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A LAYMAN'S RELIGION

Roger Sherman Galer



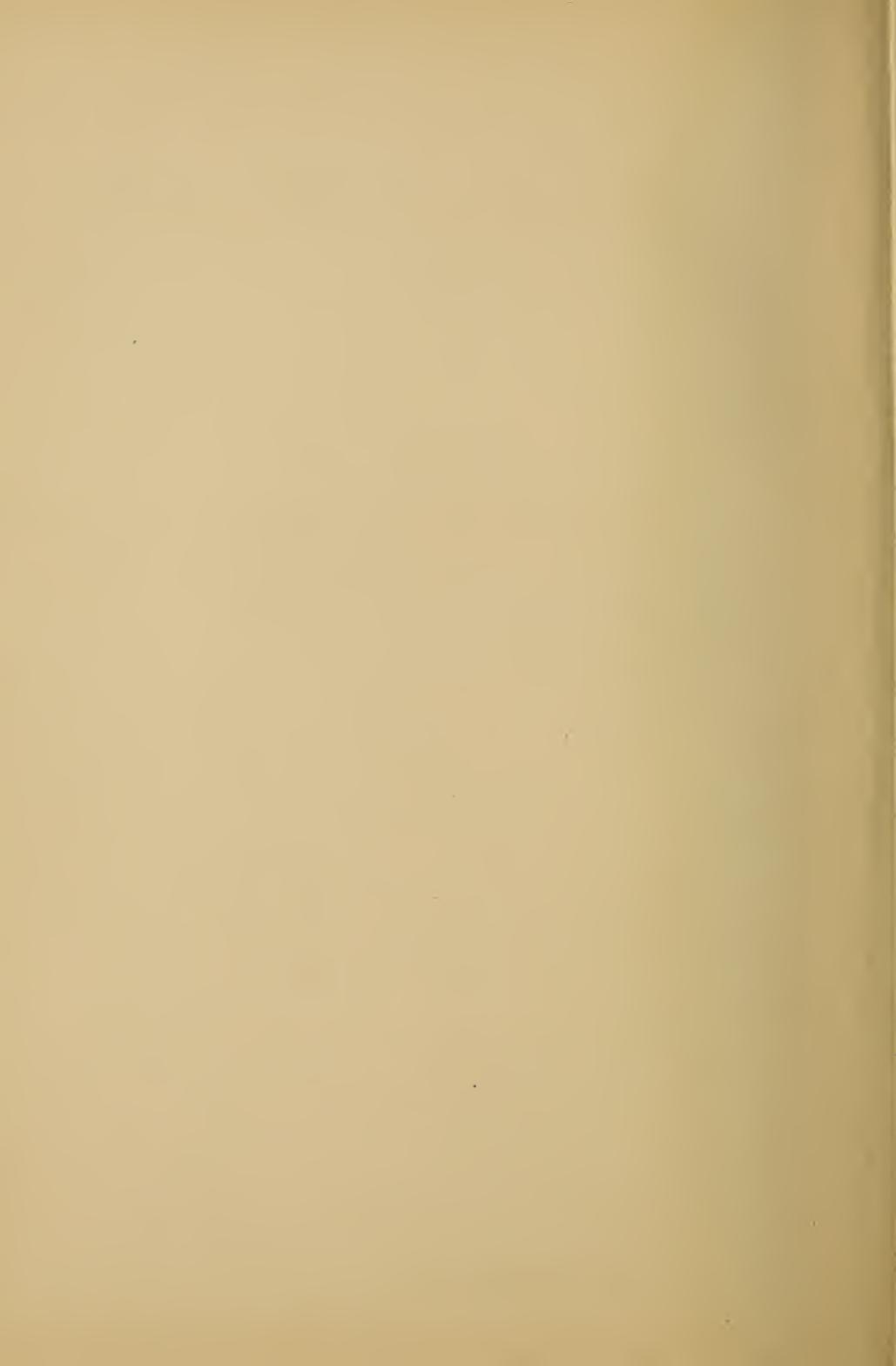
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# A Layman's Religion



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by

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## INTRODUCTION

Laymen in these modern days are manifesting an ever increasing interest in religion, and are taking a larger part in the affairs of the Church. The demands of the age for religious instrumentalities are far more numerous than ever before. In its efforts to keep pace with the spiritual needs of a complex civilization the Church is forced to multiply its activities and widen its interests. In every direction it sees new fields of profitable enterprise. Religion touches life at nearly every angle. On the other hand, nearly every phase of life affects men's reactions to religion, so that, to paraphrase the dictum of the old Roman poet, "Nothing human is foreign to the Church."

We have ceased to regard religion as a thing to be observed on Sundays and laid aside for the remainder of the week. To become effective as a social agent it must have trained spiritual specialists, and these must have intelligent, courageous soldiers to execute their commands. When religion was regarded as purely a creature of the emotions, a sort of religious frenzy to be worked up in evangelistic revival or prayer meeting, laymen might give it nominal adherence, but many of them shrank from its public avowal and exhibition.

The different definition which we are giving to religion to-day has set free a vast reservoir of power among the laymen of the Church, power which, if rightly guided, will go far toward making the Church what it ought to be, a dynamic force in social as well as individual life.

Laymen and preachers look at the religious problem from different angles. Each is to a certain extent conscious of class impulses and motives. The layman may be able better to sense

the religious currents moving in his own group and to give them articulate voice. He may supplement the spiritual dynamic of the preacher most effectively with his practical training and business experience.

Too often the layman leaves all of the spiritual activities of the Church to the preacher. Is it not time to go back to first principles and to recognize the layman as a spiritual unit for whose express benefit the Church is organized? For the layman too is an individual and sustains an independent relation to the universe. He is a part of the great scheme of God; he looks out with infinite interest at the life he is living; he yearns for the spiritual consolations, if there be any, which religion has to offer. The layman, if he be intelligent, must have a philosophy of life, and if he be serious, a religion in which he anchors his faith.

These chapters are not intended as complete discussions of the various topics, but as cross-sections of the reactions of a layman to religious problems.

The widening interest of our thoughtful and sincere laymen in religious activities should be heartily welcomed by all who desire to see the Church grow in scope and influence. To assist in interpreting this modern lay movement in our churches, and to encourage it so far as possible, is the purpose of this book.

*Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, June, 1921.*

# A LAYMAN'S RELIGION

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## RELIGION AS A THEORY

**M**AN finds himself in a world of wonder and mystery. In whatever direction he turns, the wonder grows and the mystery deepens. If he analyzes matter by microscope and crucible to its ultimate atom, a still farther search reveals the atom as a world in itself, as complicated in its mechanism as a solar system. If he multiplies the power of the telescope until the seven Pleiades become a hundred and the Milky Way a blazing path of star-sown space, he perceives there are infinite depths beyond the reach of his most powerful instrument. He can not measure the infinitely great or the infinitely little. Neither can he, by the subtlest processes of chemistry, determine the ultimate essence of what we call matter.

In the spiritual realm man feels himself conscious of personality. He is the cosmos in miniature. He feels, thinks, wills. He is actuated consciously, sometimes unconsciously, by motives that appear to originate within himself, as well as by stimuli of the outside world. He perceives a relationship between the external world of matter and the internal world of sense. How this relationship originated or how it

operates, he has been unable to explain by the most profound researches in psychology, physiology and physics. The Me and the Not-Me somehow interact to produce the amazing thing called Personality. Man is a puzzle to himself. His physical life he can partly understand, but how food is transmuted into thought or emotion or altruism still transcends the utmost bounds of knowledge.

Man is not only an individual, he is a social being. He finds himself surrounded by other such individual units as himself. He is enmeshed in society where his conditions of life are largely determined by others, and where his every act has social consequences. For good or evil his life is bound up with the lives of those around him. In some manner these human units must live together in the same world, country, community. Out of social relationships arise moral and ethical considerations he can not ignore. But just as he sees on every side the relentless warring of the physical forces of nature, he perceives in society the forces of good and evil struggling for the mastery. The greed, selfishness, hate and ambition of a sinful world are only too apparent. Contradicting his inmost moral instincts, he sees badness often triumphant and goodness often defeated. He is forced to echo the complaint of Job—that the good are sometimes unjustly punished, while the evil prosper in their ways. In the complicated maze of social forces it is sometimes difficult to see the operation of a moral law. He is even tempted to believe that the universe

is distinctly unmoral, that it does not care whether good or evil prevails. Ultimately, he is forced back upon the fundamental problem—the existence of evil. With curious subtlety and undying optimism he tries to explain the puzzling enigma that thus far has proved insoluble to all generations of men.

Every thinking mind, lay as well as clerical, has pondered long and deeply on these fundamental problems of philosophy and life. To explain the nature of man's spiritual existence, and his relationship to God and to his fellow men, is the peculiar province of religion.

Science deals with the whole vast physical and psychical universe, so far as its properties and laws are susceptible of examination and analysis. Philosophy attempts to explain and arrange into a system the laws underlying the worlds of matter and of thought, the nature of substance and attribute, the existence of a first cause, the relations of cause and effect, mind and matter, good and evil. Religion confines itself to man alone. To religion, the universe is a moral one. If there were no such thing as right and wrong, religion as a practical thing would cease to exist. It would still be necessary for man to exist as a non-moral being. He would still try to govern his actions so as to live as comfortably as possible. But human actions would be divested of their moral qualities, and life would lack that sense of infinite up-reaching and aspiration which religion alone affords.

As a theory, the religion of the layman does not

come through systematic theology or a study of historic sources. These have their value chiefly to the theological student, and the layman is not sufficiently versed in them to act upon their conclusions. But he has, he can not help having, a theory of the universe. With all due respect to the clergy, he must in the end formulate for himself the general outlines of his religious faith. What is religion, and what are the sanctions it imposes? What kind of a universe is it in which we are living? Religion has so long been deemed the peculiar province of the preacher, or at most of a few emotional souls, that before the layman can orient himself he must study the whole religious field, and learn the direction and purpose of the great religious movement.

Is religion an intellectual assent to certain dogmas, or an act of worship? Is it creed or life, an inner experience or a purely social force? Is it a matter for the individual soul without the intervention of priest or Church, or must it come through authorized channels, long ago established by Divine Order? Are conscience and reason its guides, or must it follow the revelation of a book or the dictates of a Church? Upon the answer to these questions depends our whole attitude toward religion and the Church.

The intelligent layman has studied the philosophical systems of the past, but only to a limited extent has he tried to interpret the underlying philosophy of the Christian religion.

And yet, the world of science, the fields of phil-

osophic thought, are studied and explored in every college, are a part of the daily life of every cultivated intellect. It is impossible to avoid them if we would. At every point they touch and affect human life. We see the eternal processes of nature in every spring-time and harvest, in the movements of the planets, the august succession of the seasons, the mysterious laws of life, growth and death. We are conscious of passion, feel the throb of emotion, thrill at the magic touch of art in the form of music, painting, poetry, and know there is some mysterious power that urges us toward righteousness and truth. Who has not wondered as to the origin of this vast physical universe of which our little world is only an insignificant atom? Or who has not speculated as to the origin of evil, the only moral riddle in the universe? What is the nature of man, and, if he possesses a soul, where did it come from and what is its ultimate destiny? Christian or Pagan, Buddhist or Mohammedan, Jew or Gentile, these questions come to the inquiring soul with equal and awful force. Every age, every condition of man, has thought, prayed, agonized over the fundamental problems of philosophy and of life.

When these profound questions touch the Christian scheme of religion we are at once impressed by the new method of approach which Jesus used.

Jesus did not argue, he proclaimed. He neither invented nor followed a system of logic. His words were dicta, not syllogisms. He did not aim to convince the intellect, but to arouse the emotions, to

fire the heart. The philosophy of Socrates regarded man as a moral being, and was directed chiefly to his intellect. To the majority of men it was cold and unappealing. The intellect was convinced, but the soul was not touched. It was light without heat. The method of Jesus was the exact antithesis of this. He did not aim to prove man's divine sonship to God, or the awfulness of sin. He spoke of these things as if they proved themselves, as needing no proof save the consciousness in every breast that they were true.

