular and exclusive authority for its sacred books.

Of course there are differences: Judaism and Islam, for example, proclaim their teachings as from God, with the prophet as his messenger. Buddhism learns its way from the Enlightened One, who by long struggles has arrived at a knowledge of the truth, and Confucianism embodies the fundamental laws of the universe which were perceived intuitively and without conscious effort by the sages. None the less, the Sacred Books of China have acquired an authority in no degree less absolute than the authority of the Koran in Islam.

Nature worships grow up, seemingly, unconsciously, and are the naïve expression of a common tradition and experience. But personal religions first exist as ideals in the minds of individuals, and are expressed in sermons, in teachings, in definite and intelligible doctrines, and seek consciously and directly to control and shape the life. So they are pre-eminently ethical religions, since ethical conduct is action in accordance with ideals.

These religions agree in setting forth a conscious experience as their immediate end. In nature religions man is religious as matter of course, and

accepts the common faith as he accepts the common traditions and customs unthinkingly. But the ethical religions begin as a protest and a challenge, setting forth new ideals as better than the common tradition. The natural man clings to the old and rejects the new, but the awakened man is born again, accepts the new ideal, sees all things from his new point of view, and lives a new life. His experience testifies that the new is the highest reality.

Even when the religion becomes itself traditional it cannot forget its origin. It still sets forth its ideal, giving large place to preaching; it still seeks to win adherents, and it still distinguishes between the natural man and the twice born, between the outward worshipper and the true believer; for it has its attainment to be won, a peace which passeth understanding, and a victory over the world and fear and death. This attainment is mediated by the fundamental teachings of each system and by its historical and physical environment.

Each religion forms its own systems of metaphysics, the theoretical explanation of its phenomena, and each becomes mingled with a cosmogony representing the views of the world current when

it was founded, or acquired during its history. Each develops an apologetics as it comes in contact with rival faiths, and our immediate interest is in the arguments which offer the direct and fundamental proofs.

An interesting illustration is found in the conflict between Confucianism and Buddhism in China and Japan, a typical instance decided upon its merits after long contact and discussion.

Confucius (b. 550 B. C., *circa*) claimed to be not an originator but a transmitter, yet the system known by his name is rightly traced to him. He edited and passed on the literary remains of antiquity, but his own sayings and not the "classics" have attained decisive authority.

For six centuries before his birth a single dynasty had ruled China, and there are indications that even before the twelfth century B.C. the same general forms of civilization and of culture had prevailed. In any case Confucius supposed these social forms identical with those established in the earliest times by the mythical Sage Kings and with the unchanging laws of the universe itself. Nor was he forced to any other conclusion by contact with alien civilization, for beyond China he knew only an outer fringe of barbarians.

But in his day the order of the past was disturbed with feudal strife and widespread immorality. Thus arose his activity, from veneration for the order of ancient days and distress over the confusion of the present.

Confucius left nothing of moment in writing, but his sayings were collected in a haphazard fashion by his disciples and were interspersed with anecdotes of his deeds and manners. From this volume, the Analects, we learn the substance of his message.

It was very simple: "Return to the right line." The principle of heaven and earth, of empire, family, society, and of the individual is order. Let prince be prince, and servant be servant: let father be father, and son be son: let the wise rule and teach, and let the stupid obey and listen. This is fundamental.

Society is organized in five orders, with five relationships and five corresponding duties. And the individual has five relationships, with five corresponding virtues. The individual may begin with himself, and ruling his own life go on to govern others — the family, the province, and finally the empire. Or we may consider the State as a whole, and setting forth its order find every

man his rightful place and assign to him his duties. The entire conception is social; there can be no solitary virtue, for virtue is essentially to stand in one's place and perform its duties. There can be nothing higher or nobler, for the place is greater and more permanent and more necessary than the individual who fills it. Indeed he exists for it and out of place he is nothing, fit neither for society in any of its relations nor even for the waste pile. He is strictly outcast, without further duty or relationship. Sometimes man through no fault of his own cannot fulfil these duties, and suicide is the only resource, since existence apart from one's position is undesirable and non-ethical. So, too, individual immortality has no place in this teaching, and the question is left wholly undetermined.

The principle is illustrated and enforced by the great importance attached to ceremonies. Ritual is as important as ethics, as always happens when order is given chief place, — for example, in the army, where form is almost equal to substance, disorder ranking with the major sins. So that the extreme punctiliousness of Confucianism is the natural expression of its organizing principle.

The nature of supernatural beings is left unde-

cided. The conservatism of Confucius forced a recognition of the nature gods of an earlier time, but they were kept at a distance. Not even the Supreme Ruler has any active share in the government of the universe. For as man is made a part of the great machine, and his only normal activity is in accordance with its laws, all other free activity is of evil, and naturally the kosmos does not need the personal interference of the gods, but runs its own course from everlasting to everlasting.

Nevertheless, Confucianism is a religion, for it identifies its teachings with the eternal and invisible verities, and its morality is touched with religious emotion. Heaven becomes the visible representative of the invisible system of the universe, and takes the place of Providence. It rewards, it punishes, it protects, and it destroys. As the Chinese State is identified with humanity, in all China's affliction Heaven is afflicted, and with all its misfortunes it grieves. The universe is by no means dead, for it is filled with a common life, and part responds to part, and whole to part. Its symbol is not matter, in the common sense, but the acting, feeling, thinking life of man. The analogue is not agnosticism nor materialism nor positivism, but Stoicism.

But Confucianism was not to become dominant at once nor without additions. Already in its infancy Laotsu taught his mystical paradoxes, and many another system sought pre-eminence. In the days of the grandson of Confucius one detects a difference, for the influence of Taoism especially was felt, and the ethical "Way" of the Master was in the process of reification, becoming a mysterious and transcendental Power. In Mencius the tendency was still more marked as he struggled to maintain the standard against an opposing host. A process was begun which could terminate only when a complete philosophy and religion should satisfy all the intellectual needs of men not contented with the practical directions of him they called "Master." And it is in accordance with all we know of the growth of doctrine that later thinkers identified their own speculations with the books they acknowledged as supreme.

But before the process was complete Buddhism entered China. It was the Buddhism of the Great Vehicle, far removed from the simplicity of Gautama's institute. It had elaborate temples and rituals and orders of priests and nuns; prayers and chants and magic formulæ; ascetic practices

for the few and compromises for the many; heaven for the virtuous, hell for the wicked; gods, angels, saints, and martyrs; activities, mysticism, fables, systems of doctrines; realism for the vulgar, idealism for the learned; it was all things to all men, and by all means won many. Later, in Japan, it had militant priests, sectarian persecutions, and fierce participations in feudal warfare. Yet with its many transformations it remained in some essentials true to type, insisting upon the impermanence of all things and their woe. This series of systems took possession of China, and later of Japan. An artistic and literary development followed, great religious establishments were set up, monarchs abdicated and became priests, and civilization was luxurious and corrupt. Buddhism and Confucianism for a thousand years existed side by side, or even were commingled in an uncritical and unequal fashion.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. came the break in China, postponed for some centuries in Japan by the dark ages caused by feudal strife. Great Chinese scholars trained in Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism brought on the conflict in which the issue was settled once for all. Buddhism became the religion of the dependent and of

the ignorant, and Confucianism the completed philosophical system which has satisfied educated men in China, Korea, and Japan. Only in our own day is the orthodox Confucian system seriously challenged by our western science, philosophy, and religion. Buddhism was rejected on various grounds by Confucian writers: —

1st. It denied men their own nature, setting up a standard which is unnatural. For example, it denied marriage, and as a result there were gross and unnatural vices. In accordance with it the Buddhist literature is foul, and compares with the Confucian as charcoal to snow. Confucianism accords with nature, exalts marriage and the family, thus promoting virtue.

2d. Nor is this superficial criticism. Buddhism denying the order of society would destroy it. It praises its founder, who, born a king, become husband and father, forsook his aged parents, his wife, his child, and his throne, that in the wilderness he might seek salvation. This is the height of immorality, the denial of nature. Its purpose was good no doubt, but it implies a complete misunderstanding. For what contamination is there in kingly robes, or what virtue in the ascetic's garb? Virtue there may be in both, or vice, for

virtue consists in standing in one's place and performing its duties.

3d. Buddha was only mistaken, though well intentioned, but his disciples mistook his purpose and in search of salvation betook themselves to monasteries and retreats and laid down the responsibilities of life. A more terrible illustration of thorough selfishness cannot be found. Neglecting the natural relationships they expect to win heaven, and come to believe, at last, that even a parricide can be saved through religious duties and formulæ. Thus Buddhism is a false light, alluring men to death. It puts good for evil and evil for good, and comes not to save, but to destroy.

4th. The theory on which Buddhism builds is a perverted half-truth, that nothing abides, but that all things pass away. Its natural result is to make men think that nothing matters much, but that they may do as they please. The neglected truth is that while phenomena pass away the principles, the laws of the universe abide. They are from everlasting to everlasting, from chaos to kosmos, and in the whole great process back to chaos again. They are in heaven, earth, and man, and constitute the reality of all things. To know them is the

way to peace, and to fulfil them is the chief end of man. To neglect them is to make virtue as impermanent as the clouds and to destroy at once the basis of morality and its practice.

5th. To the end Buddhism is true to its essentially immoral nature. It speaks of an attainment and finds this through asceticism or through mental contemplation, but this contemplation terminates in itself. It is a mere understanding of principles which have no existence save in our own minds. As in the rest of its teaching Buddhism has a part of the truth. The highest bliss is found through contemplation, and attainment is the perception of one's identity with the underlying principle of the universe, but this principle is not an empty thought or a passive idea, but it is really understood as we fulfil the duties of our station. For the principle which is to be perceived is an all-embracing order, and neither a mystic feeling nor a mere idea. So when I recognize myself as something quite other than this fleeting consciousness, my willing, feeling, knowing self, and identify my true self with my position in the kosmos, and my true life with a fulfilment of its duties, then I have attained true knowledge. But manifestly, if I do not thus

know through the exercise of these duties in the actual relationships of life, I know nothing as I ought to know. Thus the Confucianist could agree with the Buddhist in declaring the impermanence of all things, including what men mean by their selves, but he differed in proclaiming the eternity of principles, which in the actual human society find expression in the virtues which are exercised in the five relationships. We might sum up the difference by saying that the Buddhist ideal is the contemplative ascetic, who has severed every human tie and has entered into a bliss which cannot be disturbed, because it is passionless, and that the Confucian ideal is the philosophic statesman, who has an understanding of the theory of the universe, and uses it as furnishing the complete reason why he should esteem duty to the State in its strictest and severest terms as his own chief end. The contemplative Buddhist counsels men to flee the world, but the Confucianist teaches that we are to purify and reform it.

Buddhism made, neither in China nor in Japan, any effective resistance, and philosophic Confucianism became in time the authorized and established doctrine, the only doctrine recognized by the government, and in Japan taught in the great

schools. But even in its hour of triumph, while the great Chu Hi[1] still lived, opponents arose within Confucianism itself.

Two of these schools are of especial importance: the first denied the orthodox ontological realism in the interest of a thorough-going idealism, and the second denied it in the interest of a merely practical following of the Confucian ethics. The first was more metaphysical than orthodoxy, and declared that each is to follow the dictates of his own intuitive knowledge, making thus his own nature supreme; the second thought that the orthodox overlaid the plain, practical precepts of the sage with a far-away, misty philosophy, so that its understanding became the chief thing, and the ordinary virtues of ordinary folks secondary. Its watchword was, "Back to Confucius himself, so that reading him not through the eyes of commentators and system-makers, we may see him in his own true light."

It does not belong to our plan to do more than point out these varying schools without entering upon their merits. The three, orthodox, idealist, and positivist, are all true to fundamental Confu-

[1] Chu Hi, b. 1130, d. 1200 A.D. His exposition of Confucianism and his philosophy constitute still the test of "orthodoxy" in China.

cian teaching, though they differ in the way in which it is developed and in fidelity to its purity. But from the point of view of comparative philosophy it is apparent that the three schools wherein they differ are not characteristic of Confucianism, but are representative of permanent differences in men. In all lands and among all races where speculation has reached a certain height, we find the three groups. Some thinkers can find a reasoned basis for life only in an ontology, and identify the truth with this foundation and regard the men who deny the foundation as denying the truth. So the orthodox school insists that it is only by considering these principles or laws as real beings, as the most real of all beings, as being itself, as the fundamental cause why things exist, that we can be true to the principles of obedience, loyalty, righteousness, and affection which are found in actual society.

So, too, there are men who are not satisfied with dualistic realism, and are determined to make all things pure phenomena, with the mind as the fundamental reality, and who yet are as ready as the orthodox to accept the practical morality of the world in which they live. And finally, there are men who, weary of these discussions and impa-

tient of these foundations of morality, which after all can afford no certain ground, push them aside and insist that conduct is the chief thing, and that if we are to have a morality which shall really reform and purify society, we are to put it in the fore-front and hand over metaphysics and ontology to the priests, recluses, and ascetics from whom they come.

It follows, therefore, that Confucianism does not stand or fall with the peculiar tenets of any one of these schools. Buddhism, too, has like differences, though the insistence upon a plain, practical morality is not so prominent. But it has its solipsists, and its cosmological idealists, and its worshippers of one Buddha, and its worshippers of many Buddhas, and its worshippers of no Buddha. In both systems alike, through long periods of time, with all the vast variety of culture, education, and surroundings, with the differences in men which are temperamental, it is inevitable that such schools should arise and such wide diversities manifest themselves. But, also, it is apparent that the conflict between the two is not to be settled by an appeal to these peculiarities, which belong to our common nature and not to either system exclusively, but to the real differences

which everywhere make Confucianist to differ from Buddhist.

In the conflicts between the differing Confucianist schools the charge of syncretism is freely urged against the orthodox. Their antagonists are never weary of charging them with incorporating Buddhist and Taoist elements. The charge is doubtless true. The long contact of a thousand years with Buddhism left its deep impressions on the Chinese mind. But from the apologetic point of view the charge is beside the mark. It belongs to the systematic doctrinal strife of the schools. There is no canon of truth which demands that any teaching remain uninfluenced by its surroundings. It is apparent that Confucianism won its decisive triumph when the scholastics of the eleventh century provided it with a thoroughgoing philosophy, and whether that philosophy is implied by Confucius or is read into his teachings is unimportant. The question of the historicity of the writings attributed to Confucius, and even of his own historicity, if fully answered, settles nothing. For the student who comes to the topic with an open mind the system offers itself as it is, and must stand or fall by itself, without aid or loss from the criticism which attacks the history and the original documents.

The final system is as we find it, a great attempt by men of vast learning and of keen minds to systematize the universe and to explain it all on their principles. Cosmology, ontology, history, natural science, even the arts of medicine, etiquette, and war are embraced in it. It comes to surround the minds of men as an intellectual atmosphere. It is identified with the teachings of the sages and with the eternal principles of Heaven and Earth. It appropriates the treasures of alien systems, and it employs a terminology admittedly foreign to the Sacred Books. It has its differing schools, and its endless disputes over the finer points of doctrine and exegesis.

It claims identity with the teachings of the Master, but it admits that he did not use its terms. But what he taught implicitly it proclaims explicitly. Were he to return to the earth he would recognize his successors and adopt their forms of exposition as his own. Thus, ultimately, the great commentaries explain Confucius' words in the sense maintained by Chu Hi, and the latter becomes the real authority. It is his ontology which is identified with the eternal truth.

But Confucianism, as matter of fact, cannot be overturned by attacks upon the teachings of the

scholastics of the twelfth century A. D. Whether they are correct in claiming a legitimate development of his teaching, and that he implied their ontology, or whether Buddhism and Taoism are read into his words as the Ancient Learning School charge, the fact remains that Confucianism existed for fifteen centuries before Chu Hi, and that men who reject his explanations and his theories are as loyal to Confucius as are his followers. We can at least clearly separate the two, the teachings of Confucius and the teachings of Chu Hi, and we can test each by itself. In the actual conflict with Buddhism, as matter of fact, this was done, and therefore the conflict was on the right ground.

Is the world good or evil? Good, says Confucius; evil, says Buddha. What is our supreme duty? To stand in our lot and fulfil its duties, says the Confucianist; to flee the world and to sever its ties, says the Buddhist. Follow me, says the one, and the well-ordered empire existing in peace shall minister to the happiness of man. Follow me, says the other, and breaking all ties and destroying all passions, and making all things as if they were not, you shall find a perfect peace which can never be destroyed.

This was the question between the two, and the

answer could not be doubtful. For China to accept Buddhism seriously was to renounce its future as its past; but to hold fast to the teachings of the sages was to maintain the ideals which only could insure the prosperity and perpetuity of the Confucian State.

The Buddhist could appeal to the disillusioned few, to whom contemplation and empty idleness seemed worthy ideals, but Confucianism appealed to son, father, friend, neighbor, servant, master, statesman, emperor, to all who valued the relationships of life, to all who had work to do, and to all who felt the stoic passion for a virtue which is more precious than life.

Thus Confucianism won its victory through the sense of right in man, — that is, in the Chinaman, and in the other Far-Easterns. The Confucian empire, society, and family existing long before Buddhism entered the empire, and even for centuries before Confucius lived, Chinamen found complete satisfaction in this ancient model, as they still find it, since it embodies the fundamental and controlling ideas of the race, ideas which are today as they ever have been, ideas which are not the offspring of the doctrine, but its source. Chinese history is didactic and facts are of minor

importance, yet it truly asserts that the peace and prosperity of the State have been bound up in this religion, and that a long line of historic facts can be adduced in its favor. So that to the educated Chinaman to-day the decadence of Confucian teachings and morality means the dissolution of society.

Thus does Confucianism embody the immemorial customs of a race which loves antiquity. It sets forth an ideal which satisfies the desires of the people, and embodies the ideal in a great historic character and in a long list of statesmen, philosophers, and scholars who were formed upon his model. It is taught to all, and is taken as indisputable truth in all literature. It is final law in courts of justice, and forms the fundamental constitution of the State. All knowledge has come to be embraced within its sweep, and it satisfies the eager minds of men with its philosophy, and cosmology, and literature. To the graduate it embodies the fundamental truths of nature, and to the multitude no other teaching is desirable or even possible. Itself, thus satisfying the minds of men and embodying itself in their conduct, is its own direct and fundamental proof.

The truth of Confucianism is, therefore, its con-

formity to the facts, its conformity to society, as it has developed during the long isolation of the Chinese people. It can be successfully attacked only as the ideal it embodies is replaced by some nobler ideal, which shall lead the race to a higher civilization and a more worthy life. Buddhism made its attempt and failed, because its ideal did not appeal to the people, and because it was not true to the facts. All the rest is secondary. As we have pointed out, the system does not depend upon its metaphysics, for the latter is only its ontological explanation. It does not depend upon its cosmology, for this is only the current ideas of science brought together and interpreted in accordance with the demands of Chinese system-makers. It is not one with its interpretations of history, nor even with the identification of its teachings with the words of the Master, for its precepts have validity only as they are true to the social condition which they attempt to embody, and that remaining the same the question as to the authenticity of the words ascribed to Confucius is of secondary consequence. Were Confucianism to be destroyed simply by attacks upon the historicity and authenticity of its documentary sources, or upon its cosmogony and ontology the result

would be only anarchy. For men, religious by nature, lacking some new system would relapse into a tangle of superstitions and vain imaginings. Only by some ideal more elevating and some truth which embraces a larger range of facts, can the conflict of religions terminate in a victory which shall be beneficial and worthy of the efforts of self-denying and reasoning men. For, favorable as may be our judgment of Confucianism, we cannot regard it as final. It leaves us uninterested and cold; for the civilization which it represents, and with which it stands or falls, on the whole is repulsive to the Western mind, and its adaptation to China explains why that empire remains unattractive and unconvincing. The ideals of the twelfth century B. C. in China cannot be the ideal for humanity in the twentieth century A. D. Indeed, in our day, the salvation of Japan is in the fact that it has turned away from this system which for centuries appeared to contain the final truth, and the difference between the present position of the two empires is expressed in the statement that China learns no new truth and aspires to no higher standard, while Japan has adopted in part the ideals and standards of modern times.

VI

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

OVER against the East is the Christian West, and these two are no longer in separation, but in the most vital relationship. Let us attempt to study the problems of Christianity as we discussed Confucianism, for only in the light of impartial studies can we hope to find truth.

Multitudes of sects profess the Christian faith, and its definitions are as varied as those who profess it. No general agreement can be found as to its nature, its essential teaching, or its history. The enumeration of its differing definitions and their discussion would require volumes, for the divergences, many and great, are to be paralleled only by the innumerable sects of Buddhism.

But as in Confucianism, so here, we are not concerned with the truth of Christianity as set forth by any particular sect or school, or as embodied in any systematic set of doctrines, for this belongs to the disciplines of historical and of systematic

theology. Nor are we to maintain the identity of pure Christianity with any of its forms, either primitive or derived. But we are to ask for a distinguishing feature which shall be recognized by all, and which belongs indisputably to it. Thus, if any one differs from us, and thinks we have not adequately defined Christianity, nor set forth all which is essential to it, we shall have no quarrel with him, for we differ only with those who dispute this feature as essential.

It is the commonplace of our day to emphasize "love" as this characteristic, and the commonness of the assertion calls attention to the fact that while Christianity includes much more, and though other elements have been often predominant, still in some degree at least the love of God to man, the love of man to God, and the love of man to man belong to our religion as all forms of Buddhism proclaim the transitoriness of the world, and as every school of Confucianism teaches the principle of order as embodied in a social code.

Christ's teaching is sometimes summed up in the phrases "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," and though his teaching includes much more, it certainly puts emphasis on this as characteristic and essential. Not only is

"Father" his habitual term for God, not only does he use the family names in indicating those who are one with him, but he bases our salvation from sin and care, the forgiveness of our sins, and our right attitude towards our fellow-men upon this aspect of God's nature. The synoptic Gospels, in their reports of the words of Jesus, show him finding the solution of all problems in the Fatherhood of God as the Analects show us Confucius finding the solution of his problems in the maintenance of a conservative social order; for with Jesus the family indicates the true social conception of the kingdom of God. The Johannine writings, in accordance with their more self-conscious and didactic character set forth the same truth, teaching that Christ is the manifestation of God who is love, and that we know him through the Spirit, who interprets Christ to us. Only as we are born of the same Spirit and love our fellows, can we know truth, that is, God. Nor is it otherwise with Paul, who, notwithstanding his emphasis upon faith as our attitude towards God, yet makes love, our attitude towards men, the greatest thing in the world. The source of redemption is God's love to man, the Divine righteousness being grace, God's love to sinners. The apostle embodied his teach-

ing in his own life, in his activity as the great missionary to the nations.

Even in its earliest documents Christianity has differing forms, yet in them all this truth, as we have indicated briefly, stands forth as characteristic. But when we ask, as men certainly must ask, for the metaphysical presuppositions and historical determinations of the manifestations of this love of God, we find wide divergences and differing explanations. It is not our purpose to discuss these divergent forms, but, as in Confucianism, merely to call attention to them, and to note that with the wide diversities of men in culture, temperament, and environment, such differences are inevitable.

We must define Christian love more closely. It is not the love of reciprocity, the affection we have naturally for those who are agreeable and kindly, for do not the publicans so? It is not a feeling of the presence of an ineffable Being, the love of mystical religion. It is not the intellectual apprehension of the Infinite, the pure intellectual love of a Spinoza. It is not dealing with our neighbors according to righteousness, for that is the law which Christianity at once fulfils and surpasses. But beyond all these, it leads us to render to our fellows that on

which they have no claim, and to give, looking for nothing in return. Its supreme manifestation is in returning good for evil, in loving our enemies.

So God deals with the sinner. It is not that we first loved him, but he commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly. It is when we are no more worthy to be called sons that our Father welcomes us with music and feasting and puts on us the best robe and ring. God's salvation, as Romanist and Protestant alike teach, is of grace, a free gift. Hence the condition of acceptance is the feeling of need, not necessarily of the need of forgiveness, but of God's gift. It is the sick and not the well who feel their need; the harlots and the publicans accept Christ's gift, for he came to call not the pious, but the outcasts. Self-complacency, self-sufficiency, and self-confidence hinder acceptance of his gifts. Thus humility and gratitude are the characteristic Christian virtues towards God. He gives, we receive; he loves, we are loved; he forgives, we have sinned. So complete is this relationship that all offerings to God cease, for he makes the only offering and the only sacrifice. All merit ceases, for at best we are unprofitable servants. He does not seek our worship,

nor our praise, nor our gifts, but only that we love our fellow-men as he has loved us, and serve them as he serves us.

Thus love to God is source of our love to our fellow-men, and yet, with the paradox of truth, love to our fellow-men is the interpretation of God's love to us, as we pray, Forgive as we have forgiven. God's love is primary source, and manifested in Jesus Christ wins our love to God. But such love is not perfect, it does not enter into the fulness of God's love, until we love our neighbors, even those who sin against us. Then first we truly know, as the child really knows its parents' love only when he becomes a parent. We cannot exercise pure, Christian, unrequited love towards God, but towards our fellows only. So that the Christian love finds its meaning, not in mystic ecstasy, nor in intellectual clearness of vision, but in our self-denying service of others. For according to the gospel, none can know forgiveness until he has forgiven, nor mercy until he has been merciful, nor grace until he has been gracious. So that the requisite to a true knowledge of God is a like mind in ourselves, for ethics and religion are the two aspects of a single experience.

Christian knowledge is not synonymous with

cosmological or critical or metaphysical or historical knowledge, though these be baptized into the Christian name. Notwithstanding the widest diversities in theoretical beliefs men have been equally Christian, for this experience accords with the varied speculations and activities of the various races and ages. In a sense it cannot be taught, for like all reality it must be experienced to be known, and this experience, we repeat, is realized in an ethical activity. Hence the art of the Christian religion is not the study of philosophy nor the performance of ritual, but service of our fellows, which only introduces us to the Christian God; for he who loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? As temple and ritual stimulate the feelings of awe and mystery in the presence of the God of an Infinite Majesty, so do mercy, forgiveness, self-denial, and service stimulate the feelings of gratitude and love towards him who is the God of self-sacrificing devotion, for such is the true "practice of the Presence of God."

The theoretical presuppositions of this love of God are not found in a metaphysical construction of his nature, though to many minds such a construction is necessary, nor in cosmological doc-

trines as to creation out of nothing, though such doctrines naturally suggest themselves, but in the thought that God's service to us is uncompelled, of choice, free will, and not even of the moral law. He had power to give and he had power to withhold is the *conditio sine qua non*. None compelled God to save. Of Christ it is written, no man took his life from him, he had power to keep it and power to lay it down.