God is our Father, men are brothers, sin destroys, love heals, forgiveness is divine, life is a battle against evil, the soul may enjoy happiness forever. The moral phases of life are the only ones that are worth considering. Life is regarded as a practical rather than a philosophical entity. Men may reason and speculate on these fundamental and all-important questions, but the only thing that matters is—what kind of a life shall we live?

Perhaps it was well that Jesus ignored the questions of speculative philosophy. Any definitions he might have given or conclusions he might have stated, would have been subject to critical analysis, and so far in the history of thought no system or theory has been propounded that has not been open to the most serious objections. No philosophical explanation of the universe has yet obtained universal acceptance. By confining himself to the mission and province of love, Jesus avoided the disputatious criticisms of the schoolmen and the cold analysis of the philosopher.

The layman may well begin with the "Confession"—to use the Augustinian term—that Christianity is the highest and best form of religion known to man. He may go one step farther and assert that, whether all of its various phases are of equal authority, or possess an equal share of Divine truth, or not, yet it is of the utmost importance that in some form it be adopted as our religion and that we work faithfully for its general acceptance and practise. We are not going to make careful appraisements and comparisons with other religions. We accept Christianity as an ultimate fact. The religion of Christ is the religion of the most enlightened peoples. Its precepts cover every practical need of men. Its inspirations are sufficient for every soul. Its ideals are lofty enough to serve as the goal of every human endeavor. Here we may rest with the assurance that if human society will only follow its dictates, not only will individual souls be solaced and satisfied, but social institutions will be touched with that charity and sympathy that may soon reconstruct them on broader and better foundations.

Religion as a theory is the attitude of the soul toward God. However we may define the term God, whether we mean the vital Life Principle of the scientist, the First Great Cause of the philosopher, the Unknowable of Herbert Spencer, the "Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness" of Matthew Arnold, the *Élan Vital* of Bergson, or the God of Christian theology, it is our relation to that mysterious

but omnipresent power that constitutes our religion. That is its essence. All other articles of our belief are but incidents, corollaries, and by-products. They are important, of course, in defining our mental operations, our views of life, and ultimately in shaping our conduct. Men in all ages and in all stages of culture have recognized or believed in a supreme Intelligence or Power; that the universe is somehow under its control or responsive to its influence; that man is a weak and dependent being; that distinctions exist between right and wrong; and that man continues to exist after death. These are tremendous factors in determining the kind of lives we are to lead.

There are two theories of God in His relation to the world. One is that God is transcendent—that is Mohammedanism, St. Augustinism, Calvinism. The other theory is that God is immanent. This, under whatever name it may be found, is the doctrine of Plato, of Jesus, of Emerson, of the theistic evolutionist. From one viewpoint God rules the universe with a rod of iron. Man is the helpless creature of a Being who, though absolutely just, is without pity or sympathy. God is the creator and controller of a universe that sprang into being at His fiat and that exists only at His pleasure. Things which are right because He wills them, not because of any inherent moral rightness in themselves. His decrees are to be accepted implicitly, without question.

In some inscrutable way, God has decreed things as they are, and His ways toward man would be

abundantly justified if we only understood His ultimate purpose.

If we are forced to choose between these opposing theories we should prefer the doctrine of immanence, which, in its ultimate analysis, is the doctrine of love. God is *in* His world, not above it. He lives and moves in the countless concentrations of star-dust into worlds fit for life, in the movements of gravitation, in all the forces of the natural world, in the beauty of the flower and the grandeur of the sea, and, above all, in the soul of man. He is the vital fact that gives the universe its color, its beauty, its life. He transfuses matter as the soul transfuses the body. The laws of matter are His modes of operation. The world is not a finished product. It is a system in process of becoming. Life is a stage in an infinite journey. Onward and upward has been the process of cosmic evolution. The fire-mist swings in space, the worlds round into shape, the seas lay down their strata, man appears, civilization begins, conscience is born, religion teaches unselfishness and love. This is the eternal process, a process that embraces Polaris and the Southern Cross, amoeba and man, the infant in its cradle and a Newton reaching out with Godlike intellect among the stars.

It is much more consoling and satisfying to the average thinking mind to look upon human life as part of a great Becoming and capable of indefinite improvement, rather than as a final completed fact, for which there is no possibility of further progress. The Calvinistic theory that God elects certain men

and saves them by the operation of His grace, and that for the great majority of mankind no efforts of their own can avail to change their destiny, is repugnant to the modern mind.

We prefer to believe that God cares for His children, and helps them so far as they will permit Him to do so; that He wills the good of every soul and its final happiness; that all our efforts help ourselves and our fellows toward the highest good and happiness of all.

There is no doubt an element of truth in both theories of God. He is no doubt transcendent in the sense that He is behind and above all phenomena, that He is the guiding power of the universe. But frail, finite man prefers to think of Him as a Being with whom he may have loving contact and with whom he can co-operate in all efforts for his personal salvation. We should avoid the pantheism which confuses God with the material substance of which the visible universe is composed. Let us cling to the belief, which has ample philosophic warrant, that God is a Person who lives in all things, and who in addition thinks and feels for the struggling souls of our common humanity.

If this be true man becomes a child of God, who is his loving Father, not a remorseless monarch, living above and outside of His creation. And if God is our Father, then all men must be brothers. This is the democracy of religion. There are no divine favorites, destined to be transferred upon death to the bosom of

a God who sends most of His children to eternal torment. Man is the object of God's tender thoughtfulness and care. He is in a world of sin and wrong that he may develop God-like qualities. He is beset with passions and temptations that he may grow in grace and strength. Man is a part of the Divine, and is fighting, pushing, struggling, sorrowing, his way up into the sunlight where love and justice are to become universal.

Man is not the creature of a day. His past reaches back into geologic ages, and he realizes that events far removed have contributed to his present status and surroundings. He knows that the flashes of Sirius affect our lives. That the fishes splashing in Devonian seas helped to prepare the earth as a home for imperial man. That Sumerian texts written in curious cuneiform characters five thousand years before the Christian era helped to lay the foundations of our religious beliefs. These things make him realize that the universe is one, that a mighty plan is being unfolded, through countless eons, and that he is a factor, though a small one, in this wonderful onward march, a co-worker with God.

If God is still working in His universe and creation is endless, is it not clear that man's growth and work will never be finished, that his upward climbing is an eternal process? This world is not a probation, it is a station in an endless journey. Man's life and energies are to be continuous throughout this and all future worlds. The soul of man can not die, for

the great law of the conservation of energy applies to the spiritual as well as to the physical universe. Man is not to be condemned for his imperfections and sins, for too often he is unable to control events and conditions. Punished he will be, so far as retributive justice can heal and induce repentance and reform.

Man has a free will, but that will works within the limitations in which it is placed. Two hundred generations often avail more than the passing hour. Heredity chains, environment compels, and these often leave but little to moral choice. It would be a moral crime to punish forever a soul under fetters not of its own creating, and which it is powerless to break. The old controversy between free-will and predestination loses much of its importance in the light of this theory of man and his mission—a creature in a boundless universe, traveling an endless journey, in loving fellowship with an Infinite Spirit who watches every step and predestines upward every stage of the onward march.

Nearly two thousand years ago a new light appeared in the world. It came in an obscure corner of the mighty Roman Empire. The whole world was at peace, wrapped up in material problems, drunk with power. The torch bearer was a simple Nazarene, the son of a carpenter. To Grecian philosophy or Roman law, to the wise and powerful of earth, what could he offer of value or importance?

Neither his coming nor his going created a ripple on the serene waters of the Roman ocean of his time.

Augustus in his palace on the Palatine never heard nor heeded the golden tones of his persuasive voice.

He wrote no creed and hence did not rank with the philosophers. He carried no sword to win the fame of a conqueror. He established no church to perpetuate his teaching. His program was so simple it seemed absurd.

A few fishermen by the Sea of Galilee.

A few immortal sentences on the Mount above.

A few parables cast in vivid Eastern phrase.

A few years of kindly ministrations.

And then the voice ceased. The light for a time disappeared. The feet ran no more errands of mercy. The gentle commands healed no more the hideous sicknesses of that Eastern world. When the light went out neither Rome, nor Alexandria, nor Athens, had heard his name. His life and death were but a feeble wave on the restless shore of an imperial world.

And yet this simple prophet with his message of love on the Judean hills has wrought the mightiest changes of history; no king, no military conqueror, no inspired seer has ever exerted a tithe of the influence of the carpenter of Nazareth. And the mighty flood of that influence is still sweeping over the world, cleansing, renewing, inspiring with a new and divine power.

When Jesus appeared, faith was dead. The old gods had lost their hold upon the respect and reverence of men. Zeus had disappeared from Olympus, Jupiter had deserted the Capitol, Neptune no longer ruled the waves of the sea. Greek philosophy had

broken up into schools—its golden age departed. Even Jahveh had lost his power over all but a small fragment of the sacred nation, some of the Jews preferring Roman authority and some Hellenistic culture. The religion which Jesus preached challenged both Jew and Greek. For the one it took away the supremacy of the Mosaic law. For the other it added the strange doctrine of a God of love, a great sacrifice for sin, a paradise of happiness for the redeemed soul.

Christianity as Christ preached it is an internal religion. It proceeds from within outwards. The Kingdom of God which he came to set up was not to be a worldly kingdom. From the individual outward to society, from the heart of man upward to God. This is the Christian ideal. This is the divine method of reconstructing both man and social institutions.

And what is the message that is to accomplish this regeneration? It is the gospel of Love. The whole glow of Jesus' personality shines forth in that one word—Love. His whole scheme is based on Love. If that fails Christianity is doomed to ultimate extinction. It has no other formula or basis. Its entire preaching is centered in this one word.

Love is the universal solvent. It destroys selfishness, dissolves envy, softens ambition. In its rays the clouds of sin disappear. If Christian love should become universal the land would never again resound with the tramp of armies, the shores of the oceans would never again see a hostile fleet. Unlawful gains in business, cruel oppression of the weak, unjust use of

power, would be unknown. In short, the wrongs that afflict society and that spring out of our relationship to our fellows would disappear in just the proportion that men were permeated with love and were willing to practise its precepts.

As to the social theories of Jesus we shall have something to say in a future chapter. As to his personality we do not need to dogmatize. His influence in our hearts does not depend on any theory of his person.

His message is true and it will ultimately win, for we believe that truth is mighty and will prevail. In his enthusiasm he said, "I and my Father are one." Not in the sense of identity, except as all souls are of the likeness of God, but in the sense of an essential spiritual affinity and kinship. We can not assent to the metaphysical absurdities of a trinitarian dogma, but this does not diminish our admiration and love.

The Bible is the great document of our faith. The Catholic reads it but only the Church may interpret it. Orthodox Protestantism holds the doctrine of its plenary and verbal inspiration. In recent years the Higher Criticism has shaken that doctrine in the minds of most thoughtful people. We have studied the origins of the Bible, its historic sources and materials, its authorship, and the dates of its composition. Most people now agree that, instead of being a single book, it is a collection of books, many of them of composite authorship, some anonymous, written in different ages and for many purposes. Some of the

Bible is history, some prophecy, some moral instruction of the highest order. Its different parts vary greatly in value. It is a library collected through many ages and purposed for instruction, for reproof, for inspiration.

But whatever may be its origins, whether in the highly sensitized Semitic genius, in Babylonian myths and traditions, or even those of Persia and far off India, whether found in Gilgamesh Epic, Tel-el-Amarna tablets or Oxyrhynchus papyrus, it narrates a marvelous history—the development of the spiritual sense from Animism to Jehovah, from Jehovah to the loving Father of Jesus. In the course of a thousand years of growth and accretion, it shows how, out of painful experience and prophetic guidance, moral and religious ideas arose. It marks the gamut from a superstitious appeal to the Witch of Endor to the Lord's Prayer, from the crude barbarism of the idea which paints the sun as standing still while Joshua slays his enemies, to the sublime utterance of Jesus, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Whoever reads the Bible as a story of marvelous religious development forgets that its science is faulty and its morals often those of a barbarous age. Literally interpreted it is frequently open to criticism, especially if viewed as the product of verbal inspiration.