So of the great apostle, he counted himself the servant of all, but was compelled by none. The supreme Christian sacrifice which is the symbol and complete expression of the principle is conceived as freely offered; it is not the death of the martyr who cannot escape, but the offering of the Christ who might escape. Thus the idea of power connects itself with the Christian religion, power to accomplish the purpose, and power to give or to withhold. This principle is embodied in the narratives of Gethsemane and the resurrection. Angels awaited Christ's word to deliver him, and the grave could not hold him. A weak, overpowered Christ could not be held as Saviour of men.

This Christian principle finds expression in all varieties of helpful conduct, no sphere being too

great or too small for its exercise. Its ideal is the fellowship of the sons of God, each giving as God gives, of his best. God gives that men may become his sons and that his mind may be in them, and that they may be perfect as he is perfect. So Christian love cannot find satisfaction in ministering merely to the bodies and to the intellectual needs of men, though, imitating its Lord, it will not undervalue these. St. Paul desired that Christ be formed in all, and that each possess the high gift which was his own. For the Christian desire for others is that they should have that which is highest to ourselves. To do unto others what we would that they should do to us involves no less than this.

Therefore Christianity cannot be a law. Not in form, for law protects in rights, but the Christian spirit does not claim protection, giving freely more than the neighbor seeks to take. It cannot be a law in substance, for no law can meet the endless needs of men, nor determine that which each possesses which is most worthy to be given to others, but Christian love in its manifestation is as varied as humanity. With the individual, in childhood, youth, manhood, and old age, it has differing standards, attainments, and ideals from year to year,

almost from day to day, and yet in all alike is Christian. So no method can be always obligatory, none excluded, and all may be used in turn, for as is the gift so shall the giving be. Hence love surpasses law, as it gives what no law can demand and for which no return can be demanded, as it differs with differing individuals and differing times, and as the form and method of its bestowal differ with the gift. Thus as it is free from particular cosmogonies and philosophies it is free from particular forms of philanthropy and methods of administration. These all it may freely use and fulfil, but itself is free from all and sovereign over all.

The Church in all its wide diversity has not forgotten the plain teachings of its Lord, though it has too often made them subordinate. In this common feeling at once of humble confidence in his love undeserved by us, and of desire for the service of fellow-man, we find the unity which we seek in vain in creed or organization or ritual. However mistaken in its expression of this truth, the Christian Church has esteemed God's favor undeserved, and it has held his gifts as a sacred trust for men. Not salvation for self only, but for others also, and this in the things which are essential and eternal, has been the thought which has

moved it to missionary activity.[1] Nor has it limited its labors to the souls of men, but has ministered to mind and body also. In many manners and with many means, differing with differing times and differing ideals, it has shown its oneness in such labors; and even in our day it is source of the greatest philanthropic movements, for it is only within the communities which have accepted the Christian ideal that strong, practical, and wide efforts for the upbuilding of men are found.

The Christian recognizes the Divine source of all true effort, but he holds, and this makes him historically a Christian, that its supreme revelation and source is in Jesus Christ. It is an historic fact that not Hinduism, nor Buddhism, nor Confucianism, nor Islam, but Christianity is source of the efforts for freedom, for a higher social life, and for the elevation of humanity which are transfiguring the world. Without undervaluing other religions or exalting his own at their expense, and recognizing that the supreme principle of Christianity is implicitly accepted by multitudes who do not acknowledge our Lord, none the less he

[1] It is true, however, that missionary activity has been caused sometimes by religious self-interest, the desire to acquire merit, and so far as this principle has influenced missions they have been, in spirit, un-Christian.

holds that the great movements which now seek definitely and purposefully to elevate mankind are Christian in source and environment.

This is not disproved by the further fact that the Church sometimes has been false to its trust and anti-Christian in practice. For, in the world and of it, the Church has yielded too often to other powers. Sometimes it has substituted, for example, an ascetic ideal for the Christian. The world truly may be best served in some times and places by asceticism, and when the motive is this service the result is Christian, since wisdom is justified of all her children, of John the Baptist as of the Son of man. But when asceticism in its proper form causes the religious man to withdraw from the world in search of some mystical feeling of devotion, or some apprehension of the Infinite, or some self-mortification which shall atone for his sin and shall render sure his entrance into Heaven, self-seeking, however subtle, is put in the place of service of our fellows, the distinctive mark is lost, and a Hindu, or Buddhist ideal is substituted for that of Christ.

So also when philosophical theology has usurped the chief place in the Church and the defining of truth has taken precedence of its practice, the

Church has been recreant to its Lord. It is true that the most punctilious regard for the minutiæ of doctrine, and the finest hair-splitting in the realm of theory may be consistent with the most earnest endeavor for the salvation of men. When one thus regards theory as supreme, when the truth in its exactness and completeness appears the presupposition for salvation, it becomes the chief duty of the theologian to follow error in all its intricate windings, and to defend against all attacks the fulness of the truth. The truest Christian spirit may be then consistent with a life-long devotion to the intricacies of critical scholarship and theological speculation. But when theology is set forth as the main thing, and intellectual agreement as the great object to be attained, when the consent of the mind to doctrine is exalted above the consent of the will to a service for life, then Christianity is surrendered, and instead of the life of the Divine Spirit is substituted the methods and the results of the schools.

Thus, too, once more, the extremest ritualism is consistent with the Christian life. Many a man gains his motive to a self-sacrificing life by a consistent and well-grounded acceptance of systematic truth, and others gain their impulse through æs-

thetic feelings cultivated by an ornate ritual and worship. None can doubt the directness of service rendered by many whose impulses have been stirred thus; but when worship terminates in itself, when form and ritual and architecture and organization are made supreme, and when the resulting emotion aroused by prayer, and psalm, and sacrament is thought to be religion, though the prayers be in Christ's name, and though all be offered to him before whom the worshipper bows, still is he denied, for he holds such worship as not entitling any one to fellowship with him. Thus the distinctively Christian character of such service is maintained by way of inclusion and of exclusion. Asceticism and ritualism and intellectualism are Christian if their end be the more perfect service of man and a truer self-surrender, but doctrine and ritual and ascetic self-sacrifice are as sounding brass or the tinkling cymbal if love be absent. Nor, remembering our Lord's words, can we refuse the Christian recognition to those who live the life of service, though they be not of the professed company of his disciples and are unaware that in serving men they are serving him.

As thus the Christian finds this principle at work in history through the instrumentality of the

Church, so does he find its supreme and perfect manifestation in Jesus of Nazareth. This manifestation is its own direct and fundamental proof, and it does not involve the miraculous conception and the resurrection of the body as its presuppositions. It was only to believers that the risen Lord appeared, and unless men see him full of grace and truth all acceptance of the testimony to the empty tomb is vain. To a Christian theology the miraculous conception and the resurrection are not the presuppositions and the proofs of Christ's divinity, but are deductions from it. Hence their consideration does not belong to apologetics, but to systematic theology. Christ has made the Divine love the essential attribute of God, so that the Christian God is the Father of all men, even of the unthankful and the guilty, and his perfect revelation can be only in forgiveness of enemies and in a service for humanity which endured all persecution and ignominy, even the death of the cross.

As Christ made the Fatherhood of God supreme in his teachings instead of his power and kingship, he transformed the conception of earthly greatness, so that the Messiah is no longer Lord, but servant. This is represented most clearly when he put away the temptation of the devil to lordship, when he

was recognized as the Christ by his disciples, and during his ascent to Jerusalem when he declared the nature of high position in his kingdom. In all his teaching and life the Christian sees the complete embodiment of the ideal, the incarnation of God in a true representative of humanity.

This recognition of the supremacy of Christ in his unreserved self-sacrifice for men, gives us the Christian rule of life. It is not a mechanical imitation of Christ's acts. Paul attempted nothing of the sort, nor, in differing circumstances, could it involve anything save a mechanical formalism. But neither can it be found by a literal obedience to Christ's words. These prove neither complete enough nor clear enough for a statute-book of life. And besides, it is not the Christian conception that a new law be established, but, in accordance with Christ's greatest interpreter, that a new spirit be begotten. When possessed with the Spirit of Jesus, when animated by his aims, moved by his motives, and in sympathy with his mind, the Christian, in many manners and in many ways, shall render the same service.

Thus the perfectness of Christ's teaching is to be found, not in its completeness as a code, but in its emphasis upon freedom from formal law. The

two stand over against each other, as Pharisaism against the gospel. It has been objected that Christ's teaching is deficient and incomplete on the political side, but so is it deficient and incomplete on its social and its individual side. It is in parables, and in paradoxes, and in examples which cannot be followed. And its perfectness consists in this, that it cannot be followed literally, but, accepted in spirit only, may be adapted freely to every activity of the individual and every need of society and every requirement of the State.

Thus, too, Christ's teaching is often, and even by the Church, said to be deficient in theology, that is, in the philosophy of religion. But, again, from the point of view of apologetics this also constitutes its perfectness. Had he taught a complete and systematic theology, of necessity it would have met the need only of the few; it would have been stated in the terms of his day and could have been of no lasting value. It is his emphasis upon love which makes his religion abide in a world of changing opinions, organizations, knowledge, and culture.

Doubtless certain teachings especially stimulate and foster Christian feeling and promote Christian activity. Nor should we deny that certain forms of ritual, of organization, and of administration are

peculiarly fitted to its expression, direction, and control. These doctrines and forms may be essential to individuals and to groups of men who, without them could not maintain the Christian principle; but admitting and insisting upon this, none the less we cannot identify them with it, however necessary they may be to us, as we refused to identify Confucianism with an ontological philosophy, notwithstanding the fact that its explanation in accordance with such a philosophy made its triumph certain in the scholastic period of Chinese history. In the variety of mental capacities and acquisitions who shall say what doctrine or explanation may be necessary to any person? But, in the kingdom of God, membership does not depend upon appreciation of ontological, or historical, or scientific inferences, nor upon our ability to weigh testimony and to appreciate argument, nor upon the acceptance of tradition, nor upon the distinguishing of tradition from history, but only upon the acceptance of God's love and the manifestation of the Christ's spirit in our life with our fellows. For theology is not religion, but its attempted explanation and theory.

Christianity thus offers itself directly as ethics and religion. Its direct and fundamental proofs

are that it satisfies our religious needs, and that it may be embodied in all the varied activities of men. With its characteristic feature isolated, stripped of all accessories that it may be clearly perceived, the question of its proof can be determined. The discussion will be at least on the right ground.

Is it necessary to point out the fundamental difference between this apologetic task and that of Butler and Paley? To them the vehicle of the message was the object of proof, that the scripture was given by revelation of God. But here it is the substance of the message, that this conforms to facts. Busied with the proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures or the infallibility of the Church, it was quite possible for men to forget the substance of the teaching in their zeal for the exaltation of the messenger. But with the message itself in the forefront, men who reject it will do so not because of their inability to define accurately the conditions of its original promulgation, but because they separate themselves from the course of life it points out, and the conduct it requires, or from the spiritual view of man's relation to the universe which it sets forth. Thus men will differ on grounds distinctively moral and religious.

VII

CHRISTIANITY AS ETHICS: ITS CONFLICT AND PROOF

ETHICAL judgments are worth estimates, and their proof is: first, that they commend themselves to the minds of men; and second, that they can be embodied in conduct. They appeal for their proof not to every one, but to competent judges, to those who take conduct seriously and earnestly desire the betterment of the race. Such ideals need not assert themselves as final. He who adopts them may be aware that absolute truth is as yet unattainable, and that, specifically, ethical standards are modified with a changing civilization and culture. And finally, as proof, the embodiment in conduct is not conceived as already fully attained. It must be shown to be practical and not visionary, but the fact that most men do not adopt it will prove nothing to its disadvantage, for if civilization be progressive, its advancement depends upon its acceptance of ideals which differ from those of the past and which are not yet distinctly adopted by the masses nor embodied perfectly in conduct and

institutions. It follows that, while ethics must maintain its ideal as at least relatively higher than other systems and at least practicable within some definite range of time and place, it can be disproved only by showing a higher standard of conduct, or that it is unadapted to the requirements of life.

The ethical principle of the Christian religion, to love our neighbors as ourselves and to treat even our enemies with forgiveness, forbearance, and kindness, submits itself to these proofs. Surely, if Christian teachings are impracticable or undesirable in this present life we have no rational reason for accepting them for some other life beyond the grave. If the principle of our Lord cannot be taken as guide now it is irrational to trust him for salvation hereafter. And if the message be impracticable, in vain do we worship the messenger. The fundamental proof of the Christian religion is therefore in the realm of ethics, where its theory can be understood and tested as other theories in ethics can be understood and tested. If it fail us here we may well surrender it altogether.

Submitting the Christian religion to this judgment two cautions are necessary: we may not identify it with modern civilization, nor with the communities which constitute the Church.

No doubt modern civilization owes much to our religion, but it is not a Christian civilization. Many of its elements are of other origins and some of them are directly antagonistic to its fundamental principles. The proof which takes our particular form of modern life as the fruit of the teaching of Christ at once claims too much and too little, too much for our social condition, and too little for the Christian ideal. It were indeed the greatest evidence against Christianity, could our civilization be claimed as its fruits, precisely as China is the gravest indictment against the Confucian system.

The highest claim of our faith is that it is a protest still, indignant and uncompromising, against not only the excrescences, but against much of the essential character of the modern world. To be representative of the life which now prevails would be condemnation. One needs only to look at Europe and America from an Asiatic point of view, to see how little they are fitted to be the exponents of Christian love. And finally, we may remember that Christ did not appeal to a civilization expressed in the terms of arms, wealth, culture, and power when he said, "By their fruits shall ye know them."

Nor can we appeal to the present condition of the Church and to its history. Whatever may be our judgment as to the justice of the conflicting claims set up by different communions to be the true body of Christ we shall agree that they have not set up Christian love as their test and proof. Indeed, as the identification of modern civilization with Christianity is the greatest obstacle to the progress of the faith in foreign lands so is the identification of the Christian religion with the Church the chief obstacle to its proof. Intellectual agreement, ritualistic conformity, or ecclesiastical submission have been the requirements, with the very moderate ethical standard of the Ten Commandments, a standard which in no respect goes beyond the requirements of Confucianism as ethics. Christian love has been neither a condition of admission, nor has its possession in a high degree been any protection against discipline and excommunication. It has remained a counsel for saints otherwise unobjectionable, and an attainment to be reached when sanctification is complete in some life beyond the world, but for the most it has remained a thing apart, and many who hold St. Paul verbally inspired have uttered indignant remonstrance when in accordance with his words

love has been set forth as the greatest thing in the world.

Historically the Church may be justified, doubtless; for the principle of Jesus and of St. Paul, being not a law but a principle of life adapted to all degrees of knowledge and all conditions of men, is ill fitted to be the external standard of an organization. Were it made such, the inevitable result would be a new and unbending law on the one side, and a new and peculiarly disgusting hypocrisy on the other. But so it is that the Church cannot be set forth as the proof of this principle. Like modern civilization, it at once excludes and includes too much. It includes much which is even directly antagonistic to Christ's words, and it excludes, therefore, many who live the Christian life. To be of the Church is not equivalent to being of Christ, and the practicability of the principle can be maintained only by the conduct of those who follow it, whether of the Church or without it.

The principle of love, then, which includes self-sacrifice when necessary, and the treatment of others, even our enemies, as we would desire to be done by, is proposed as the ethical ideal which at once satisfies the moral judgment and is the practical rule for life.

Sometimes this principle is openly and formally rejected as not only impracticable but undesirable; more often it is ignored as a counsel of perfection without significance for our present life.

Nietzsche represented the first class and expressed from the house-top what many believe in secret. Over against the "slave morality" of Christianity he sets the ideal of the "hero," a Napoleon or an Alexander, as more admirable than Jesus Christ. Christianity is sometimes rejected because it is misunderstood, but in this case because it is understood. The cross is an offence and a stumbling-block, for it is incredible that the embodiment of the Divine Being should yield his own will and be slain as a criminal without resistance. As it was said of old, sarcastically, "He saved others, let him save himself if he be Christ, the chosen of God." The cross is thus the sign set for the division of men.

For when Christianity is identified with metaphysics or with ritual or with ecclesiastical authority or with the affairs of the future life supremely, it is possible that the cross be adored as a relic or worn as an ornament; but when its ethical significance is understood a division takes place between those who follow the Christ and those who oppose

him. For it is not only men like Nietzsche, open opponents of Christianity, who accept as their creed the teaching that strength is supreme and the strong man a law unto himself, while self-restraint, self-sacrifice, and the forgiveness of enemies are rejected as weak and ignominious. Nations embody this anti-Christian principle in their policies, though each appeals to the Christian God for aid in violating the revelation of his will, and each hypocritically professes abhorrence of the law that might makes right when some neighboring state practises it. When successful on the exchange or in the market, men are ready to greet him who has won by disregarding Christ's teachings; and his words are scornfully rejected in the field of politics as impracticable by men who worship in churches dedicated to him as the Son of God. Theoretically anti-Christ is justified by an appeal to the natural law of the survival of the fittest.

We thus set the two principles over against each other in an extreme form, and ask if the theory of the hero who shall do as he will with that which he has made his own can be accepted as ideal, or as practical guide for life. The question carries its own answer, for neither as ideal nor as practical guide can this principle be

accepted. Indeed it is only tacitly and without being brought to the light of day that it can prevail at all. When set forth in its nakedness it strikes the public as having a vein of madness, and when carried out in its fulness it is condemned even by him who profits by it. For it is by no means free from contradictions and conflicts with that which is highest in the strong man himself. Or if there be no such inner contradiction, if without inner remonstrance he can be regardful only of himself, he belongs to a class outlawed by common consent. For the civilization of the world decrees that he who thus tramples upon the rights of others shall have no rights.

But neither is it practical. It is only incidentally the bringer of civilization, as in the case of an Alexander, or the promoter of law, as in the case of a Napoleon. In its own nature, when it cries,

> "Let him get who has the power
> And let him keep who can,"

it is the destruction of civilization and the return to the state of perpetual savagery and war. Even in a modified form, when kept in check by the machinery of civilization, it is the cause of misery enough to show its inherent wastefulness and impracti-

cability. Of all the evils of society, it causes the greater part.

But if it shall be maintained none the less that this principle of self-gratification through the use of strength is final and satisfactory, then at least the conflict with Christianity is on its right grounds. The end cannot be compromise, but victory for the one side or the other, for the distinction goes to the foundations of the moral life.

Society has already decided in part. It has come on so far that it insists that the game shall be played fair, with a certain regard for the welfare of others. The law "Thou shalt not injure thy neighbor" is to be maintained in the interests of all. Each, obedient to the law and protected by the law, within its limits may seek his own. Essentially the law is negative, thou shalt not, and it governs best as it governs least. Its classic embodiment is the second table of the Decalogue. Beyond this, in accordance with the general sentiment of mankind, the successful man should give of his abundance to those in want.

Founded in immemorial tradition, embodied in law, approved by conscience, this theory is set up as highest ideal and indispensable to the best in-

terests of society. The motive of self-aggrandizement in some form is necessary, we are told, to the excitation of industry; and the certainty of the secure enjoyment of the fruits of toil is the very basis of our commercial and industrial civilization.

Yet, notwithstanding all which may justly be said in favor of this theory, it can be by no means accepted as a full and satisfactory and final ideal for life, nor as affording a complete theoretical basis for conduct. It is already surpassed in much of the legislation of the Old Testament—legislation which marks a stage far in advance of the prohibitions of the Ten Commandments. And it is again surpassed in the teachings of Plato and Confucius, to choose widely separated examples. In all of these another principle is invoked where the so-called natural rights of the individual yield to the demands of the community. And here is put the limit at once of individualistic prohibitions and rights in the interests of a higher morality, which by common consent is supreme. In the simplest form of social organization, the family, it is the condition of its existence. Its ideal is the self-sacrificing love of the parents who for the welfare of the children labor, endure, and if need be

give up life. Their love fulfils the law, and does far more than any law can demand. In the larger family, the tribe and nation, the same principle obtains. Not insistence upon one's rights, nor the careful protection of self-interest, but the surrender of one's rights and interests, even of the simplest, of movement, free speech, gain, companionship, family, and life itself, in the interests, real or supposed, of the community, is regarded as duty. Love of country, love of humanity, love of righteousness are better and more praiseworthy than all the pleasures and gains of a lawfully protected self-seeking. The common consent of mankind extols love as the final ideal, and makes the true hero him who renounces his own for others, and not him who uses others for himself.

Not only in the family and in emergencies which demand heroic response, but in wide ranges of activities this rule of life is recognized. The man who enters the Christian ministry is provided with a meagre livelihood in order that he may devote himself to the service of his fellows. The physician gives freely his skill and time to those who can make no return, and is forbidden private profit through his discoveries; and the most skilful men deplore the invasion of commercialism into a

profession which from time immemorial has held a nobler creed. So too the lover of pure science gives strength and time and skill, and sometimes property, that he may advance human knowledge and contribute his part to the progress of the race. And, finally, the soldier surrenders the common rights and the common motives, and for a mere livelihood gives himself body and soul to the service of his country.

Thus the law of simple righteousness expressed in prohibitions, "Thou shalt not injure thy neighbor," neither covers all the relations of life nor is adequate to the emergencies. It must be supplemented by another and a higher ideal, which is recognized instinctively. All we mean by martyrdom and heroism, the deeds the poets sing and nations love, which are set before youth as incentive, and retold in age with just pride, belong to this ideal of self-sacrifice, the giving over of rights freely and with gladness. The conscience of men responds when the higher ideal is set forth. So strong is the response that it becomes often an instrument of evil. Men use it in others for base purposes of their own. Thus, in the East, parents have appealed to a daughter's love, and have made gain from her prostitution, and in all lands rulers have grati-

fied the lust of conquest and revenge, because men have been ready to give up life at their bidding. So little is it true that men are moved only by self-interest that they often give up their own willingly for no apparent end.

Plainly, this ideal of free surrender is not sentimental and weak. On the contrary, though it may be confused with a sickly emotionalism, it is one with all which is strong and best. It is the free surrender, for a worthy end, of that which the law holds securely as my own. Thus it contains an element of strength, and is the expression of freedom. "No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself." Not weakness, but strength, is characteristic, and in its Christian form it is freed from abuses by the worthiness of the ideal which is set up.

It is objected that though self-sacrifice be the ideal in emergencies, it cannot be made the rule of ordinary life without defeating itself. He who gives may be twice blessed, but he who receives is injured. Christian charity has filled the entrances of cathedrals and churches with beggars, and has increased and perpetuated the very evils it has sought to alleviate. The principle of love carried into effect in the ordinary affairs of

life would injure men, by making them dependent and destroying that fine self-reliance which is created by the presence of danger and the necessity for self-maintenance. Love as a principle would preserve possibly the physical well-being of man, but at the expense of his moral strength, and self-respect, and manhood. Such criticism is based upon a misunderstanding common enough, and a confusing of the principle of Christian love with indiscriminate charity. The Christian law is, "Thy neighbor as thyself," and its interpretation can only be, Give as thou wouldst be given to. With this in mind, it can be no indiscriminating and respect-destroying charity which shall fulfil it. But as the father who best loves his son may be rigorous with him in order that he may grow into the most effective and best disciplined manhood, so will the Christian who loves his neighbor as himself hold almsgiving as least and last of the manifestations of the spirit which would do unto others as one would be done by. For that injunction can only mean that we give of our highest and best, and that the manhood we hold highest, the conduct we esteem best, and the character we would achieve for ourselves be the gifts we would bestow. From the very statement of the case,

such giving cannot injure, or it would not accomplish but would defeat its end.

In a commercial age certain lines of business, at least, are thought exempt from this principle. The men who carry on great enterprises and succeed in building up great fortunes must attend strictly to their own interests, and are held as fully justified, if they keep within the letter of the law. Only thus, it is urged, can they hope for success. And if success be won, the means will not be too closely scrutinized. One might simply set the Christian ideal over against this of a worldly success. It was not Christ who said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." The way for the rich man into the kingdom of the Christ he did not regard as easy, nor is there any indication that he would accept some fraction of ill-gotten gains as price for entrance into eternal life. In terms so strong as to seem paradoxical, he taught that he who would save his life should lose it, and that the rich man can enter the kingdom only as the camel goes through the eye of a needle. This is only the commonplace of his teaching, and the necessary implication of his principle. He who loves his native land cannot be a hero and live luxuriously at his club while the in-

vader threatens to destroy the nation. The mother cannot love her babe better than herself and at the same time enjoy the liberty of a childless woman. Christ demands the definite choice between the supreme quest for riches, honor, power, and self, and the spirit which comes not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give one's self for the benefit of our fellows. Nor is there any principle which can set up one standard for the soldier, clergyman, and physician, and permit another to the merchant and the man of affairs. Christianity's greatest difficulty has been compromise and its disregard of the plain injunction of its Lord, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." But is it true that self-seeking is the controlling motive, and should be the motive, in business, and in the great commercial enterprises of our age? Surely there are illustrations enough of another spirit to show its possibility, and there are all too many illustrations which show that self-seeking is the cause of evils innumerable, and of most of the dangers which threaten society. In view of the strife between labor and capital, the operations which disgrace our financial centres, and which threaten more than anything else the prosperity of the people, the present reign of greed can-

not be maintained as the triumph of practical common-sense.

Even in the affairs of nations, the last refuge of selfishness, where self-interest may be readily mistaken for patriotism, Christ's law makes no distinction. It is to be supreme, and we are to treat others as ourselves. This principle as the practical guiding principle of statesmen is not utopian. It is its converse which is impracticable and destructive. Of nations it is true as of individuals, that "fightings come because men lust and have not, kill and covet and cannot obtain." Crushing taxation, the waste of resources in armament and in service unproductive and harmful, the jealousy, and international hatred, and isolation which shut ourselves out from much which would be of benefit, are from the rejection of the teaching which knows no distinction between nations, because it holds all men as constituting the great family of God. Even in international politics, even as the practical outcome of an enlightened self-interest, the doing away of the outgrown principle which held men as enemies because separated by a river, or mountains, or the sea is the condition of a future which shall fulfil the reasonable expectations of the present. It is not the teachings of Christ which

are impracticable, but their rejection, making nations armed camps, and leading each to legislate with sole regard to its own supposed interests.