But its virtues are transcendent and its content invaluable. Briefly stated, that content may be summarized as follows: In the Old Testament, it is the

gradual development of the idea of only one God—  
“Hear O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is One.”  
In the New Testament, the noble proclamation of the  
brotherhood of man and the infinite value of each  
human soul.

For the orthodox the ultimate end of religion is  
personal “salvation,” and this comes through grace.  
For the liberal thinker it is not so much salvation as  
character, but salvation comes through character.  
Obviously the orthodox are right if this life is merely a  
probation which ends at death, and if our conduct in  
this life determines for all future time whether the  
soul shall be happy or miserable. But if, as we be-  
lieve, life is continuous in all worlds and death only  
an incident, the supreme purpose of life becomes  
growth, development. The more lessons we learn  
here, the more beautiful our characters become, so  
much the farther are we on the road toward per-  
fection and happiness. Life is a school. Salvation  
is overcoming the lower instincts and passions and  
enthroning in man’s life the higher qualities of love  
and sacrifice. It comes by everything that lifts and  
educates and elevates the soul. The Church, the  
school, the home, all good influences, help to save.  
It is a slow, evolutionary process, not sudden or  
cataclysmic. But it is a certain process, otherwise  
God will be defeated and evil will be permanently  
triumphant. If a single human soul is lost forever,  
God is defeated in His plans, or else he is not All-God.  
We see no escape from the conclusion that there

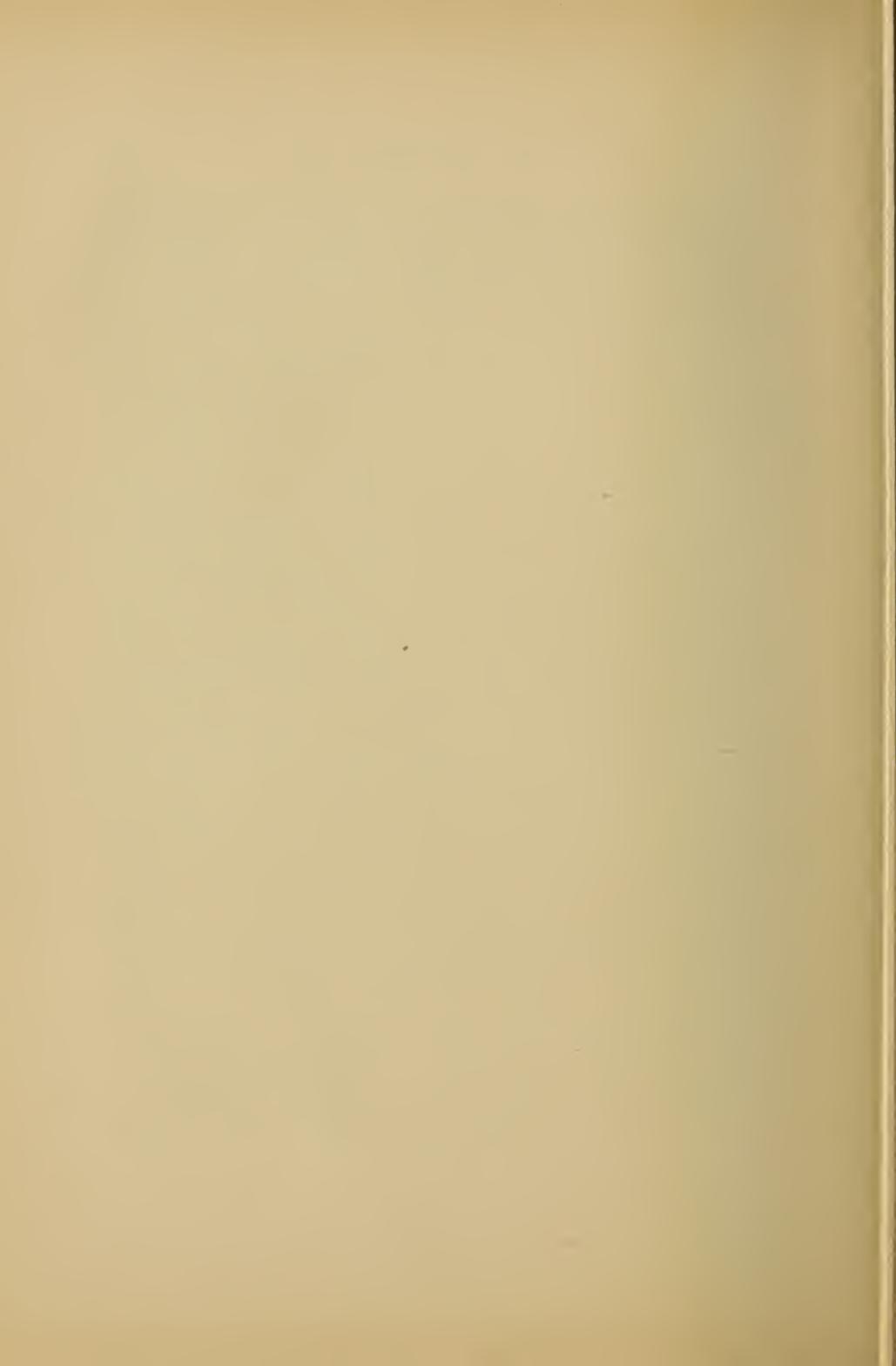
must be a state and a world where man comes into harmony with the divine plan and God's love and the universe are vindicated.

This final harmony is a condition, not a point in time or space. Salvation is a natural, wholesome, certain process, and heaven is not on Arcturus or the Pleiades, but is "within you."

There is no realm where law does not operate and govern. This is as true in the spiritual as in the physical universe. We are not to be saved by divine favors, or operations which conflict with natural law. The individual soul learns by experience. It discovers that it pays to do what is right and that doing wrong brings a sure penalty. Gradually, it becomes obedient to the higher law, just as the worlds rounded into shape under the stern but loving compulsion of natural law. As the result of obedience there is harmony between the soul and its Maker, and harmony brings the "peace that passeth all understanding." Hell is the punishment that follows wrong doing, and will not last forever. Heaven is the condition of harmony existing between the soul and its environment, which includes not only this transient life, but God, the soul's Creator and final destiny.

Viewed from the standpoint of the individual the world sometimes seems unjust, cruel, remorseless. But experience teaches us to view the world as a whole, its conflicting passions the instruments of progress, its seeming injustices but incidents in a cosmic plan which ultimately means the highest good of all.

Sometimes we seem to see in glimpses into the Divine plan that what we call justice is not the only or even the most desirable object; that right is relative and often impossible to ascertain with our poor finite vision; and that righteousness is only a partial goal. There are other qualities that are of great, even transcendent, value in making up the sum-total of life—sacrifice, love, pain, defeat, struggle. These educate the soul and make it grow. Would it be a moral universe in which there was no injustice and where no struggle was necessary to overcome temptation? The evolution of a nervous system made man susceptible to countless exquisite pains unknown to the protozoon. Likewise, the evolution of a moral sense renders the soul capable of suffering torments that are absent from the animal that has no moral instincts. Would we, to avoid the penalties of a higher organization—physical and moral—go back to the formless, simple structure of the lower animals? It is the part of wisdom to recognize these evident truths. A highly organized being is impossible without attendant liability to suffering, and the pains and struggles that come as the result of living surrounded by wrong and imperfection, push the soul on in its upward evolution toward its ultimate goal—a likeness with God.



## RELIGION AS AN EXPERIENCE

I HAVE been discussing religion as a theory. That is theology or the philosophy of religion. But religion is an inner life, an experience, rather than any speculative doctrine as to God, man and the universe. The different phases of religion as an experience may be summarized as follows:

1. Man's proper relation to God, which is the basis of all religious experience.

2. The manner in which right relations with God should be maintained—that is, modes of worship.

3. Man's inner religious life—the conscious reactions of the soul under the influence of religious impulses.

So intimately are these three conceptions interwoven, that it is difficult to separate them in any adequate discussion of the problems they suggest.

1. It is not to be expected that all men will see God in the same attributes or modes of manifestation. God shows Himself in various ways to His children. Some possess the vision which "sees God in clouds or hears Him in the wind." Some see Him in the reddening bars of a golden sunset or in the silver evening star—serene sentinel of a countless heavenly host. He may be read in geologic strata, mute relics of eons past, or in the delicate tissues of the human

frame where adaptations of infinite complexity and beauty are manifest.

And some find God in their own souls—an inner consciousness that tells them God has been there and left a trace of Himself in feeling and emotion and sacrifice and prayer. It is not essential what kind of glass there may be in the soul's cathedral windows. The vital thing is the altar where, in the "dim religious light," the soul finds its ultimate kinship with the Divine.

2. Nor is it necessary for all to worship in the same way. Souls are prisms through which the white light of truth is broken up into many different colors. Reverence and worship may be expressed in ecstatic frenzy, as with Southern negroes in the midst of a "protracted meeting;" or in the serene and stately formality of high church ritual, every phrase precisely modulated, every gesture carefully toned down. Conventionality would crowd out religion from some and foster it in others. There is room for all in the great temple without crowding or jealous interference one with the other.

Forms of religious worship, broadly speaking, adapt themselves to the needs of their adherents. We need not ridicule the savage who worships his idol, or believes in the mysterious efficacy of charms and amulets. He would be lost in the Sistine Chapel with its heavenly choir and priceless pictures. The Quaker worships in a plain chapel with wooden benches, the Italian in a marble temple adorned with

gems of art. Which is best? That which satisfies the soul. The Cromlechs of the Druids, the massive temples of the Egyptians, the winged lions of Assyria, the deathless Parthenon, the Gothic Cathedral. We may be saints in steam-heated houses as well as on St. Simeon's pillar. We may worship God in the soul's inner sanctuary as acceptably as in "long-drawn aisle and fretted vault," with the most gorgeous ceremonial that genius can devise. The law of filial obedience, of loving companionship, knows no sacred place, no magic formula, no mysterious rites. It demands only the sincere worship, the inner consecration of a loyal soul.

3. To enrich the soul with a wealth of religious experience is entirely possible. And yet it need not be, as many imagine, a purely emotional process. The layman at least wants intellectual conviction rather than soul ecstasy. Even prayer must be on a rational basis—a communion with its roots in reason rather than in mysticism. There are souls always living in a pentecostal baptism. There are more who can not reach the heights of feeling and who intensely dislike emotional display. That form of worship is best which arms the soul for its battles, as the steel is tempered by fire. Mrs. Humphry Ward says: "Learn to seek God, not in any event of past history, but in your own soul—in the constant verifications of experience, in the life of Christian love."

4. There is a world of beauty outside of man—the natural world by which we are surrounded. The

loveliness of the tree and flower and sunlit lake, the sublimity of the mountain, the grandeur of the sea, appeal powerfully to the dullest brain. But our noblest fellowship is with our human brothers, the fellow voyagers we meet along the ocean paths of life. They have insistent passions, or tender consciences, or quivering souls, as we have. They respond to the friendly touch of love, or flame with hate, or quicken with hope, as we wave to them our friendly greetings. Enter into their souls we can not, for the real soul of man lives in splendid isolation. But when hands are outstretched in friendly help and hearts beat in sympathy and love, their countenances glow and there is a redemptive grace and a transfiguration.

Man's spiritual attitude toward his fellow men is an important element in his own religious experience. He who does not realize that he is living in a world of struggling, suffering fellow mortals is blind to the heavenly vision of self-sacrifice, the beauty of living for others. He does not realize his own fullest possibilities until he has made for some soul a vicarious atonement. This doctrine derives its virtue not from some debt paid or ransom discharged. It is by virtue of sacrifice and not under the law that it transfigures and saves. Like all sacrifice its benefits are more to the donor than to the beneficiary. Wonderful law of life—that he who gives, receives, and in greater measure and abundance as his gift is rich and rare.

It is an obvious truth that the soul needs every possible spiritual help and consolation. We are in a

world of sin and suffering. Clouds surround us on every side. We are travelers in a narrow valley beyond whose rugged mountain-sides our vision can not reach. We can see only a strip of blue sky above, with an occasional gleam of sunshine; sometimes mists and clouds obscure and storms beat themselves out above our hapless heads. Out of the prison of the present we can not escape. We were helpless to determine where our lot would be cast, what land or age or surroundings would be ours. We are alike powerless to stay our steps at the cold stream of death, but must plunge in and land upon its farther unseen shore.