Governed by the end Christ puts before us as his golden rule, that we treat others as we would have them treat us, his paradoxes as to the dealings with our enemies lose their seeming impracticability. When once it is accepted that all are brethren, and that the welfare of one is the welfare of all, when once it is understood that the injury of one is the injury of all, the returning of evil for evil, blow for blow, anger for anger will assume its correct aspect as irrational. Evil is doubled that it may be avenged, and we cause ourselves to suffer that we may inflict suffering on another. Revenge, hatred, and all their companions are recognized indeed, as evil, and the same growth in moral sentiment which has made the duel, and the sensitive regard for the point of honor, absurd among civilized people, will eventually make wrath and revenge seem the atavistic revivals of a savage state.

Christian ethics is the opposite of the kingdom of nature described as a desperate struggle for existence, wherein he survives who is strongest. As in all the range of moral activities, nature in this

sense does not give us our rule of right, but furnishes the material which is to be reformed by man's labors and sufferings in accordance with his ideals. As already pointed out, the progress of humanity consists in surmounting natural law after natural law, and man's end is not to be found by returning to the state of nature from which he has emerged, but in his successive victory over it, and the embodiment of his ideas, so that they take place in the established order. He would not be ethical were his life not a protest against that which is and has been, and a progress toward that which is not but shall be.

But even empirically, how much which is highest and best in the life of man has been given by those who were not fit for survival in any struggle, but whose life has been the result of the tenderest care on the part of others. Certainly science is not to be charged with the vagaries of men who appeal to this law as excuse for we know not what barbarities towards the weak and backward individuals and races which are held not worthy to survive.

The Christian's eye must be single, and he must unreservedly accept the fundamental principle of his Lord, but the outcome of this principle cannot

be expressed in any formula, nor in any stage of civilization, nor can it be made identical with any social or ecclesiastical scheme or utopia. It is the redemption of body, mind, and soul from all evil which is sought. It can be fully realized only in the kingdom of God, the commonwealth of humanity, where in complete freedom each individual shall develop his own nature in the fullest and highest sense. Each individual shall have his place, for each shall have his own gift to offer to all. This distinctively Christian conception sets at once the highest aim and frees it from all sentimentality, impracticability, and narrowness. Unreflecting and indiscriminate self-sacrifice is not the standard, but a Christian love which has come to a complete understanding of itself.

In the kingdom of God all which is beneficial to mankind has a place. The question of what is beneficial is for science to determine. Whether individualism or socialism; whether a government which shall care for those who cannot care for themselves, or a society existing by mutual consent; whether personal property or communistic collectivism; whether this form or that shall prevail must be settled by the highest wisdom and the best judgment. The Christian principle is

compatible with widely differing forms, societies, and grades of development. It is incompatible only with lust, self-seeking, and trespass upon others. Committed to no programme and to no type of civilization, it can be the controlling principle of all varieties of human life.

The historic Christ embodied this principle completely, so that Christianity as ethics sums itself up in the expression "Christlike." It is to be under the control of his influence and to possess his spirit. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and Saint Paul understood that Christ thought even an equality with God something not to be grasped after, but that to be found as a servant was with him the chief thing. So the apostle, in view of this tremendous example says simply, "Let the same mind be in you." With such a conception Christian ethics offers itself to the world as supreme. It is proved as we accept it as ideal, and embody it in life.

If it be maintained that though this principle is thus supreme, and though we recognize it as practical when it is adopted by all, yet in this present evil age men must fight fire with fire, resist force with force, and in general postpone the adoption of Christ's teaching until some convenient season, we

are reminded that Christ promises his disciples persecutions and sufferings, and though he gives them blessings he yet demands that they take up the cross and follow him. It is not to some indefinite progress of the race, nor to a future kingdom of Heaven that our Lord refers men. In this, as in all else, the best is not obtained without struggle and suffering, and we may finally remind ourselves that if no self-sacrifice were needed we should not be taught that he who was crucified is the supreme guide to life. It is through the labors and the sufferings of men who live in advance of their age that the world advances to higher planes.

VIII

CHRISTIANITY AS RELIGION: ITS CONFLICT AND PROOF

CHRISTIANITY offers the ethics of Christ as its fundamental proof, but his teachings are religious in the highest sense and from his religion his ethics gain power, for the problem of ethics is not only what is right, but also how shall right conduct be inspired.

Religion is the intuition of unseen realities, and its experiences show the nature of the supreme reality which is worshipped as God. The earliest distinct thought of God is of a mysterious Power, manifested in rock, or mountain, or stream, or heaven, or storm, or in men of heroic strength and daring. Its proof is some strange deed: a tree slays a stranger resting beneath its shade, or a thunderbolt from some storm-covered mountain-top strikes dead an intruder, or a resistless flow of great waters brings aid or disaster. Man filled with awe and fear gives expression to his feelings in acts of propitiation and worship. When the hero

is deified the attributes of the gods are transferred to him, as are his to them. Nor is there thought as yet of righteousness, power being its own law and justification. The king can do no wrong, let him do what he will with his own. He wills it, and man may not question the way of the god. So Power constitutes the god, and power reveals him. If he remain hidden his messenger does marvellously, and we, in our weakness, receiving the message proved by a wonder, must worship and obey.

Man worships many and changing gods, but when he becomes reflective he ascends from the multiplicity of powers to the unity of the all-embracing One. Pantheism is a mystical and religious anticipation of the doctrine which, through the conservation and correlation of forces, attempts, in physics, to sum up all powers in a formula, as an unknowable force which at once is none and all. So God is not wisdom, nor righteousness, nor goodness, but IT, the final substance or force, of which all else is illusory manifestation. It only is, and the category of substance is worshipped as Divine.

Or by a different path, man finds in himself something more imperative than power, and higher

than all-embracing substance. Righteousness is supreme. He refuses to worship the immoral gods of tradition or any mere power, natural or divine. The contemplation of the Absolute does not seem to him most worthy, for a voice within compels, not to mystic contemplation, but to activity among his fellows. Conscience becomes the voice of the final reality, and an ethical religion whose end is righteousness is taught by sages and prophets. To the immortal founders of such religions, righteousness expresses truth, besides which all else is worthless.

The highest expression of ethical religion is in the prophets of Israel. Jehovah demands not worship or sacrifice, but that righteousness flow forth as rivers. The idea of God is transformed. His followers count righteousness better than life, and it only can win his favor or manifest his presence. Hence, no wonderful power can testify of God unless it also justify itself to the conscience. Nor can an ontological philosophy express his character, for he is true and righteous altogether. Miracle and prophecy may command attention and win allegiance, but only as secondary to righteousness, for this is at once its own credential and our highest duty.

The revelation of God in Jesus Christ is the culmination of this development. His Father is the God of truth and righteousness, but he goes beyond all requirements of justice and supremely manifests himself for the redemption of men. He saves them when they are sinful and guilty, with such a redemption that they become like himself, righteous, forgiving, loving.

The manifestation of such a God can be only in a supreme act of self-sacrifice. It cannot be found in nature, nor in speculation, but is strictly a revelation, and is shown only in man. So that the direct and fundamental proof of Christianity as religion can be only in the life and death of Jesus Christ as the revelation of the Christian God. For consider:

If the fundamental teaching of God be of his all-pervading substance, his self-existence, his eternity, the ontological method of his existence, then its direct proof will be found in the processes of metaphysical inquiry, and the highest teaching as to Christ as Divine will be that he is of the same substance with the Father. And the great interest as to God himself will be in his immanence or his transcendence, and as to man, the relation of the finite to the Infinite, of our free

will to predestination. But historically, men holding antagonistic views on these subjects have been equally sincere followers of the Christ, and he preeminently taught not as the philosophers.

Or if the fundamental teaching of the Christian God be of power, then the direct proof must be through miracle, and the first duty of man a blind obedience. Pushed to its natural outcome God cannot be differentiated from force, nor man's lot in the world from mere fate. If an overwhelming display of power is to compel my obedience and submission, then are my manhood and my conscience crushed, and I shall be most ignoble when most religious.

But when the teaching is that God is righteousness, then his manifestation must be in that which commands the conscience and leads me to a higher righteousness. The law and the prophets command my assent, surpass in their contents my powers of discovery and of compliance, and yet draw me to themselves as the truest and best which I can know. Thus only can they prove themselves to be Divine. They can be displaced only by some new revelation which shall be a higher law. Then the old passes away; it is no longer supreme, but is at best introductory to the

higher truth, and remains God's word only in a secondary sense.

This is what happens in our religion. To the Christian, Jesus completes and fulfils the words of prophets and sages and embodies his own teaching, his words being one with his life and death. It is not primarily that he is of one substance with the Father, nor that he was possessed of miraculous powers, but that he was incarnate grace and truth. Hence it is that we confess, "We have seen thee; we have seen the Father." Thus the Christian religion is completely ethical, and as such it not only is our guide to conduct, but fulfils all the deepest needs of the soul.

It delivers from discontent, from fear, from sin, and from death. The recognition of the Divine love, in its peculiar Christian sense, involves our apprehension of our own unworthiness. The Christian cries, "I am no longer worthy to be called thy son!" He knows that he has not shown to others the mercy, forgiveness, and love on which he himself depends. He feels himself the debtor to whom his Lord has forgiven all his debt. With this understanding he accepts God's gifts with humble gratitude and rejoices in all which his Father sends to him.

With this supreme trust in the forgiving love of God he is free from fear. If while he was yet a sinner Christ died for him, if while he was still unworthy his Father welcomed him, how shall it be that with this great gift he shall not also freely receive all else? The realization of Divine love as supreme makes him more than conqueror, and convinces him that nothing, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, shall separate him from this love of God which is in Jesus Christ his Lord.

He is free from death, for it takes its place in the dominion of his Father. This world becomes only one of his Father's mansions, and the Divine love which has made him son will do for him in the future, as in the present, that which is best.

It delivers from sin, for he who has appreciated the love of God in forgiving his sins cannot go forth from the Divine presence, and, taking his brother by the throat, demand that he pay his insignificant account; still less can he take that which belongs to his brother, but he forgives as he is forgiven and serves as he is served.

The proof of such a religion can be only that it appeals to us as highest, and that it is realized in our own experience as something actual. To

the believer, as in all religion, this is the only proof, and to the unbeliever his testimony can be the only witness. If any one shall take another conception as higher and insist that the God of philosophy or the God of external nature be supreme, then the argument is at an end, and no words can make certain what we have no eyes to see.

But though one may take this Christian doctrine of love as supreme, and though he may have this full subjective proof when he holds it to be also objectively valid, he finds objections and difficulties.

As in the ethical domain, so also in the religious, the Christian principle is sometimes directly denied. The universe, we are told, shows no signs of moral purpose, much less of love. Some law of force or ether, some all-embracing statement in terms of matter or force is final, and in a more narrow sphere the survival of the fittest in a desperate struggle for existence controls and governs. He, therefore, who trusts that love is "creation's final law" has all "nature, red in tooth and claw," shrieking against his creed. Besides, it is urged, even the evidences of wisdom and righteousness which man has long found in nature are read into it, — the transference of man's own thought as he

selects from the great masses of material which nature offers just that which fits in with his immediate purpose.[1]

Certainly apologetics has misunderstood the situation and its own fundamental position when it has set itself in opposition to science and has declared even angrily that science in its strictly scientific statements is wrong. For such an apologetics has failed to understand the fundamental truths of epistemology and of a truly Christian theology. For, to take the last first, the procedure is not up from nature's God to the Christian's. It is true beyond all question that the Christian finds his God in nature because he finds him first in Christ and in his own heart, and then interprets nature in accordance with him who is thus known. Nor shall we admit any other procedure. Least of all shall we admit that the truth of religion depends upon rescuing some fraction of existence from scientific law. The truth is clear enough: the Christian finds his heart responding to the revelation of love in Christ, and through that he comes to God. But when this procedure is therefore condemned, and he is asked to interpret nature not by that which he brings to

[1] James, " Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 438.

nature but solely by itself, then he questions in turn: Is the scientific procedure other than the Christian? Surely it is what the scientist brings to nature — his thought, his selection, his unity, his logic — which forms the principle on which afterwards he builds. Now the Christian can freely agree that physics shall select such phenomena as may serve its purpose, and may interpret it as it will; and that chemistry shall follow its own purpose and select and arrange according to its laws; and that biology shall have like liberty; and that even the all-embracing cosmic philosopher shall make his careful arrangements of material, selecting and rejecting and assorting according to the principle he brings to the task; but, thus agreeing, it claims the same right for itself. Religion naturally is not the direct teaching of physics. If we start with atoms we shall have to end with an atomic universe, or if with ether, then we shall state our results in its terms. If, disregarding all differences, we state our results in quantitative form, nothing can hinder us; only, let us not in thus choosing and arranging in terms of our own selection suppose that we have exhausted the truth, and that our mathematical or atomic or ontological universe is the whole and only world

to be forever set forth thus. We may not find religion by selecting elements which exclude it, and combining and sorting them. If from a mechanical universe we deduce religion it is because we smuggle in what we take out. But no doubt the reliance of theology upon philosophy and science, and its confusion with cosmological speculation, accounts for the strange notion that the proof of atoms is the disproof of love. Surely the proof that love is supreme is not to be looked for in microbes and animalculæ and worms and beasts and birds, nor in the cunning arrangements of man's body, nor in the origin of species, but in the society and in the souls of men, where religion has its being, its explanation, and its proof.

Need we repeat the difference between the sphere of descriptive science and of religion, the former having as its task the classification of that which is and has been, the latter the embodiment of the highest, of that which is not yet in the natural order, but shall be? One understands and sympathizes with the well-meant efforts to prove the existence of God by using the latest results of science, and by showing that evolution and the struggle for existence are evidences of the Divine wisdom and love, but none the less such efforts

are doomed to failure. They satisfy neither science nor religion: not science, because ideas are read into the results which differ from the conceptions of science, and necessarily differ because belonging to another order of thought, as if one should find political constitutions or the justification for artistic theories in the law of gravitation; so that one does not know of scientific men led to religion through these efforts. They do not aid religion, because they are of the nature of compromise, and offer the religious sense a partial and inadequate satisfaction in ideas of order, and of relentless continuity, and of a slow development we know not to what end or if to any end at all. The God of nature — that is, the Being we should deduce from a careful study of nature as it is shown to us by science — would be one whom we should not adore; for nature thus described is not more than man, but less than man, for it is his own creation according to methods and ideas of his own devising. When science rigidly excludes the higher nature of man from the scope of its inquiries, and confines itself to physics, chemistry, or biology, why, then, should its results give us that which is higher than the highest in man, comprehending in himself all which man hopes sometime and

somewhere to realize? For God is not an all-embracing principle, to be found by any and all investigations, nor does religion consist in the finding of some formula which shall reconcile all the divergent viewpoints from which man may organize scientifically the universe. Such a religion would be Hinduism, and such a God the neuter Brahma.

The difficulty with theology has been that it has made the proof of the Christian God depend upon its conception of the universe. It has attempted to reconcile all our knowledge with itself, and to find in God the fundamental principle of all existence. Hence it has thought it necessary to reconcile the existence of evil with a Divine goodness, and of the many seeming irrationalities of the world with an all-directing Divine wisdom, and a revelation of Divine love through men with an historical record, and our appreciation of God's mercy with a theory of the origin and extent of sin. This was all natural in an age when almost any one could master the whole realm of knowledge, and when a systematic statement including everything seemed easily formed. But no such all-embracing system is possible. Whoever attempts it — Spencer, Haeckel, Comte, or Hegel — fails to gain recognition, and shows simply how

futile is the effort. Indeed, even particular objective sciences, — physics and chemistry, geology and astronomy, — cannot be brought into thoroughgoing theoretical harmony. The philosophy of religion, theology, is no exception to this condition of our knowledge. It does not succeed in harmonizing knowledge, for knowledge, as we have pointed out, at present is incapable of such harmony, but it has its own definite place and this it may confidently fill.

Questions of final harmony, of man and the universe, of God and the finite, of an all-embracing principle which shall embrace and reconcile all differences, is the natural end of intellectual inquiry, not peculiarly of theology, but of all thoroughgoing and serious reflection. It is at once the presupposition and the end of such inquiry: its presupposition because intellectual faith rests securely on the principle that knowledge is one; the end because its demonstration can be only the last step in the process, when, all being known, man shall know that all is one. Meanwhile each science pursues its own investigations in touch with the others, but still unshaken in its own results, even if they cannot be harmonized at once with all theories and facts.

We do not argue that religion separate itself from science, claiming some special faculty of knowledge, or that theology may ignore the results of scientific inquiry. Such separation of reason and faith is not possible permanently; and before long, when the attempt is made, reason destroys the faith or faith conquers reason. But we insist that physical science remember that it is a partial view of the world, and that when its conditions are forgotten and it is set forth as final and sufficient explanation it errs. For example, we are coming to know that the struggle for existence is only one element in organic evolution, and that the description of nature as "red in tooth and claw" is only a partial representation of carefully selected facts. When, therefore, Mr. Huxley finds no trace of moral purpose in nature, and thinks the world the devil's kingdom, it is because he first excludes man, and ethics as man's production. Excluding man with all his interests, feelings, and relationships, give the problem how to describe nature, and the result will be a non-moral universe, but as unreal and as unnatural as non-moral. Such a procedure has a relative value, but it is pure fancy when its result is supposed to embody the final description of the universe as it is. The religious

problem is: given man, dependent and ignorant, with feelings, fears, hopes, hatreds, loves, in the midst of he knows not what dangers and difficulties, how shall he be triumphant over fear and sin and death? How shall he live in peace and make existence not only endurable but worthy?

Precisely as the scientist sets forth his theory of forces, laws, or substance as best explaining the world of forces, atoms, or substances, does the Christian set forth the manifestation of the Divine love in Jesus Christ as best meeting the needs of the religious nature of men, and best satisfying the soul. Thus theology neither attacks nor appropriates the results of investigation in other spheres, for it too appeals to its own peculiar and sufficient proofs.

This is seen more clearly by a further consideration. The ills of life, and of the world, are used as an argument against the truth of the Christian religion, and it is true, indeed even a truth of Christianity, that these ills are real and that if they are made chief by the mind they shall triumph and man shall perish. But how does this contradict the truth of the Christian religion? It neither minimizes the evils of life nor does it promise immunity from them. It does not deny illness, poverty, mis-

fortune, and death, but it affirms a power which as matter of fact delivers from sin, and fear, and unhappiness, and renders blessed. This power it proves not by extraordinary deliverances, by miracles of healing and of restoration from death, which at best win only a temporary triumph and show in the end that after all illness and death prevail, but by the peace which passeth understanding in the hearts of its believers, a victory the world can never give and never take away. The Christian knows that his God delivers, and that even in Gethsemane and on Calvary he strengthens and blesses his child.

Many objections to Christianity have been created by the historic claims set forth as to the manner of its introduction into the world. God's omniscience and power have been made the essential characteristics, and a revelation from him has been proved by showing its conformity to historic and natural facts. But from our point of view questions of inspiration and of revelation in the ordinary sense are apart from the direct and fundamental proofs of this religion. It is not the method of its revelation which is primary, nor the mode of its discovery. If Mahomet claims a direct revelation, and Buddha an acquired insight, and

the sages of China an intuitive apprehension of all truth, the fundamental test for all alike is still whether the principle they set forth is true, whether it conforms to facts. When it is stated that Buddha anticipated the theory of evolution,[1] nothing is added to the proof of his peculiar doctrines. In the same way the fundamental proof of Christianity is wholly apart from questions of the mistakes of Moses, of his knowledge of natural science, and of the foreknowledge of the future possessed by the prophets. Indeed it is independent of the whole discussion as to the Bible as the Word of God, for important as the questions of historical criticism are, the direct proof of the Christian religion does not depend upon them. Establish the resurrection from the dead, the immaculate conception of our Lord, the unerring historical and scientific knowledge of Moses, the inerrancy of all the Biblical history, and that the contents of the book were made known in some mysterious and supernatural way, still, if the fundamental principle disclosed be not proved to our hearts by satisfying our religious need, all the rest

[1] Quite incorrectly, it is true, for wherein the doctrine of evolution has scientific value, Buddha did not know it, and what he taught is without scientific significance.

profits nothing. The larger part of the attacks upon Christianity rest on this misapprehension, on the supposition that it is disproved as errors in science or history are pointed out. But if it be light and life it shows itself and proves itself by its effects.

Therefore we do not discuss the usual difficulties. They belong in any case only to secondary apologetics, for the fundamental proof sets forth the essential principle. If one will not believe the prophets neither will he believe though one rose from the dead, and in accordance with this Divine word it is plain that the case cannot be reversed. One may not say the book is inerrant, and therefore trust Divine love, nor that Christ rose from the dead, and therefore accept his words, but seeing his grace and truth we readily interpret the rest in their light. Knowing Christ's love one may interpret the Scriptures which record it as Divine, and having implicit faith in Jesus may credit the accounts of the wonders which he wrought. Starting with love and faith men have variously interpreted his person, as the Logos, as the Man from Heaven, as the Second Person of the Trinity, as the Sinless One, — uniting in this, that in him they find God. The determination of his person be-

longs to theology, and apologetics cannot rest its case on theories of his person or of the Book, but in the love Christ revealed, which makes men triumphant over sin and fear and death.

The agnostic controversy does not involve the fundamental proofs. Only, as we have pointed out, if Christianity be essentially philosophical can discussions about noumenon, the absolute, and the abstract infinite determine the issue; but some theologians as agnostic as Huxley himself, and others as gnostic as Hegel, have equally trusted the Divine love revealed in Christ in life and death, and have taken it as their rule of conduct toward their fellow-men.

Should scientific method fail wholly in its efforts to solve its immediate problems, men would give scant recognition to guesses based on it as to questions remote and ultimate. But as it wins successive triumphs, confidence grows and men come to trust that in the future it will master much which is beyond its present powers. Its proofs are in the present, in its partial victories; its faith is, as to the future, that though the fight with ignorance be long, complete triumph will come at last. Failures do not cause despair nor doubt that man's welfare can be attained only as he reso-

lutely follows the method which thus far on the whole best answers his needs and is most efficient in mastering the facts.

So with Christianity: it meets man's present needs, and he comes to trust it for the future too. That it accords with the facts which he knows, and meets the situation in which he is, is its proof, and the foundation for faith. The facts demand belief in the Divine love, and such belief proves itself by gaining the victory. All literature and philosophy and science emphasize man's dependence. The acknowledgment of his ill desert is almost as universal. There is a discord external and internal, and only trust in Divine goodness heals it. Pride, self-confidence, self-righteousness are surely not judgments warranted by the facts. Man may ignore his true situation and find a temporary contentment and happiness, but, none the less, the world shows him surrounded by dangers, difficulties, and sin which may at any moment destroy him. To deny the facts is impossible, and to ignore them is to prefer falsehood to truth. But in their presence men can be brave and accomplish their life tasks only through belief in fundamental goodness. This is the truth of religion, and the implied creed of scientific inquiry.

Christianity makes this implicit faith explicit, and thereby increases its power so that man may look the facts in the face, understand his position and even his sinfulness, and still gain the victory. "Though he slay me yet will I put my trust in him" is an expression of the faith which makes men brave in the last extremity, and victorious when the world has done its worst. It overcomes also the inner contradiction, the sin which man cannot forgive to himself and whose consequences he can never repair. Not forgetting it, not ignoring it, not excusing it, still the sinner does not despair, but finds in the Divine love the salvation which can restore to peace.

This faith in the Divine goodness as the supreme principle of the world is strengthened when it is embodied in life, and as ethics approves itself. Ethics is the manifestation of religion, and religion is the principle of ethics. Ethics, as we have seen, brings conduct into harmony with principles, and the righteous man conforms not to that which is, but to that which should be. Religion trusts that which is, and believes in God, who is a present help in time of need. And in this religion and ethics have the same relation which science bears to its underlying faith; for science,

notwithstanding all failures, holds that truth exists and can be found. So religion holds that Christian love shall be manifested because, notwithstanding all suffering and sin, it is. This ultimate faith in God is our trust that that which should be *is*, and that the kingdom of love and peace which is to be achieved by men is an expression of the Divine love, which we trust now as the highest reality, that is, as God.

The Christian religion, like the Christian ethics, points to Jesus as its embodiment. His religious consciousness is at once its type and its realization. Acceptance of doctrine, repentance of sin, faith in Christ himself, with whatever rites and sacraments and ecclesiastical orders are esteemed by any as essential, are means to the attainment, but the religion itself is in the consciousness, which is like his own.

The central fact in his consciousness was the love of his Father, and this one fact made him triumphant. The antitheses set forth abstractly are made real by the concrete facts of his experience. His faith was not the result of a philosophical line of reasoning, which found a reconcilement of the contradictions of the world in some ontological or monistic principle. But it was a trust

termed childlike, and thus recommended to all. Nowhere does it appear that he makes this living consciousness of his Father's love dependent upon the ability to answer the hard questions which have perplexed man's reason, nor is there any indication that he would have rejected any one because of intellectual disagreement. But neither was his trust in God's love based upon freedom from the ills of life or exceptional favors, for he drank the cup of bitterness to its dregs, and neither sought nor found relief in any miraculous interference. When an hungered no miracle fed him, and when betrayed no legions of angels rescued him, and when on the cross no supernatural power made it possible for him to descend and confute his enemies; surrounded by dangers and attacked by evil he suffered. Man lives not by bread alone, but by God's word; to be delivered from foes is not to be desired, but to do God's will, and if on the cross there comes a moment of depression when God seems to have forsaken his son, it passes as he commits his spirit into his Father's hands. He was spared no humiliation, no loneliness of suffering, no contradiction, no reviling, no pain, no loss, but in it all the consciousness of his Father's love sustained and made him

blessed. Sin itself could not shake his trust. He confessed no sin, and did not pray for forgiveness, but in the presence of the evil toward which man is most unrelenting, and of guilt which man deems most unworthy, with the adulteress, the outcast, the technical sinner, and the renegade he never hesitated as to God's all-forgiving love. Even when, at the last, sin did its worst against himself, he held fast his faith, and asked forgiveness for those who slew him.

This consciousness of God's love bore with it an undoubted faith in final victory. Whether in the apocalyptic visions of the synoptic Gospels, or in the transcendental conceptions of the Johannine writings, the confidence is clear and undisturbed. Not his own loneliness of faith, nor his rejection by his nation, nor the fewness and misunderstandings of his disciples, nor his own death could make him hesitate. He saw the evil in the world and felt its full force, but he still knew that without his Father not a sparrow falls. It is not a philosophy of nature, nor a philosophy of history which he teaches, but a trust in a love which pervades nature and history, and makes all, even in the darkest times, blessed.