While we are in the flesh we are buffeted by misfortunes, beset by temptations, stormed by sorrows, which come not "singly but in battalions." Our friends forsake us. Riches take wings and fly away. Death invades our homes and takes the choicest flowers. Ambition lures us on only to deceive and leave us following an ever fading mirage. Pain, grim and pitiless, seizes upon our bodies. Racked with suffering we cry out in agony at the injustice that scourges us as if we were guilty of the blackest crimes. And all the while the laws that govern matter and spirit hold their serene and undisputed course, apparently caring not at all for the bruised flesh or wounded souls of men.

Man's life on earth has been ignobly likened to a frightened bird which, during the storm of a winter night, dashes into a brilliant banquet room, with its

flashing lights and summer warmth and color. Bewildered by the unusual spectacle, it flies at random in various directions, meeting different obstacles, until, almost despairing and exhausted, it escapes by chance into the desolate blackness from which it came. The simile must not be admitted, for if I am a mere bird of passage, a snowflake that melts into the ocean's billows, identity forever lost, this life becomes an unbearable mockery. But if I am a child of destiny, capable of infinite growth, the source of limitless good to my fellows—life is merely a transient shadow in an eternal gleam of sunshine.

Religion as an experience operates in an invisible world. Its outward results the world sees, and judges our religion from what it sees; but the fountains of religious experience lie within the depths of the soul. Is the invisible merely a fiction or is it real? Is it a figment of the imagination, conjured by hope or created by fear? All history, our own souls, loudly answer No! Across the bloody pages of the past rise the spectres of kingdoms vanished, of nations overthrown by invisible forces. Proudly did they rear their thrones and establish their dominions upon the known laws of force, the wide foundations of selfishness and pride. But they toppled over before the love of a Nazarene, the "still, small voice" of a sage, the conscience of a saint. The cry of an innocent child is often mightier than the bugle of the warrior, for its human appeal arms heroic souls with the panoply of a mighty determination. The human soul is

a sea in which all tides are born and whose far-flung waters wash every shore of life.

This is not the realm of mysticism, a garden of the soul's exotics, a twilight borderland where certainty ends and speculation begins. It is the charted land of sure experiences, where the soul lives its true life, apart from the base materialism of the senses. If we were as sure of a fixed result in the spiritual as in the physical realm, our task would be simple, for we could multiply our knowledge by patient exploration with scientific accuracy. But the soul is a complex of forces and tendencies, the elements and properties of which are not susceptible of exact chemical analysis. Its subtle shadings defy description. Its varied colors elude the artist's brush. Its subtle tones suggest the harmonies of all instruments, with a different music, depending on the quality of pipes and strings and overtones. Raphael's genius could make the soul shine through the face as in the Sistine Madonna, and Handel could evoke the noblest human emotions with his Messiah choruses, but neither could disentangle the silken threads of the soul's web and measure its feelings, its inwrought sensibilities, its inmost longings. Psychology is, therefore, more or less empirical, and religion addresses itself to this mystic synthesis—the loftiest but most elusive of all existences.

I have already said that the religious experience of the layman is different from that of the preacher. It is likely to be less intense and more intellectual.

In fact, the preacher often wonders why the layman places so little apparent stress on his religious life, forgetting that most of his energies are absorbed in daily tasks. On the other hand, it is a source of constant wonder to the layman that the preacher can talk so much of ecstasy and the inner life, can live so completely without the sphere of material things which daily occur. And yet, with this difference in emphasis and in the angle of vision, I think there is much common ground. For, while the layman can not talk so freely of his experiences, the hunger of the heart is there and must be constantly fed. He knows that religion is a necessity for the normal soul, that churches are ministries that are constantly needed. He knows that they are corrective to the moral strabismus too often acquired in business life. That they lift the soul into an atmosphere of peace and serenity which serves as a moral bath, refreshing and reinvigorating it for the stern duties that lie before it. Here is a fresh infusion of spiritual energy and of the loftiest ideals. For religion is the spiritual battery which recharges the soul. All through the week the soul gives off from its reservoir of moral energy, as the battery furnishes power to the motor. When the Sabbath dawns the light streams in from above, the great currents are reversed, the soul's depleted reservoirs are filled up with spiritual life and energy, and man goes forth a new creature, full of power and joy and hope, into his accustomed world.

## RELIGION AS A GUIDE TO CONDUCT

**I**F I should take a text for this lay sermon it would be from James: "Faith without works is dead."

The unknown author of this "Epistle of Straw," as Luther called it, was chiefly concerned about conduct, which Matthew Arnold declared to be "three-fourths of life." "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Man is not an isolated fact in this world. His domain is bounded on the north, the south, the east and the west by other lives. Instead of doing as he pleases he must relate his conduct to those whose lives touch his and whom every act of his vitally affects. Thus there springs into existence a realm of social obligation which rises into the sphere of religious duty. Love to God is not enough. Love to our fellow man is the second great Commandment, and this introduces us into a complex problem of our duties and relations to our fellows. Is there a guide in this labyrinth that shall bring us safely out at last? Is there a sure-footed path for the soul amid the temptations and dangers that beset it in its earthly journey?

There are two ways in which religion may serve as a guide to conduct. The first is by telling us what

is right and what is wrong. The second is by furnishing sanctions for right doing and living. Book and church and conscience and reason contribute to our moral standards, and through them we are fairly apprised as to what we may or may not do.

The great roads of life are for the most part clearly marked with sign posts at the principal corners. For thousands of years men have been blazing trails in the wilderness of life. Religion is the compass which enables us to locate the pole-star and orient ourselves amid the moral perplexities of life.

I see no reason why we should not make use of every religion, every book, every philosophy. We may learn from ancient Chinese moralists and from Hindu mystics. The prophets and psalmists of Israel uttered glorious notes of praise and wisdom. The philosophers of Greece came very close to the line of inspiration in their speculations on human life and duty. There is not a school of philosophic thought from the Eleatics to New England Transcendentalism which does not teach that there are certain moral standards of action and that wisdom consists in living up to those standards so far as possible. We may travel through this world with the confident conviction that all the wise and good souls of the past are with us as we struggle toward the light and the right.

The chief function of religion is to serve as a guide to human conduct. Conduct is its acid test. Assent to a creed is a mockery unless it is followed by right action. Intellectual belief alone can not save

a soul or serve as a basis for social institutions. If we live right, if we "do justly, and love mercy," we are not far from the Kingdom. Jesus was forever proclaiming the necessity of good works. He was not content with forms or professions. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." This is the foundation stone of his religion. It elevates to supreme importance the religion of the spirit and of good works.

The universe is woven in one great piece. In His infinite loom God has set the fabrics which are matter, and established the movements of the shuttles, which are nature's laws, and the result is all of one texture following one supreme design.

"Thus at the roaring loom of Time I ply,  
And weave the living garment of the Deity."

Goethe could understand the magnificent sweep of this process and the marvelous unity of the result. Throw upon throw, thread after thread, the great loom speeds on its work and each of us adds his own individual contribution to the pattern. The blood-red of sacrifice, the lily-white of purity, the dashing colors of courage, or the modest gray of service, these are our lives woven into the many-colored fabric. Our part may unconsciously be played, but it is the mission of religion to make us conscious sharers in the process, joyfully entering into the great design with all our powers and faculties.

Nearly all of civilization rests on self-sacrifice.

In primitive ages man saves up a part of his store of fruits or meats for winter use. By a similar self-control in later stages of development he lays up part of what he has produced to serve his pleasure or increase production. Thus we have houses, cattle, enclosed lands—in short, Capital. Altruism is born and teaches him to continue his acts of sacrifice by sharing his products with others, and lo, a miracle is wrought. After giving largely he has more left than he had before. Aeschylus paints Prometheus chained to a rock, with the vultures preying upon his vitals. Each night there grew as much as the birds of prey devoured by day. When love prompts us to give ourselves in social service we do not lose but are better and finer than before. The soul with a wide horizon of sympathy is richer than the narrow one which counts its visible wealth by millions.

Religion of the right kind will make us better neighbors, better citizens, better in all the affairs of life. We are learning that selfishness does not pay and that all are bound together in the bonds of a common fate. Tuberculosis in the next block means danger to our own loved ones. Dirty alleys and vicious moral conditions in our town prove that others' lives are vital to ours. The slums in the crowded East Side affect luxury on Fifth Avenue. An epidemic in Chinatown endangers Nob Hill. Science is thus a moral agent, teaching us by unanswerable argument our Christian duty.

In theology also we are learning the solidarity of

society. This has been slow, for procrustean creeds have stood in the way. Social necessities are forcing their lessons on theology as well as on statesmanship. It is being borne in upon us from every direction that we are fellow travelers on the same great ship, across the same stormy ocean of life, and all destined to land in the same haven of happiness or suffer shipwreck together. To social truths religion comes and offers its sanctions. All men are brothers, children of the same loving Father. We must be satisfied with nothing less than the good of all men, of every race, every social and moral status. We see how all truth converges at this focus. In its ultimate lessons science is moral, teaching the danger of disease, the safety in obeying psychical laws. Art is moral, for art means beauty, and beauty means health, and health is found only in being in harmony with the laws of our being. Philosophy teaches these same lessons, but religion says that science and art and philosophy are moral because God so ordered the universe that every truth, of whatever color or significance or purpose, harmonizes with all other truths. Moral wrong produces moral disease, and right living results in moral soundness and health. This is God's part in the great drama of the universe.

In the famous Judgment scene in which Jesus prescribes the rules for entrance into eternal life it is significant that he says nothing about belief or ritual. He does not ask what you believe or whether you belong to the established church. "I was hungry and

ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty and ye gave me to drink; naked and ye clothed me; sick and ye visited me." This is the gospel of good works. These are the tests that approve or condemn our lives. A man may say his prayers, or count his beads, or give intellectual assent to a creed a thousand times, but if he tells lies, cheats his neighbors, or wrongs the poor, his religion is worthless. In the last analysis the judgment of the world is not far wrong. And the world, impatient with theories or mere professions, looks at one's conduct as not only "three-fourths of life," but as the only invariable test of one's religion.

## THE LAYMAN AND THE CHURCH

WE think it one of the fortunate signs of the times that laymen are becoming interested and active church workers. Fortunate, to be sure, for the laymen themselves, doubly fortunate for the Church. Too often, laymen have been considered merely as raw material out of which to convert steady going, regular paying parishioners. I do not mean to suggest that they have been exploited by the ministry for that purpose. But it has been tacitly conceded that all the spiritual functions of the church should be performed by the minister, while laymen were interested but passive observers. The economic principle known as the "division of labor" has set the preacher apart from his congregation, living on a pedestal of religious experience, and has made his hearers passive receivers of the inspiration which flows to them through his super-heated soul.

To the average layman religion is more a matter of intellect and less a matter of emotion. The preacher looks out upon life as it should be—the layman as it is. The preacher measures a theory by the yardstick of right—the layman asks "Will it work?" The former wants to know if an event can be justified by ethical standards, the latter analyzes events much as a surgeon dissects his subject. The preacher is an idealist; the layman a pragmatist. Always there are these two

phases of truth and two angles of vision. The preacher calls his flock with a trumpet to ascend the mount and enjoy with him the beatific vision. The layman replies, "I am too busy down here in the dust and toil of actual life." One tends toward an excessive otherworldliness, the other toward an undue materialism.

These historic relationships are rapidly melting in the new days and conditions that are now upon us. We are nearing each other both in function and along the lines of social contact. The preacher lays aside his air of dignity with his clerical garb. He studies practical methods that he may administer the business affairs of his flock with keener insight and surer success.

On the other hand we see the inspiring spectacle of laymen everywhere pressing forward in religious activities. They may be unwilling as ever to indulge in emotional exhibitions, but these are no longer regarded as the only proof of religious feeling or conviction. Religion is largely a matter of conduct and the layman feels that he can engage in religious work not only with propriety but also from real liking. He becomes interested in the growing business concerns of the church and gradually takes on more of its spiritual activities. A great reservoir of business sagacity, energy and enthusiasm has thus been opened up among devoted and intelligent laymen.