Such a religion meets precisely the needs of

such a world as this: a religion primarily not for the explanation of evil, but for victory over it. Beyond all denial the world, in its sin and suffering and death, is a world where reasons may be found for a pessimistic assertion of evil as supreme, and for a fatalistic refusal of further exertion even for the sake of escape. Were this not true the Christian religion in its peculiar and essential characteristic would be unreal. But it is equally true that such a consciousness of the love of God as Christ's will make one victorious, and give to him a peace and blessedness which the highest success and the greatest wealth cannot bestow.

The religious consciousness of Christ is the source of ethics, not because there is a balancing of happiness in this world against happiness in some future existence, but because this experience reveals something better than happiness and more efficient as motive than self love. To love God with all one's heart is already to love one's neighbor as one's self. Hence the love of the neighbor, the actual carrying out into activities of this consciousness that love is supreme, cannot wait until it can be combined with one's own peace, prosperity, and success. In an evil

world Christ would not call down fire from heaven to destroy his enemies, nor permit the Prince of Peace to be defended by the sword. Love only begets love, and the kingdom of peace is not ushered in by a triumphant slaughter of its foes.

For the consummation of the Christian religion is the presence of this same consciousness of God in men. As St. Paul sums up ethics by setting forth the supreme sacrifice of Christ and the injunction, "Have this mind in you," so does the Johannine Christ sum up religion in the prayer, "That they may all be one; even as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Such a presence in consciousness, such a realization of God's love, is the only proof possible for a religious truth. Other proof may establish historical, or scientific, or metaphysical truth, but this only the truth of a Divine love, asserted in the face of all the miseries and sins of the world, triumphantly asserted as giving us the victory. It is not by dialectics that such a proof can be established, but by the fact. The fact is apparent in the life and death of Jesus, and in some measure in all those who are one with him. To this, then, is the final appeal: "That

they may be one even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected in one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me."

IX

CHRISTIANITY THE ABSOLUTE RELIGION

THE Christian is not content, surely, with the supremacy of the principle of his religion in his own life, with his own peace and blessedness, but seeks by necessity its impartation to others. His religion is not merely the best for him, but the true and absolute religion corresponding to fundamental facts which are accessible to all, and whose knowledge is necessary to all. This claim, that Christianity is the absolute religion, remains to be examined and the nature of its possible proof to be set forth.

Reviewing what we have said of proof in general, we find it in a repeated and a common experience. In a realistic way, in the common affairs of life, we examine the object in question, and if our judgment be confirmed, appeal to others for their agreement. But if on our examination we find conflicting facts, or if others fail to agree with our

decision, the question remains in doubt. In physical science the procedure is the same, repeated examination, the appeal to competent witnesses, and a final judgment by common consent. In the most abstract matters the logical procedure is essentially similar. Though we have no sensible phenomenon to be examined, but deal only with a concept, we view it in all possible relations, submit it to all possible questionings, offer it to the judgment of competent specialists, and on their agreement it takes its place among the established truths of philosophy.

As we have seen, another class of truths involve a somewhat different procedure. They are not found primarily as facts, that is, as already a part of the objective and established order, but, seen by the mind, they are to be made real by the activities of men. The intellect discerns the ideal, the feelings approve, and the will realizes it. Truths of law, of politics, of economics, of music, of art, of ethics, and of most of man's many varied activities, are of this nature, and are higher than the truths which are conceived as purely objective, and already matter of fact. They are higher because they involve most completely the whole and unique nature of man. Yet, evidently, the distinction is some-

what artificial, since our so-called established order of facts, and our objective sciences which are supposed to describe it, is itself the result of a discriminating mental activity, which selects and arranges material out of the great mass presented to our senses according to a principle which first approves itself to the mind as best, and then is used to organize our knowledge. Still there is a difference, for the scientist asks chiefly what is; but it is no answer to the lover of liberty to tell him that no order of objective facts exists agreeing with his conception of government, say, of the people, by the people, and for the people. It is his high purpose to organize the facts. Indeed, mere facts, in the crude, realistic sense, exist only that they may furnish material for the embodiment of ideals scientific, social, æsthetic, and ethical. The ideal is not found in the brute fact, but is brought to it, and the brute fact is made its servant, and is thereby transformed and glorified. This injection of our consciousness into nature, this teleological use of the raw material, distinguishes civilization from barbarism, as in truth it separates man from the brute. Indeed, the one valid form of the teleological argument for the existence of God is in the fact that nature thus serves the ends of man.

Since these truths characterize the varied richness of man's life, and offer the motives to his exertions, the full meaning of the world itself must be discerned here if anywhere. As the color is not in the flower, but is my perception, as the universe can be described only as my phenomenon, so its true meaning can be found only in the aspirations and activities of man. Let us be as objectively scientific as we will, we shall not escape this fact.

The universe we describe in terms of man, and we cannot describe him in terms of something other than himself. For such an effort describes the higher in terms of the lower, even of the lowest, and the fulness of life in terms of some single factor; for example, in terms of matter, which is in the last analysis only man's feeling of resistance, important, surely, but in no wise entitled to be the sole or the chief interpreter of our consciousness. The truest explanation of the world will account for all of man's experience, taking full account of his origin and formation, and also of his aims, his feelings, and of the transformation he can work in outer nature, in the order of objective facts, which is unchanging save as he works his will in it.

Religion belongs to this higher part of life. It

is not analogous to the crude experience which is satisfied with experiments of touch and sight. At least in the present day few attempt to offer direct and fundamental proofs of religion in terms of the senses. Only the superstitious and the fanatical claim visions and apparitions and voices as evidences of the existence of God. And if more appeal to historical evidence of such manifestations in the past, the intelligence of our times increasingly refuses to accept the testimony as competent. Thus, though some may regret it, the direct and fundamental proofs of our religion can be found only in its satisfaction of the religious cravings of the soul, and by its adaptation to the highest wants of society through its ethical activities.

For the most part, we are satisfied in such matters, as has already been pointed out, with the concurrent testimony of the little groups of persons who, for one reason or another, seem to us competent witnesses. Few persons survey a wide horizon, but most are content with their own sect, coterie, or denomination. But when we attempt to view the wide world, and to ask for truth, not yet, indeed, all prevailing, but which is fitted to prevail, doubts arise. Especially is this so when we witness the contentment of great communities with

ideals and conditions which not only do not satisfy, but repel us, and when we further observe how little our best ideals and our most favorable conditions appeal to them. An impenetrable barrier seems to separate people from people, and to make any all-embracing judgment of value impossible. In politics, economics and art, after a brief examination, we turn back, saying that these things are too great for us, and content ourselves with affirming our absolute judgments of truth, while ignoring the opinions of nine-tenths of the race.[1]

But the Christian religion cannot be thus content. Its thorough-going monotheism holds no truth for any one which is not also adapted to, and to be accepted by, all. That which is for the select few only is not true for them, for the Christian religion knows no differences of race and condition and culture. Besides, since the Christian principle is self-devotion to the service of others, and this in the highest things, it cannot be content with its own salvation, for such contentment is a self-contradiction. Belief in the Christian God holds that nothing can resist his love, and toward man the

[1] "It really makes no difference whether we speak of an absolute truth or of an absolute necessity of belief. What we cannot help believing we cannot help regarding as true." — C. C. EVERETT, "Essays Theol. and Lit.," p. 107.

same faith holds the infinite value of every soul. The scientist may ignore the wisdom of Asia, but the Christian cannot ignore its faiths. He must consider their claims, and compare them with his own.

We need not dwell upon the religions of the so-called "primitive peoples." The eighteenth century exalted the noble savage and the state of nature, but we know that man's salvation is not in a return to nature, but in victory over it. At best, primitive man shows only the dim strivings, not yet understood, out of which have come gradually the civilizations, which in their turn are only steps in the long progress toward a perfected life. The beginnings of civilization throw light, indeed, upon it, but they are not its interpretation, for it is only in the light of an advanced and highly specialized science that we understand primitive society at all. Specifically, religion is not to be explained by its first manifestations, which give us only the vague sense of a reality greater than man, and a dim groping after something, he knows not what.

Turning from these beginnings of religion to its great representatives, we compare them with the faith we hold ourselves. Manifestly we would

seek their best, their highest achievement, and their noblest ideal. This we ask for Christianity, that it be not judged with unfriendly eyes and a captious criticism; that it be not held responsible for the evils done in its name by men who are not of its spirit and by communities which, calling themselves Christian, are only in part, or even not at all under the control of its pure teachings; we would not have it judged even by the average Christian who does attempt in some half-hearted way to conform his life to its words; but we assert that it is to be judged by its noblest and its best, by its teaching in its purity, and by the ideal it sets before us. The claim is reasonable, as the composer may ask to be judged not by the performance of the amateur, but by the well-appointed orchestra, trained by the master and led by his baton.

So, judging others as we would be judged, four great forms of religion, besides our own, claim possession of "the truth," viz.: the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Confucian, and the Mohammedan. Let us briefly review their teachings in fundamental principles.

Hinduism is the religion of contemplation, and its attainment is absorption in the Infinite. Thus

its goal is the intuition of the unreality of all individuality, of all differences, and the reality of the all-embracing unity. This intuition may be attained in various ways, by asceticism, by solitary contemplation, or by philosophic study. It represents a real desire in man, gratifying a deep emotion. It is true to certain facts. Wherever man has thought profoundly it has been found, — in ancient Greece, in modern Europe, in all Asiatic lands. Its classic home is India.

Its attainment demands intense and long-continued concentration, for it abstracts from all sensible phenomena. Its various methods come to the same result, but the method of philosophic study is most familiar to our Western minds. The student is required to comprehend intricate and involved and contradictory statements in a complicated system. It is the better if its difficulties be enhanced by the medium of expression, by the use of some ancient and forbidding language, or the unnatural use of a living tongue. For the purpose is not the grasping of ideas, or the comprehension as speedily as possible of a philosophical system, but the realization of the unreality of the phenomenal, and of the sole reality of the Absolute. For years and decades the powers of

body and mind must be concentrated until the end is attained. Such a method is inconsistent with immorality and vice; indeed, the passions atrophy as it is followed, and the seeker after God is pure in body and mind. Hence, in all lands such seekers are thought holy, but the holiness is incidental and negative, as they have ceased to be moved by the emotions of ordinary men.

In compensation there are profound gratifications. The system builds upon the undoubted truth that the world and the fashion of it pass away. New glimpses of that truth meet the seeker at every step of his progress, and the world which passes comes to include not only the globe, but the inner and the outer life of man, all his surroundings and all his aspirations, fears, memories, and consciousness. So that if one were to project himself into the future and conceive a paradise of unnumbered *kalpas* where he should dwell as a god, still this, too, at last must change and pass away. The sense of unreality is now the only reality; the ground on which one walks, the things one sees and feels, the self within are all like the clouds which form and disappear; so that the strenuous activities of life with its hopes and fears have a deeply humorous appearance, the

activities of puppets which absurdly think themselves alive and real. With this insight every passion, every hope and fear disappears, and there ensues a peace which nothing can disturb.

There is a profound enjoyment in this attainment. The insight gratifies, for one sees the long road he has travelled and from his summit knows that the obstacles he met, the enemies he feared, the friends he cherished, the hopes he entertained were alike unreal, and that the multitudes who now struggle as once he struggled are on the same enchanted ground and are suffering from the same delusions. A word would set them free, but they know it not, none can teach it them, and I, behind the scenes, know the secret and am at rest. These struggling men and women are illusions like their own illusions, and I, too, so far as I participate in any separate consciousness, am a dream among dreams. But I know, and with this knowledge I have an intuition of the all-embracing Absolute, and with this immediate feeling which no word can utter, I am filled with a peace which is limitless.

In testing this conception we shall not deny its sincerity nor its achievement. Nor shall we deny to men the right to this prolonged contemplation

with its natural results. In the varied world of men it is doubtless well that there be some who, turning from the ordinary affairs of life, test philosophic contemplation to its utmost. These serve a purpose as a protest against absorption in trivialities, and as calling attention to the deeper aspects of the world and the deeper needs of the soul.

But when such religion is set up as authoritative for men, or as giving us an insight into the true nature of ultimate reality, we note that it is attained by a one-sided concentration upon a single aspect of the universe, and that its result, so far from being all-embracing, and, therefore, a vision of the Infinite, is intensely narrow, the vision of the man who concentrates upon a single point and makes it distinct and real, at the expense of shutting out all the wide-spreading landscape besides. This single point can represent the truth only as each other point may illustrate it, and ceases to represent clearly and fully even itself, because viewed out of its relationships. A man as rightly, as many a man does, may claim possession of the whole truth, who excludes speculation from his mind and concentrates his attention upon the practical affairs of every day, or, renouncing all ultimate problems, confines himself to

chemistry or physics. As theory, Pantheistic absorption, with the unreality of the world as its postulate, thus breaks down.

This religion cannot embody its proofs and submit them to the common judgment. Only he who has already journeyed the long path can judge. He who would prove it must give his life to the process, in faith. Hence, the Hindu faith in its highest forms seeks no converts. It holds its truth as esoteric, and has only parables and symbols for the multitude. Remembering his own long struggles, he who has attained knows the impossibility of the way to men in general, and leaves them in their errors. He cannot deliver them, and in the last analysis he would not, for they, too, are illusions like the obstacles they meet, and we, too, likewise, and futile were it for illusions to labor to save illusions from illusions. So the end is quietism, and aristocratic aloofness of mind. The multitude may wallow as they will, and their condition in India, left to religions many and debasing, to ignorance and suffering, is witness that the Hindu faith makes the few, separated from the practical interests of life, content with their own attainment, and the multitude, forsaken, without guides, the prey of

demons and priests, enslaved by caste, and worshippers too often at the shrines of cruel or licentious gods. The religion of the philosophic Absolute can never be the absolute religion, the faith of all mankind. It must remain the privilege of the few. If India is to be saved it will be by some other power.

Buddhism is more thorough-going still, for it teaches that the Absolute, like all the rest, is illusion and that asceticism and philosophic contemplation are only a weariness to the flesh. Not by concentrating upon any thing or thought, but by casting all away, is there salvation. It shares with Hinduism the belief that life is a delusion and a snare, and it, too, seeks release. This it gains by renunciation. The evils of separation and the loss of friends it would cure by cutting all ties and entering the Order. The fear of the loss of property it would cure by casting away all possessions and embracing poverty. The fear of death it would cure by making life as passionless as death. It sets forth its Noble Path and it preaches the free giving to others of all one has; but all lead to this: the perception of evil in all things and the casting away of all things, so that there shall be thenceforth no haunting fear of any loss.

Buddhism appeals chiefly to the disillusioned, and to those who have lost hope. It promises peace, and its thorough-going character appeals to certain moods. When the mother mourns her child it attempts no half-expedient; it teaches her that no house is without its dead, it promises her no reunion after death, insisting that even such reunion is only introductory to separation in the universe of change; it goes to the root and tells her to love no more and so be content. Thus it seems to look facts resolutely in the face and to win by telling the whole truth. For this reason Buddhism in our day appeals to some with winning power.[1]

But certainly Buddhism can claim no universal sway on such a plea. It cannot conquer the world by fleeing it. Only when the world is dead can the dead thus bury their dead. The victories of Buddhism for so long a time and over such multitudes have been won by other means, by compromises which have altered the essential elements of the faith, by leaving men in possession of the

[1] Of course I do not refer here to certain groups in Europe and America, taking up a fad which suits the fashion of the hour and enthusiastic for Buddhism because misunderstanding it, but to the few whose mood really is congenial to its philosophy. Amiel in his predominant state is almost the best representative of its less thorough-going forms. He appeals strongly to Orientals.

present world, and substituting for present victory a dim, far-off Nirvana, and even a mythical Western paradise of sensuous delights. It has reintroduced the Absolute, which its founder rejected, and gods, whom he denied, and ministers to the flesh which it had condemned, by æsthetic service, and art, and temples with soft-robed priests and sweet-toned bells. It casts over nature a subdued half-light, cultivating a quiet, artistic sense. It becomes all things to all men, finally accepting heaven and hell, the marriage of priests, salvation by faith, persecutes, and arms its monks, as in Japan, or as in Siam forms a priesthood which serves for a brief term, and then returns to the ordinary activities of life, assured by the merit accumulated against further ills.

This religion only by syncretism holds its own, for in its purity it cannot serve mankind. It demands no high exertion, and sets before its votaries no high ideal. Its end is an indescribable Nirvana, and he is best who casts away his powers. It fosters a meaningless charity, the end of which is not the benefit of the recipient, but the merit of the giver. It has no discrimination, and praises him who gave his body to feed a tiger. When it has brought gifts to men, as in Japan, where it was

the means of introducing the Chinese civilization, it accomplishes this because it has departed from the teaching of its founder. Were humanity to accept pure Buddhism as its creed, it would be the sign that it had lost all faith and hope, for Buddhism has no practical ideals, but teaches salvation through renouncing them.

Of Confucianism enough has been said already. Here it may be added merely that it comes most nearly in its abstract principles to the modern view of the world, as in its application of them it diverges most widely from modern thought and life. It makes laws, principles, supreme, and demands that they be embodied in State, society, and family. But its principles are empirically deduced from the social condition of China three thousand years ago, and these are set forth as the eternal and ultimate realities. Hence it contains no principle of progress, but fashions itself forever on the models of the past. In this conformity to the past in a rigid conservatism, with ideals only of peace and the perpetuity of existing institutions, the institution becomes more important than man, and he of value only because of the station he fills. Its appeal is to the highly educated, and the high in place. The superior in every class are few, and

the inferior many, and while the latter are necessary, they are left in their inferiority. Obedience, submission, contentment are their lot. The value of man in himself is not known, so that the official feels little responsibility for the uplifting of the people, and the scholar is unconcerned though superstitions rule the masses. Confucianism is a religion, unquestionably, but it is a religion of a philosophy, and for philosophers. Like Hinduism, it is content with the attainment of the chosen few, and understanding that philosophy is not for the multitude, it leaves them to Buddhism, Taoism, and devil worship. Thus, notwithstanding the high character of the "superior man," and the exaggerated influence ascribed to personal example, the individual is belittled, and society takes on the aspect of a mighty machine, whose chief end is its own continuance, and whose parts exist only that they may aid in the perpetuity of the whole. Neither in the great heaven and earth, the Kosmos, nor in the little heaven and earth, man, is there any exalted aim, but only that going on forever through never-ending cycles all may remain as to-day.

One hesitates to treat Islam as a distinct and separate faith, so dependent is it on the teachings

of the Bible. It contains elements from primitive Semitic heathenism, but so do the teachings of Christian sects contain heathen elements. It only in part understands the Bible, but this too is not distinctively its characteristic. It does not have the central message of our Lord and of St. Paul, but alas, many who call themselves Christians have not understood the gospel of the Christ. He who enters the mosque immediately from the confused and tawdry and picture and statue filled churches of the Orient, feels that it and not they most nearly represents the pure theism of the prophets.

"The unity of God, the certainty of judgment, the fact of revelation, God's will to save men, the appropriation of salvation by faith, good works as the fruits of faith — these doctrines make up no small part of our religion. And these he [Mohammed] adopted and proclaimed."[1] Hence it is not wonderful that a type of piety is found which many Protestants think peculiar to themselves, definitions of God which would make no change in the statement of the Shorter Catechism, prayers which Christians might utter, hymns which they could sing, and religious experiences fervent and

[1] H. P. Smith, "The Bible and Islam," p. 316.

profound. Nor is it surprising that missionary zeal continues, and that Islam is still one of the living forces of the religious world.

But to Islam God is supremely the King of power who judges men, and the motives to obedience are the fear of hell and the hope of heaven. Thus religion becomes obedience to rules and revelation, a system of laws and doctrines necessary for man if he is to attain salvation. How wide a need such a conception of religion meets is shown not only by the success of Islam, but by the prevalence of like ideas in the Christian Church, notwithstanding the teachings of our Lord and of St. Paul. Doubtless a religion based on fear, with salvation as entrance upon future bliss, and religious duty as the observance of rules and statutes, appeals to many men. But it neither meets the needs of the highest minds, nor is it capable of universal prevalence. Its limitations are shown in clear fashion by Islam. Tied to a list of rules which represent the ethics and religion of Arabia a thousand years ago, progress is impossible. Worshipping a supreme King and not loving a Father, it naturally rests upon the power of the sword and cannot rise to the thought of free men — led in many ways to God. Emphasizing faith

as means of escape, salvation in this world and the next is for the believer only, while for the others hell hereafter, and now slavery or death.

Fairly representative of theism a thousand years ago, Islam again illustrates by contrast the progress in religious and ethical ideals made in Christendom. Judged by the standards of its own day and place, it was a great advance; judged by ours, it is repellent and impossible. Nor could clearer proof be given than by Islam and Confucianism that no faith which is represented by a code of laws can be the religion for all men in all times, or set forth the goal to which humanity may hope to move.

Judaism, in its prophetic ideals and in its ethical monotheism, seemed destined to be the religion of humanity. But in the crisis its representatives were unable to burst the bonds of nationalism. Some of its representatives even to-day regard the distinctive feature of Christianity as sentimentalism, and reject Jesus precisely in that wherein he transcended the older ideals. But in the truest sense Christianity is not the opponent of Judaism, but its fulfilment and completion.

Turning to our own religion we need not dwell further on the point that its claim to be the absolute religion is not in asserting itself to be the

religion of the Absolute. Worshippers of the Absolute have been good Christians, indeed, and since Schleiermacher it has been common to claim that the religion of Jesus is the absolute religion because it includes all other beliefs and has no distinguishing characteristic of its own, a description which would apply more correctly to philosophic Hinduism.[1] Jesus did not teach the form nor the substance of philosophy, nor was comprehensiveness the central feature of his words, though in the vast variety of schools and sects claiming his name each may find somewhere what he seeks. But thus to define Christianity as absolute because it includes all is to make it universal by making it equivalent to nothing, with no task of its own and no gift for men but only the cry to each, Be faithful to your own.

Such identification is untrue to facts. Christianity is not identical with Hinduism, nor with Buddhism nor with Confucianism. The resemblances are superficial and the differences fundamental. Its absoluteness must be sought elsewhere.

It is not by chance that Christianity centres in

[1] Schleiermacher had his own distinctive marks of Christianity clearly in mind, but those parts of the "Reden" where he deals with religion in general have had wide influence and have led many to suppose that he held the opinion written above.

Jesus Christ, and that he is accounted God and man. For thus the highest expression of truth is found in a person. If God be Father and man be his son, if self-giving love for the highest benefit of others be the supreme principle of their common nature, then the religious and the ethical aspects of our faith are summed up in him. His life and his death reveal this love as supreme, and that it is the final end of man. To that Christ appeals, to that he likens his Father, and that he asks from men as the condition of discipleship. Man becomes through perfect service the complete expression of God. So that the Christian finds the true symbol of his faith, not in any abstract teaching as to the substance or the formation of the universe, nor in any abstract principle of the nature of the Infinite, but in him who went about doing good and gave his life that his brethren also might become sons of God.

Thus the goal of the Christian is perfection, as God is perfect — a goal which sets no limit to progress but carries with it the intimations of immortality and is to be attained in a perfect society where all serve all, and all are served by all. This meets the usual objection to altruism as a universal principle. Let all adopt it, we are sometimes

told, and there will remain no field for its exercise. One need not insist here upon this introduction of the "fallacy of the infinite," though one may express mild surprise at finding it in the quarters where it is given expression, but it is sufficient to point out that such would be the result only if individuality were obliterated in an all-absorbing sameness. It has no place in the perfected kingdom of God, where each has his own peculiarity, and each his own gift to bestow. The principle is not dependent upon the continuance of suffering and distress, since the manifestation of self-giving love will continue while men and women differ in powers, acquirements, and gifts. As in the family love does not wait for illness or misfortune for its opportunities, so may we think of it among the world-wide people of God.

This guards also against mere indiscriminate giving, and an altruism which destroys one's own nature. Its rule "As thyself" involves a true estimate of self and may demand the development of the self as the highest contribution one can make to the welfare of the whole.

Christianity contains all progress, for so long as man individually and collectively has not exhausted his possibilities the ideal is not realized.

With every advance in wisdom, power, control over nature, in character and happiness, the ideal advances. Sufficient for all ages and for all conditions it contains an absolute truth which is progressively embodied. He who has given himself wholly to it in his own circumstances is already perfect, without destroying the possibility of further advance for himself and others.

This principle is ethical through and through, and therefore involves the whole man with all his powers. It is not merely intellectual assent which is sought, nor a development of the emotions, nor a surrender of the will, but the devotion of the entire man, and this in his highest development. The intellect seeks the means for the realization, the emotions respond to the immediate as to the remote ideal, and the will moves in joyful compliance. It contains its own enforcement and is dependent upon no extraneous power, for it is a personal life given for the salvation of the world. It is only in the fulness of personal life perfected through its relations with an all-embracing society of persons that an absolute principle can be found, for all other principles are abstractions, partial statements of certain aspects of this fulness. In such a principle is contained the best and highest

attainments of all other religions, each given opportunity for its completest development, and each freed from the limitations which disfigure it because dedicated not to lower ends but to the noblest service of humanity.

Christianity was born in an Asiatic province nineteen hundred years ago, but it finds its highest expression, apart from the Christ, in our own day, which adopts its ideal more completely than any former age. In the future no limit can be placed to it, for no worthier principle can be suggested, nor any which contains more opportunities for boundless development. As a natural power, manifested fitfully and partially and half unconsciously, it has influenced men and served them in all ages and times, but as the Christian religion it is adopted consciously with a realization of the meaning of its demands and a comprehension already in part of the means necessary for its complete embodiment.

Christianity will be worthy of its profession as the absolute religion when its chief quest is not the solution of problems as to the ontological nature of God, nor his relation to the finite as Infinite, nor his position in a cosmological scheme of the universe, but the establishment of his king

dom and its righteousness. Then it can wait in faith for all these things to be added unto it. Its intellectual task is to set forth the ideal of service and to show how that ideal may be attained. It will be truly Christian when its prayer is "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth;" and it will be truly universal when the kingdoms of the world become the embodiment of the Spirit of the Christ.

As absolute religion for the individual, Christianity ministers to all his needs and furnishes the sufficient principle for all the activities of his life. As absolute religion for humanity it shall be established when it ministers to all needs and is adopted as the guiding principle in all lives.

"The direct and fundamental proofs" of the Christian religion are found already in those who resting upon the Divine love revealed in Christ find blessedness and peace; and embodying the same love in their lives, serve their brethren. The true Church is the brotherhood of those who are united in this fellowship of service and love. The final proof will be given when all men in all places and all times acknowledge holy love as supreme, and manifest it in the completed kingdom of God.

Then shall the absolute religion be fully known, for God will be all and in all. Until then we work in faith, for the proof of the Christian religion is not a deduction of logic, but an achievement of redeeming love.