What may the layman do for the church? There are several suggestions which seem to be pertinent.

1. The fundamental need is of course financial

support. Millions and yet more millions must be poured out if we are to reach and satisfy the world's need. Hearts everywhere have been touched as never before by human misery. And never were responses so liberal or so freely given. The churches may well serve as the organizations through which, by means of hospitals, missions, and philanthropic work of all kinds, the layman's dollars may be transmitted into golden help for all who suffer.

2. The wisdom and good judgment resulting from strenuous experience in practical affairs may be zealously directed to the business side of church administration. There are always problems to solve, and the challenge to the layman is insistent and spurs him on to his best efforts. The making of a church budget, the collection of annual revenues, wise purchase of supplies, economical expenditure of funds, are important problems for every church. Perhaps even more important is the wise determination of church activities.

3. The influence of laywomen must not be overlooked. In all social affairs and in many purely business matters, their judgment and co-operation are invaluable. Their spiritual zeal is of course traditional. Without it many flourishing churches would have perished for want of support. The qualities which women offer to church life and management are indispensable and must be fully utilized.

4. Laymen are largely responsible for the moral standing of their church in the community. If their

lives are honest and of good repute they are the very bulwarks of true religion. The church is judged largely by the lives of its members. What a tremendous influence churches might wield if all their members would measure their activities by the Golden Rule. I look for the day when religion shall cease to be regarded as a mere pious sentimentality, but shall be considered as a part of the normal working life of the individual. It is needless to say that such an ideal, if realized, would mean increased activity in Sunday schools, young people's societies, and social service work, as well as in the purely religious activities of the church.

5. A new age is dawning. Old barriers are being destroyed and life is revealing itself as an old fact in ever new garb and fashion.

Society is becoming more and more complex, and new agencies must be employed to meet its new situations and problems. We are on the verge of profound reconstructions along social and religious lines. The genius and enthusiasm of all our people, laymen and ministers, men and women, should be organized and thrown into this vast and all-important work. Here is a field that challenges the finest skill, the trained experience, and the solid virtues of all classes of church members. Millionaire and day laborer, women of fashion and men in homespun, the classical scholar and the ignorant peasant, may well join hands without class or social distinctions in the great work of world regeneration.

## THE SOCIAL MESSAGE OF JESUS

IT is well known that Jesus laid down no specific theories of civil government or social organization. If his saying to the lawyer about the tribute money can be construed as having a political meaning, it was in favor of the existing order. Nowhere in his reported utterances can we learn whether he favored the monarchical system then universal or one involving greater personal freedom. In the field of economics he was equally silent. It is true that he said to the rich young man—"Go, sell all thou hast and give to the poor." It is equally certain that this reproof was personal, provoked by the sordidness of the young man's life, and can in no sense be given a general application. Such an interpretation would be so strained and distorted as totally to lack justification. In another place he uttered the profound truth that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. There is not the slightest basis for the inference that he favored the abolition of private property which some profess to see in this saying. The advocates of what is termed Christian Socialism are compelled to resort to forced interpretation and far-fetched inferences to support the theory that Jesus favored Socialism, or indeed any other form of economic organization.

Jesus was essentially a spiritual teacher. Never

did he make the mistake of substituting material for spiritual agencies. Man does not live by bread alone. He lives by the things of the spirit. He is not merely an animal, he is an immortal soul. And the spiritual life of man is the real one—one that transcends all questions of matter and time, however important these may be. Jesus bases his whole appeal, his new Kingdom of God, on the individual soul. Contrary to Jewish custom, nowhere did he prescribe community salvation or social atonements. The human soul is of infinite importance. The supreme goal is individual righteousness. It is as clear as the noon-day sun that this was the cornerstone of his gospel. Nowhere does he establish a code of social economics to cleanse the world's sin or lighten its woes. The true basis of Christian doctrine is a right Individualism. The necessary corollary from this axiom is Brotherhood. And the only road which Christ points out to attain brotherhood is the royal road of Unselfishness.

To develop Personality thus becomes a part of Christian duty as well as of social obligation. We may reassure ourselves that when we advocate individual growth and development we not only are sound economically but are in harmony with Christ's teaching. A religious or social ideal which removes from the individual the deepest incentives to self-improvement must necessarily fail. This is profoundly true in the moral world, as evidenced by the constant reiteration of Jesus in every sermon and parable.

Experience has taught us it is no less true in the material struggles of life.

In his long history man has discovered that incentives are necessary to develop his highest qualities. He has learned that it is only a divine discontent that drives him on to his noblest efforts.

Lazy contentedness never yet dug a canal, painted a picture, or discovered a new star. Hunger is an enemy to be faced and sometimes feared, but it brings out man's most daring and successful achievements. Sir Walter Scott, writing under the sting of financial failure, creates his noblest works of fiction. Robert Burns, with the cruel lash of poverty on his bleeding back, gives out his sweetest songs to an expectant world. Everywhere in literature or life, song or work, it is stern necessity that achieves results that are worthy to live. Man builds for himself a cathedral. He is not satisfied with the hut of a savage. He paints a picture, for no purpose that is practical. He builds a great literature, that it may feed nothing but his immaterial self. He is conscious of inner strivings that lift him above the clod and bid him ally himself to the immortal and the divine. It is the very essence of sound sociology that these longings should be encouraged. But if you develop personality, socialism is impossible, individualism is indispensable.

Sentimental people are prone to jump at each new social theory as containing promise of the millennium, especially if it be given a Christian label. They should remember that each new idea is on trial.

The burden of proof is on its advocates. The presumption is in favor of the present order. What the race has saved up in institutions, and ideals, and the economic organization of society, is presumptively better than the mere theories of social reformers. Professors and reformers may accumulate correct social data, but deduce false conclusions from their facts. We distrust their theories not because we distrust their motives but because we distrust their judgment. Enthusiasm for ideals is frequently allowed to eclipse an ancient experience in the history of human development. There are some things as eternal as the seas and mountains. The basic facts of human nature are comparatively stable throughout the centuries.

One of the most serious mistakes of reformers generally is to ascribe the cause of reforms to institutions rather than to changes in the individual. They expect to see a new heaven and earth if you pass a Prohibitory amendment, introduce profit-sharing in industry, or establish a League of Nations. Human beings to them are as clay to the potter, to be shaped according to some preconceived social ideal. There is of course an element of truth in this theory.

But the fundamental fact remains that all reforms that are to reinspire social ideals must begin with the individual.

Christ taught, of course, that personal religion has social implications. It is not enough to have the Kingdom of Heaven within you. There is the ever-

lasting relation of the Me to the Not-Me; of man to his fellow men; of the individual to the State. Where is the formula that will solve this riddle that is as old as man, that will convince him that when he is saving others he is saving himself? This dualism of life is a fact we can not get rid of. We are conscious of being individual souls, and yet we are imbedded in a social mesh that determines the status in which all our activities function, and which we affect whenever we act at all. The old theology was satisfied if a man saved his own soul. The difficulty of the argument is that it is impossible for man to save himself. It is broadly true that while he is saving himself he is saving some one else.

So man is tossed on this sea of thought between two shores, neither of which can he make his secure habitation. If possible we must have a religion that will minister to the soul in both its inner life and its outer relations. The soul must become a strong, vigorous unit, and yet serve as a constituent element of a plastic social organism wide enough to take in all souls. The war, if it has taught us anything, has borne in upon our consciousness that man can not save himself, that he must be satisfied with nothing less than the salvation of all.

Christ no doubt meant this in those mystical phrases that have so puzzled the world—phrases that sometimes seem contradictory, because we fail to discern their deeper meaning. They seem vague and idealistic because spiritual truths can not be

stated in purely categorical terms. Neither can they be diagrammed or charted by physical processes. The smug statements that contain our various creeds evidently do not go deep enough. For when we are face to face with a great world tragedy they do not satisfy the need or the hunger that comes to all inquiring souls.

The social message of Jesus is based on brotherhood. To overcome selfishness in society is the constant struggle of the statesman, as it is the aim of the moralist. There is no economic prescription that can accomplish the result. For purely material forces might makes right. It is only in the spiritual realm that the solution is to be sought. However impracticable it may seem at first thought, the eternal truth is that brotherhood is the necessary basis of all lasting peace, and that unselfishness is the only key that can unlock the door into the realms of social happiness.

## THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS

A PROMINENT professor of church history has recently written a book in which the chief query is—Will the Church survive in the changing social order? The book is well written and from many of its facts and conclusions we have no desire to dissent. The tone, however, is one of challenge and criticism, challenge of the existing social order, criticism of present church attitudes. Perhaps in no single place could one put his finger on a phrase and say: Here is a new social philosophy or outline of a new industrial scheme. The “atmosphere” of the book is, however, one that implies that the present social order is obsolete, and that a new one is now being developed to take its place. A second inference is that it is the duty of the Church to adapt itself and its message to the new social theories so widely heralded. The questions the book discusses are of profound interest and universal asking, and are fairly representative of what is going on in the public mind. It is for this reason we consider it worthy of brief attention.

A chief assumption which runs through the book is that the present social order is out of date, that it has fallen behind human needs, and that it is in a process of rapid transition. This transition is swift enough to be styled almost a revolution. Things are going to be changed quickly and the Church must

hasten its pace to keep up with the progress society in its industrial aspects is making. There is a second assumption, even more implicitly taken for granted, that the only thing the Church can safely do is to change its ideals or methods, or both, to correspond with these portended changes in industrial and social life.

A conservative-progressive may well hesitate to give assent to either of these assumptions, one an assumption of fact, the other of theory, in their entirety. It may well be conceded that social forces have burst many of their restrictions and are flooding the fields of human effort without apparent order or restraint. On every hand we hear revolutionary programs which are to regenerate society and restore at once the golden age. Socialistic theories have had an apparently enormous growth. The old is no longer entitled to reverence. We must reconstruct society anew. We have no faith in the fathers. We are wiser than they. The accumulated wisdom and experience of the past must be brushed aside as of little value. Man has been struggling upward for thousands of years with most of his energies misdirected and his efforts wasted. We thought great advances had been made when Magna Charta was won, when the Charter of Right was obtained, when representative government was established, when the United States of America was founded on a professed basis of democracy, the essence of which is the right of the majority to rule.

We are now told this leads to tyranny by a majority—an unendurable proposition. Instead of rule by a majority it is proposed to substitute a rule of each class by itself, which is the central idea of the soviet system in Russia. This is a reversion to the Guild system of the Middle Ages, when the builders, the weavers, the merchants, formed their own rules and governed themselves apart from the community. The Plumb plan of railroad management, quoted approvingly although guardedly in the book above referred to, is an adaptation of this Middle Age system, which arose only out of necessity in the anarchic conditions of the times.

The adoption of the soviet or class control would be the creation of an *imperium in imperio* which would tend to disintegrate society into a thousand clashing units. Theoretically it is the opposite of any general scheme of socialism or social control. It would substitute for the so-called tyranny of the majority the successive tyranny of countless small units of the body politic. And this in the so-called interest of freedom!

It is not our purpose to do more than call attention to how far afield most of these heralded new doctrines are from the accumulated experience and wisdom of the ages. If they are to be adopted it should be with our eyes open and after full and free discussion with no camouflaging the issues. There is at least the fair presumption that the past has produced the best of which humanity has been capable, and that this should be preserved till something better can be obtained.

One type of illustration in this little book is constantly used. It is the familiar historical allusion. But of all fallacies the historic parallel is the deadliest. Almost impossible it is to reconstruct a former age and discover all the countless influences at work to mold and determine its fate—influences historical, social, moral, geographical. Historians themselves do not agree, and there have been dozens of theories as to why Greece and Rome fell, all of them exclusive and asserted with the utmost dogmatism. *Post hoc propter hoc* is a familiar argument, which deceives no one who has lived long enough to think clearly for himself.

It is still a moot question whether society will reconstruct itself into a new social order. Already we see conservative forces at work to restore equilibrium to our sorely harassed social order. We do not know what changes if any are to be adopted, or what direction they shall take. Perhaps it would be well to wait the outcome before committing the Church too far to changes which can apply to society only in prophecy. And to prophesy is not only dangerous, but of little practical value.

Just to preserve the record and that there be no chance of misunderstanding, perhaps it would be well enough to state at this time that the writer is not opposed to proper changes in legislation or economics. He professes himself a progressive. He is in sympathy with every forward movement, in politics, in morals, in theology, in church administration. Only it must

be proved that proposed changes really constitute an advance. He admits that he is conservative enough to want to preserve all that is good out of the past until something better can take its place. He is progressive enough to welcome all honest inquiry and to advocate fearlessly whatever new or novel doctrines will really advance the cause of truth and justice. The world can not afford to take chances with every social theory that professes human betterment. On the other hand it can not afford to reject any plan, however revolutionary it may seem, which the deliberate judgment of mankind approves.

Another caution seems necessary in an age which apparently has taken off the brakes. In nearly every discussion we have seen, and likewise in the book referred to, it has been assumed that freedom in itself is a goal, almost a religion. At least no qualifications are stated. Every step in the direction of freedom is a step forward. If we can remove all fetters the human spirit will be happiest, noblest, best. Every great struggle of history, so goes the historical argument again, has been a struggle for freedom. Greece is cited, the Roman plebs, Dutch burghers, Cromwell's Puritans, Washington's Continentals. These are classical examples of those tremendous conflicts which have shattered thrones, and introduced new and glorious eras in human government. And so they are. The argument is plausible. Only it may be carried too far. In the very nature of things there must come a time when freedom—at least individual

freedom—must end. In the moral realm there is a point where freedom means moral anarchy. After you reach a certain stage the progress of society consists in a series of restrictions upon the freedom of individuals. The freshest illustration is the recent Prohibitory Amendment, which is a pronounced advance of the theory of social restriction into a realm for hundreds of years considered sacred to individual freedom. More and more society grows complex, and the old freedoms must be surrendered or circumscribed so as to give larger scope for the play of social rights and duties. The true position of our Church would seem to be plain—that we should advocate the freedoms that enable the human soul to grow and develop, the restrictions that prevent men from infringing upon that sacred realm that belongs to other souls.

The above is only preliminary. The real question is, What is the duty of the Church in our times? We may well be content to sink all questions of mere statement, or form of argument, in the presence of the profoundest question the Church in this age has been called upon to meet. And there can not well be too much discussion of this subject. The book we have simply taken as a text is eminently fair in considering this crucial matter, and we call attention to its fallacies only to bring out more clearly the main question at issue.

If the Church has a historic mission perhaps it would be better if it would remain true to that mission. It at least has no selfish motive to distract.

It has its eyes fixed, not on temporary advantages or political ends, but on magnificent ideals of truth and justice.

Why should the Church change its ideals even if it knew it could derive temporary advantage, if thereby it sacrificed its continuity of purpose and its ultimate goal? It may be unpopular for the moment. Men may rage against it if it refuses to surrender its priceless jewels to their selfish purposes. They may pass resolutions against it, declare there is no God, abolish its ceremonies, banish its priests and advocates. So much the worse for the Church's enemies. For we may well be assured that their victory can be only short-lived. The passions of the hour will subside. Reason will regain her throne. The soul of man will again demand religious inspiration, God will come back to earth and the Church will resume her ancient functions.

Is it the mission of the Church to enter into politics, or adjust economic disputes, or decide questions as to the social order? Is the Church a material or a spiritual agency? Is it to be a referee in industrial disputes or a guide in spiritual affairs? Should it plunge into the arena of economic battles, espousing the cause that seems at the time best, or hold itself firmly to its spiritual functions?

Sometimes we have been so busy with religion as a speculative theology that we have forgotten its practical bearing. There are two commandments in Jesus' creed—love to God and love to man. The

brotherhood of man is the corollary and crown of the Fatherhood of God—that by which the latter becomes of value. Our Liberal Churches have been emphasizing religion as a guide to conduct, but the Christian world at large still believes that religion is chiefly a preparation for a future existence.

Wherever we have tried to put the Golden Rule into practise we have gravitated into Socialism, mystic cults, dangerous economic doctrines. Many churches, carried away by altruistic motives and sympathy for suffering, are prone to think they ought to engage in economic contests. The province of the Church, in my judgment, is purely spiritual. It has no commission to invade the field of economics, or to engage in political disputes. The only question it should ask of an institution or an industrial process is—Is it right or wrong? It may not ask whether it is wasteful or extravagant, or harmful to the state. It may be extremely unwise and hurtful, and yet the Church as a Church should not interfere.

The relations between capital and labor, profit-sharing, housing conditions, and questions of that character, are economic or social, not religious. We should be clear in our thinking and recognize our limitations as well as our rights.

The field of religious work should be carefully delimited that we may conserve our energy and influence. The Church has a special and precise function, to stand guard over and minister to the spirit of man. It has a special authority for, a peculiar fitness

to perform, this noble, divine mission. Only when it descends into the arena of political or economic strife, where its training does not enable it to see clearly all the factors involved, is it shorn of its influence and power.

The objection will no doubt be made that most things directly or indirectly affect moral values and have moral effects. These, you may say, come very properly within the sphere of the Church. But a little clear thinking will convince us of the error of such a contention. Most religious views and actions affect the welfare of the state. Should the state, therefore, interfere as it did in the Middle Ages with religious beliefs? If not, neither should the Church interfere with matters which are the proper subject of legislation. Separation of Church and State is one of the precious heritages of the great struggles for liberty from Magna Charta to the Great War. Each institution performs its true function in the most effective way when it frankly recognizes its logical frontiers and confines itself to its own proper sphere.

Another objection is that this method is too slow, that the Church has a vast machinery at its command by which it can speed up the processes of social reform and reconstruction.

Probably in individual instances that is true. If we are looking only at the immediate problem to be solved we might be justified in leaving our own territory and invading the frontiers of evil with all the

militant weapons of the Church. But religion is not for a day. The Church is to live on and on. There will be other battles to fight. There will be other injustices to remedy. Evil checked in one direction finds a way to appear in another and perhaps more dangerous guise. Moral and spiritual forces should be maintained at their utmost efficiency for the long battles of an infinite future. If they are thrown into every fray, however worthy, they will be weakened for service in the realm in which they operate to the best advantage.

We are frequently impatient to engage the Church in social struggles because indirect methods seem so weak and ineffective. Invisible forces seem to many unreal and non-existent. Nevertheless, they are often the most potent of all. The air we breathe is invisible yet firmly envelops and conditions every act of our lives. Religion is just such an enveloping force, impalpable yet very real, invisible yet binding with stronger bands than iron. It is the universal solvent. It proclaims no social panacea, champions no set form of government or economics, yet enters into and determines these by the direction and energy it imparts to the human spirit.

If the toiling masses have lost faith in the Church, as some assert but which can not be conceded, for they probably have as much confidence now as they ever have had, the Church will not regain that confidence by abdicating its functions and catering to the passing demands which change their form with each

decade. It must retain its dignity, its true spiritual tone and potency.

In the great social reconstructions now going on the Church is to be a molder of events. But it will not succeed by dictating legislation. Its mission is to furnish the pattern of society's future for the statesman to weave into the living fabric. It will furnish the new social design, and that design must come from Judea and not from Potsdam, not from Machiavelli but from Jesus of Nazareth.

The Church, as a Church, is not well enough informed to dogmatize on specific economic questions. It is manifestly unable to prescribe hours of labor, or fix a minimum wage, or advocate government ownership of railroads, or any of the various remedies for social ills that are forever springing up and attracting attention for their brief day. We have recently witnessed an attempt to settle in ideal fashion the conflicting boundaries of various European states. The problem in the background seemed a comparatively simple one of race and language. But the attempt to realize this ideal in practise unchained a lot of formidable forces that had been unnoticed, but which suddenly blazed forth with an intensity that was amazing. To our consternation, we found the problem bound up confusedly with questions of geography, of trade outlets, of natural resources such as coal and oil, of historic associations, and cultural ideals.

What forward constructive social work may the Church undertake? Intensely interested as it is in

men what may it do to humanize the conditions under which they live and work? Reforms are needed and no one wishes the Church to be an idle spectator of the human comedy.

The Church may well undertake to create the atmosphere in which social institutions operate. It should foster a spirit of unselfishness, that humane quality of thought which should envelop and determine the relations between all classes of employers and employees. Men are brothers—this should be its slogan, and it should firmly insist that brotherliness permeate all our processes of production and distribution. Above even the necessities of producing the things whereby we live should stand the motto that men are not machines and that their interests should be a first social consideration. The conditions under which they live affect not only their material well being but their immortal destinies. As members of the great human family whatever affects them injuriously hurts all classes of society. The Church should take a friendly interest in all those matters that concern man in his human capacity as distinguished from the social structure which for the time being has been adopted. It may avoid caste, bring classes into friendly association, point out the advantage of unselfish co-operation, and above all the necessity of absolute justice.

Its sympathy for men and women is the one invaluable element the Church may contribute. In the maze of social questions this should be the beacon

light which it kindles and maintains. No light burden; no insignificant task. It may well call forth its wisest thought, its noblest efforts.

If the Church remains true to its fundamental truths and principles it need have no fear of losing its power and influence. Society has gone through countless changes and revolutions in the course of human history. But above the ocean of time the essential truths of religion glitter like stars in the firmament of humanity. They are the changeless, eternal facts in a changing world.



## RELIGION AND BUSINESS

CHRISTIANITY has been in the world nearly two thousand years. If Christ should return to-day what would he say? What attitude would he take with regard to the difficult problems that perplex society? Are we really as well as nominally Christian? To what extent has the Christian spirit permeated business relations? Are Christian ideals visible in the daily life of the people?

1. I make bold to assert that ethical standards in business are higher to-day than ever before. There is a noticeable tendency to recognize the human element in all our commercial dealings. We have recently taken the advanced position that labor is not a commodity, but the laborer possesses a soul and is entitled to better and higher consideration than heretofore. Greater regard is paid to hours of labor, sanitation, a living wage, housing conditions, school privileges, and recreation.

Gradually the whole field of labor is being lifted from one of grinding toil and poverty into a condition of self-respect and self-support. The laborer is becoming a social and spiritual as well as an economic asset.

2. The standards of commercial honesty are much higher than ever before. There is a constantly increasing number of business men who realize that

honesty is the best policy. They are taking these advanced ethical positions from moral as well as financial considerations. Society, too, has roused itself to the necessity of protecting its weaker members from the disastrous effects of the social strife. The old doctrine was *laissez faire*. The fields of business were open to all, and no restraints were put on the more efficient or the unscrupulous. The law, too, operated only to protect against violence or open fraud, and never professed to intervene in social relations to even up the natural differences between individuals. In recent years, however, we have invented a new social conscience. Society regards its human units as valuable social assets. For their protection and increased efficiency society provides schools of many varieties and enacts laws which throw around them the benevolent guidance of its collective wisdom.

3. We are not compelled, however, to rely wholly on legal enactments in current business and politics. Evidences are multiplying that, in spite of the widely heralded corruption in these fields, much of which is unfortunately but too true, there is a higher code of business and professional ethics than ever before. I think we can perceive among business men more than enforced compliance with the safeguards an awakened social conscience has thrown around its weaker members. There is a growing altruism, a positive feeling of human sympathy and brotherhood between capital and labor, employer and employee,

rich and poor. This tendency is most encouraging. It is religion put into daily practise. It is Christianity at work. It took thousands of years with numberless tragedies to drive into the religious consciousness of man the idea of the oneness, the unity of God. The unity and brotherhood of humanity is, in these latter days, though far from being completely realized, coming nearer and nearer being an accomplished fact.

4. I wish as the most emphatic and solemn part of my thesis to make this specific statement. It is entirely possible and feasible to mix religion and business. One may be both a Christian—that is a working Christian—and a successful business man. They who maintain otherwise have a narrow and distorted view of what constitutes success in business. I maintain that the accumulation of money is only one phase, and indeed not an indispensable phase, of success. Good-will, the respect of customers and clients, public confidence, moral integrity, self-respect, are essential elements. These are the “imponderables” of business which far outweigh purely material considerations. What Wolsey called “a clear and quiet conscience” is more to be desired than much fine gold. I assert again that one may be a successful banker, farmer, or lawyer and preserve the most scrupulous honesty. Observation of more than a quarter of a century enables me to declare most emphatically that the successful lawyer does not need to resort to sharp practises or illegal methods. That there is great temptation to do so will be admitted. But the golden

rewards at the bar are won by men of the highest integrity. It is equally true in other fields of professional or business life. The temptations which come along the highways of business may be successfully resisted by one who is fortified by an active conscience and guided by a spiritual conception of his duties to his fellow men. It is a part of correct religious teaching to cultivate such a conscience and social conception.

I have touched only a few of the various departments of business. With variations in detail they all present the same general features and the same general observations apply equally to all. The youth of our land should be taught, until they are thoroughly ingrained with it, the notion that moral qualities are part of one's outfit as he engages in business, and that his religious convictions should be carried in his knapsack through all the journey of life.

## WHAT IS SUCCESS?

**W**HEN men acquire wealth, position, power, distinction, in any field of literature or art, the world regards them, and they take pride in regarding themselves, as successful men. I have no quarrel with the general conclusion, always with the express reservation that wealth or position shall be won by fair means. So far as the artist is concerned the matter is scarcely debatable. Artistic eminence is almost universally based on merit alone. The work of the artist is objective and speaks for itself. If the world admires the product it honors its creator and success is well deserved.

In the fields of business or politics the case is different. Deception, pull, demagogy, often elevate a man regardless of individual merit. Business men deal with conditions largely personal and temporary. They work upon the plastic materials of human nature. Often their methods are hidden from public view. Nobody cares for the details of other men's business affairs. It is only too common that many men knowing these facts adopt business methods regardless of moral considerations. This is one of the tragedies of business life viewed from an ethical standpoint. Christianity faces here its severest test. Ethical ideals in a man's life must be strong enough to enable him to resist temptation and to be absolutely honest

when no one sees, when no one can prevent the temporary success of dishonesty. There are too many advocates of the perverted maxim which Moliere puts into the mouth of Tartuffe—"To sin in secret is not to sin at all."

And yet religion must face this most difficult task. No one is truly a Christian who is not able to stand the test of secret temptation. For success rightly defined is not objective alone, such as the world is able to see and appraise. It is subjective, a matter of conscience and character. That is why we define the function of religion as we do, a thing that aims at the growth and education of the soul. It should create a fortified character as its highest product rather than a mere emotional readiness to respond to religious suggestions. The latter may be valuable, but only as a means of securing the former. Absolute integrity of soul is the supreme goal of religious teaching, as it is the supreme glory of personal attainment.

Apparent success that is obtained at the expense of honest methods is not real success. What I wish to say as emphatically as possible is that true success must be measured by moral as well as material standards. It must have a spiritual as well as a material content. Outward prosperity and inward baseness do not spell success. They are a spurious counterfeit. The genuine article is a product of moral worth and material efficiency. The merchant who sells defective goods, the lawyer who suborns witnesses and wins a lawsuit upon perjured testimony, the employer who

amasses a fortune by paying his employees less than a living wage, the man who in any direction builds his prosperity by unjust methods and dishonest means, is not truly successful. Measured by temporary applause he may deceive himself and others by an apparent prosperity. But his success is built on the sands and will in time crumble. Young men especially should learn the lesson at the outset of their careers that honesty is the only policy that pays dividends throughout the entire course of a business life.

Fortunately the assurance is "doubly sure" that complete honesty is fully compatible with the highest degree of worldly success. The great characters whom the world delights to honor were men who attained success by merit and not deception. Washington lives in American history fully as much through confidence in his supreme integrity and solidity of character as from the great services he rendered the struggling colonies. Lincoln is revered for having freed a race from bondage. He was enabled to accomplish his divine mission only because his political honesty rose mountain-like above his intellectual qualities. It is part of the recompense of the divine law that moral honesty is its own reward, that conscience and integrity beget the confidence that flows into increased power and influence. If I could say but one thing that would be remembered by any of my young readers it would be that moral integrity and true material success go hand in hand and are inseparable.

There is still another phase of what we call success that is worthy of our most thoughtful consideration. True success in life is not measured by the dollars we accumulate, the fame we achieve or the monuments that are erected in our memory after we die. A man may be poor yet be in the truest sense of the word successful. He may not see his name in the lists of the great, or have crowds cheer him whenever he appears in public. Fame may not blow his name from her trumpet. Yet by every definition his life may be a blessing and a benefit to his fellow men. He may be a true friend. He may help the needy and unfortunate. He may be only a humble toiler and work long and hard for his daily bread. But if he does his work well his life has been a success. It is high time that we revise our personal and social judgments in the light of permanent and eternal values. If I write a poem, or paint a picture, or discover a new star, I am adding to the sum of human knowledge and happiness. If I am not able to do any of those worthy and important things, I may still be of real service to my fellow men.

Whoever builds a boat so staunchly and well that it will stand the severest test of wind and wave, is a public benefactor. The doctor whose skill saves precious human lives, the lawyer who gives both his client and opponent "a square deal," the mason who refuses to build a poor foundation even though his faults may be concealed, is worthy not only of confidence but of praise. In short, the method of doing

the work rather than the nature of the work itself should determine our estimate of its worth. The man, rather than the job, the soul more than its achievement, are the things of supreme value.

It is time not only for a theoretical but a practical revision of social values. The scavenger, if he does his work well, saves the lives of his fellow men as surely as the high-priced surgeon in the operating room of the most magnificent hospital. Why, then, should we not honor him for his loving efficiency and thorough honesty? Social discontent would largely vanish if every vocation were rated by the manner in which it is conducted, rather than whether it involved a so-called menial task. The man who puts coal into my cellar, if he does it well, is at least as good a man as the general who wins a battle.

William James, in his "Moral Equivalent of War," lays down the theory that some motive must henceforth be substituted for war, in order to keep alive the intense straining energies that war provokes.

Where can this be found? If we hate no longer where is the spring of action?

May it not be found in the new idea of chivalry, of warfare against pestilence, disease, ignorance, and other social evils? The old ideal was growth, individual development. The new ideal is service. Are there not soldiers who will enlist to clean up the tenements, better housing conditions, and make life more endurable for those who are submerged? And above purely material considerations is there not a fine and

high idealism in scientific discoveries, the encouragement of art, the beautification of cities, the spreading of religion? And should we not cultivate the idea that the labor of each individual, whether dignified or menial, is to be treated as a form of social service—his contribution to the good of society?

The best motto which I could suggest for all who are just beginning life is this—

*True success in life is measured not by the job you have, but by how well you perform your task in life.*

If this maxim should be thoroughly imbedded in the thought and practise of men, it would revolutionize society. The pulpit can proclaim no more practical message. The laity can add glory to human nature by making its precepts a part of their daily religion.

## RELIGION AND EVOLUTION

**J**UST sixty years ago, Darwin announced his epoch-making doctrine. It is not too much to say that it has revolutionized most of our science and our philosophy. Whole new systems of thought have been built around the theory of evolution. There is probably not a scientist or thinker of note now living who is not a firm believer in the doctrine. It has captured the intellectual world so completely that it dominates our entire processes of education and culture.

Its triumph did not come, however, without a struggle. The battles that raged around it were fierce and relentless. Scholars doubted, science hesitated, the Church condemned. Most Orthodox people still regard it with suspicion, although unable to disprove it. It seems strange now that it should have caused such excitement and dismay in religious camps. And yet historically the explanation is simple. Evolution was only the culminating point of a series of scientific facts that seemed to attack religion. Many were dazzled and confused by the scientific discoveries of a brilliant century. To the thoughtless observer it seemed as if God was altogether eliminated, or at least reduced to an insignificant role in the march of events. As one by one new truths became known and laws were observed to govern all phenomena, men rashly

assumed there was no place left in the universe for God. His throne had been usurped by natural law. He was compelled to abdicate in favor of chemical and physical forces. Even life was accounted for by evolutionary processes, so that even in the realm of man there seemed no place for a creative personality. Everything—the physical universe, the existence of our planet, the growth of vegetable and animal life, and even man himself, was predetermined and fixed for all time by the play of purely natural forces. God in men's short-sighted reasoning retreated farther and farther until He was vaguely sensed as mere law, impersonal and uncaring. Men ceased to believe in His existence, worshiped only at the altars of science, discarded their religion, forgot to pray. They said: Increase the magnifying power of your microscopes, you can not find God there. Lengthen your telescopes and peer into the deepest depths of space, still God is not there. With scalpel and x-ray search for Him in the human organism, He evades your minutest analysis. There is no place left where He may be, either in the external world or in man.

Men are already recoiling from such blank doubt and negation. They are beginning to see that evolution does not account for things, it applies only to processes. And as studied in the laboratory it applies only to physical processes, not to the things of the spirit. Darwin was studying the science of matter, not of the soul. He was not rash enough to deny the existence of a realm which defied his most rigid in-

vestigations, and transcended the processes he described and charted. So the old problem remained, and after the first shock of incredulity and surprise men returned to faith and to the study of religion. They began to realize that the scientist has never charted the world of the soul. He has made no map or diagram of its basic facts or salient features. For the very good reason that the soul can not be explored or diagnosed by physical instruments.

It is the proud boast of the liberal that for him there is no conflict between religion and science. He can and does accept the facts of science as absolutely true, without impairing at all his faith in religion and in the truths of the spiritual world. What he teaches about the Bible and the world of nature in Sunday school does not contradict what his pupils afterwards learn in their science classes in high school or college. If the facts taught by science are true we do not make them false by pointing to the Bible. If Genesis does not harmonize with geology so much the worse for Genesis.

Simple fiat or evolutionary process—which one furnishes the nobler lineage for man? If the latter is the correct theory, then man has come up through countless gradations and after countless struggles. I find in this added proof of the liberal theory as to man and his future destiny. The first living cell contained man potentially. Through untold geologic ages the man-impulse struggled upward and would not be denied. It passed through simple organisms that

merely fed and reproduced, though reptile and bird and mammal to man's present proud pre-eminence among living things. It overcame flood, and fire, and frost, and hostile animals, so strong was the upward urge within. If it triumphed over these under its almost fatal handicap of weakness and non-intelligence, what dazzling heights may it not aspire to in the long millions of years that lie ahead? Here is convincing proof that within man there is an upward predestination that can not fail to lead him into final harmony with the universe and its Creator.

You ask whether evolution holds true in the spiritual world. If the moral faculties man already possesses have been evolved I see no reason to deny that the process may continue in the unfolding of man's spiritual powers. So far as we can trace them we see thought, feeling, emotion, will, emerging out of the dramatic struggles and experiences of man. Conscience, too, is born out of social relationships, creating a sense of right and wrong. It seems clear that in the slow process of evolution there came a time when a moral faculty was evolved. And with conscience there is born unselfishness. Altruism is legitimate fruit of this tree, and adds its force to the future development of man.

Instead, then, of hesitating to accept the great cardinal truth of evolution we should recognize in it the assurance of still further, indeed endless, progress. Still higher and nobler moral qualities will be developed. We boldly claim that with the ceaseless operation of

the evolutionary process God will triumph at last, and that the entire universe will finally come into complete harmony with His Divine Will.

It would be well worth while to develop a religious philosophy that would enable us to see the relation between cause and effect, the soul and the body, the seen and the unseen. Such a system ought to satisfy the intellect, for we shall forever be dependent on mental processes for the maintenance of a comfortable existence. But it must also reach into realms where the intellect has found no path of entrance. We may paraphrase Matthew Arnold's definition—"Religion is Knowledge touched by divine fire." But man also feels and wills. And any scheme to be complete and satisfactory must recognize the triangle of man's nature, and furnish proper stimuli for all his faculties.

An old theory put in attractive modern garb by Bergson raises the question whether the universe is continually self-creative. Is it a finished product, a finality for all ages to come, or a continual Becoming? If new products are ever coming into being there may be light ahead for suffering humanity. If God still fashions new forces of law and self-sacrifice and beauty then we are struggling toward a status and a goal where the misfortunes of life may disappear and happiness be substituted in their place.



## PRESENT DAY PROBLEMS

THE Great War is over but the world still reels from the mighty blow. Men everywhere are in a disturbed psychological condition. There are strikes and lockouts, jealousies and hate in every community. It would seem that Macbeth's witches were brewing an international caldron with

“Bubble, bubble,  
Toil and trouble,”

as the principal ingredient. The railroads have become the football of politics and all kinds of nefarious projects. Prices of the necessaries of life go soaring until our amazement turns into callous though not pious resignation. Each group claims it is the victim of profiteering by some other class. Capital is too frightened to show its head and must work in secret to retain its status and influence. Everything is questioned. There are no longer any orthodox theories in political economy. Consistency of opinion has vanished. Stiff conservatives are advocating the wildest radicalism in their zeal to bring down the high cost of living. Staid High Churchmen are begging their parishioners to turn the church into a vaudeville to attract worshippers. For the church as a sacred institution there is apparent but little reverence or respect. Pious customs with the beauty and dignity

of immemorial tradition behind them are openly flouted by an irreverent age. Sanctity no longer rules rebellious hearts and the cross itself is scarcely more than a symbol of a beautiful but fading idealism.

These are the surface appearances in these days of stress and storm. The billows that lash the ocean of society mount to the very stars and their foam dashes over the decks where humanity in peril is breasting the storm. If our eyes could see no farther and our minds read no deeper lesson sad indeed would be our fate. The experienced mariner knows, however, that there are ocean depths that are never disturbed, and faces the tempest with the confident hope that the billows will soon subside and the angry waves disappear. Storms can not beat forever. Sooner or later the fires of hate will burn themselves out, passions recede and reason resume her reign.

In the maze of chaotic social conditions it is not strange if the Church is perplexed as to its duty and opportunity. If society is to be revolutionized what is to be the function of the Church? Will the old formulas retain their power? Will the old human needs reassert themselves in compelling fashion and bring back song and prayer and worship?

Or must the Church recast its methods even to the changing of its creeds and ancient modes of worship? We hear every angle of the problem discussed, and numerous are the remedies proposed. That the Church is alive to the problem is apparent in every newspaper and magazine. We see advertisements

boldly proclaiming the virtues of religion as if it were a newly invented pill.

From a religious institution the Church threatens to become a social club. It no longer emphasizes the theoretical part of religion. Creeds hoary with age are forgotten, forms of worship that answered the deep cry of the human soul in vanished centuries are quietly laid away. We are afraid to preach the eternal verities of religion. We do human nature the great injustice of assuming it has no depth of feeling or stability of character, or changelessness of purpose. We assume the war has changed human nature in its religious aspect, largely, I suppose, because it has upset so many other old traditions. Perhaps if we can visualize and classify the supposed changes the war has wrought we may be able better to appraise them and devise a remedy. The indictment reads somewhat as follows:

1. We assume the bloody experiences through which they passed have hardened the soldiers so they will not respond to religious influences.

2. They have lost faith in a religion which failed to prevent the greatest of all wars.

3. God can not be seen in the shock of battle, but belief in blind fate becomes common.

4. The war proves that selfishness still rules the world and that Christianity has made but little impression on man's real nature.

The Church in its human aspect must not lose its hold upon its members. If possible they must be

retained within its influence. As the soldiers came home hardened, bronzed, *blase*, how shall the Church approach them? It is an all important question.

In the first place it is by no means proved that the soldiers care less for religion than they did before the war. For many years prior to the war it was a common saying that the Church had lost its hold on the masses of the people. On the other hand the war sobered many who had never given religion serious consideration. To the soldier it was a tremendous thought-impelling experience. The mighty issues involved, the terrible sacrifices of life, the awful hardships, made a profound impression. That impression convinced most soldiers that life is a solemn thing, that single lives are relatively insignificant, that social welfare is essential if man is to progress. Fundamentally religion teaches these very things and I think they prepare the soil and sow the seed in the soldier's mind for the more spiritual truths which religion has to offer.

The second count in the indictment might prove more serious if all nations were equally permeated by the Christian spirit. Unfortunately the peaceful precepts of Jesus had not penetrated deeply into the German soul. The war was forced upon those nations with the most pacific ideals and they must either fight or be extinguished. Few realize how near the Christian ideal came to perishing utterly in the mighty struggle.

We may confidently expect people to revise the hasty opinion that religion failed in the supreme test.

Undoubtedly a belief in blind fate had a temporary growth among the soldiers in the trenches. And perhaps they became better soldiers therefor. If nothing can avert the day of doom or change the decrees of fate, the soldier flings himself into battle with an utter disregard of life. But I doubt if the soldier has carried this back with him as a fixed opinion into the ordinary pursuits of life. While the exaltation caused by the play of mighty forces around him induced the idea of his littleness and lack of power to determine his own fate, there is no such combination of circumstances in peaceful life. There he seems master of his own powers, his own destiny. The wave of mighty feeling subsides and leaves the old shore line of his thought with much the same features as before.

So far from selfishness being the chief factor in the world's life I think there has never been such a demonstration in history of unselfishness as the great war provoked. Millions poured out their lifeblood for an idea. There was no thought of selfish gain in their sacrifices. They did not fight for territory, or wealth or power. America especially went into the struggle with the noblest sentiments of idealism. We wanted to preserve the liberty for which the ages had struggled. We wanted to prevent the triumph of force as governing human relations. The tears and sorrows that obscure the sun of happiness for so many millions were a conscious gift by them to the new altruism whose blossoms are to beautify and bless the world.

The soldier, however, is not the only class which gives the Church deep concern. Civilian life does not seem deeply penetrated with the religious spirit. Churches receive nominal recognition, but little real respect.

Laborers sometimes complain that the conservatism of the Church operates strongly against their radical proposals. They forget that the Church is not free to espouse every new economic idea. The Church's function is not within the sphere of economic forces. If it should enter this field it would soon find itself in the midst of bitter conflicts, and would incur the deepest enmity. The safest plan for the Church is to pursue the even tenor of its way, and to stand aloof from the economic struggles that shake society to its foundations.

In time the tides of war will recede from our intellectual shores and we shall again see and reason with calm serenity. I have an implicit belief that human nature changes but little throughout the centuries. Fashions change in art, literature, dress, amusements. But the ocean depths of the mind remain the same. Physical energies still strive to master the world of matter around us. Emotions still respond to the magic play of sentiment, of joy and grief. The struggles necessary to win a sustenance for the body still demand intelligent foresight and industry. Conscience continues to remind us of a higher realm and a higher duty to our fellow men.

Men are still selfish and ambitious as they always

have been. But their dramatic experiences are slowly convincing them of the beauty, yes, the practicality of unselfishness. Society's very conflicts tend to develop altruism, a slow but hope-inspiring process in the development of the race. Much remains to be done. Man's tiger passions are to be subdued and harnessed into useful forces. His horizons are to be widened till he can see another's needs and rights. His selfishness must be pruned till there remains only a sufficient spur to provide his own necessities. His powers mental and physical are to be harnessed into obedient servants of a conscience-guided will.

In many ways the Church may retain and widen its influence. Its problems, like those of the individual, may be solved by patience and sympathetic insight. The soul will always want to be fed. It will always need consolation and guidance. It refuses to regard the daily routine of life as the most important thing in the universe. It will always respond to song, to emotion, to aspiration. In its deepest hours of need it will seek for some invisible companionship that may satisfy its longings and quench its thirst. Man is incurably religious and the Church should accept as a perennial source of encouragement this fundamental concept of human nature.

The Church is deeply concerned over the religious indifference of our youth. They are not affirmatively irreligious, but fail to react strongly to the religious impulse. Men speak of this as a recent thing, as if

we had fallen on evil days. They fear that religion will die out in another generation since the youth of this do not openly proclaim themselves religious. But the truth is this is not a new or strange thing. Youth does not wear its heart on its sleeve. It shrinks from revealing its inmost feelings and emotions. And since religion is theory "touched with emotion" young men especially can be persuaded with difficulty to profess it openly.

More important still is the fact that youth lives in life's dawn. Life to it is so real, so full of feeling, so full of joy and ambition. Material things seem of supreme importance and value. Sorrow has not yet cast its shadow. Defeat has not tempered, nor toil quenched, the enthusiasm with which it starts the race of life.

When age has fought its battles, and care has written wrinkles on cheek and brow, the real values of life gradually emerge into more and more prominence in human consciousness. The petty concerns that looked so large in the morning of life drop away and one by one the soul learns the deepest lessons of life. Men return to religion as one returns from a long journey, there to find rest and refreshment as the evening days draw on. Youth may seem care free and indifferent, but the battles of life draw men surely back to their primeval need which is also their crowning glory.

The Church need never despair of its mission. Its only problem is to find the right method. Let

religious teachers study the psychology of religion as teachers study child psychology. Let them become expert potters in this most plastic as it is the most precious of materials. This is the eternal problem—to teach the profoundest truths in such fashion as to attract and convince the hungry multitudes. The practise of religion should be made a fine art, not only in the daily life of its devotees, but in the manner in which it is presented to others. We shall first appraise our problems and then learn how to solve them by the successive approximations of experience, as the mathematician approaches nearer and nearer the root of a number it is forever impossible exactly to extract.



## IS CHRISTIANITY PRACTICABLE?

SOME one has said that human life on this earth is a great adventure. Standing on the deck of the Lusitania as the swirling waters were about to engulf her, Charles Frohman said with serene faith that death was for him the greatest adventure of life. In different phrase the noted English preacher Stopford Brooke expressed the same thought to an American friend—"I expect the day of my death to be the most romantic day of my life."

In a strange world man is a wonder and a mystery to himself. He is in existence without his own consent, in an age, a country and a social setting which he has not chosen, with his political, social and religious opinions already predestined for him. The world he enters is a field for the play of mighty forces, and the operation of unchangeable laws. Amid such diversity of conditions most men disappear like snowflakes in the river, and after living uneventful lives "rest in unvisited tombs." It is not strange that man has not mastered the science of living. Much less can he be expected to regard living as a fine art, worthy of his profoundest study, skill and effort.

Whether life can be lived as a science or a fine art is an all important question, depending on whether religion can offer a safe and practicable guide. It is true that man may sometimes live a respectable life

without consciously being religious. But consciously or unconsciously he is obeying the rules and pursuing the ideals offered by religion. In his daily rounds he is performing acts which have a religious sanction or condemnation. And his success depends on whether he may win the one and escape the other.

I know there are those who claim there is a moral law independent of religious truths or beliefs; that in the order and constitution of nature there are certain great immutable rules inherent in the very nature of things which are applicable to human conduct. I am willing to admit the truth of the statement but not the conclusion drawn. In my judgment these moral laws are the very foundation stones of true religion. The value of a religion depends on how perfectly it embodies these fundamental moral truths and how it adapts them to human needs. Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Christianity, all must be judged by this test.

By Christianity we mean the religious ideas and precepts taught by Jesus. It is not a theory or belief about the person of Jesus, it is not belonging to a church, believing in a book, or adhering to some particular mode of worship. While on earth Jesus taught certain doctrines as to God, the Kingdom, love, good works, eternal life. These inaugurated a new religion among men. It is with these only we shall be concerned.

By practicable we mean, is it feasible in a world like ours, among human beings with all their interests, hopes, ambitions and struggles?

The first question we ask of a new machine or a rule of conduct is, will it work? That is the acid test by which it succeeds or fails. However beautiful a religion may be in theory, it is not practicable unless it meets the needs of human souls, weak, sinful, beset by temptation, seeking the light, needing consolation in hours of agony and doubt. If these souls are shown the right path in life, are uplifted and strengthened to meet life's trials and cheered to perform manfully its duties, to that extent religion meets our definition and stands the test to which every system of religion must submit. If the Christian religion be true we need have no fear for the result of any test or any criticism.

Let us use the yardstick of reason. For weak and fallible as reason sometimes is it is of great value in the practical affairs of life. In the physical universe what splendid results has reason given us. It can compute the distances of the stars, tell us the component elements of Aldebaran, and weigh the Pleiades in its balance. It has read the geologic records of the earth and described the various stages of its life history through countless eons past. It observes in gravitation and chemical affinity, in electron and radioactivity, the forces and forms of matter which make up the physical universe around us. Within the realm of the visible and the practical we may rely upon the processes and results of reason with tolerable certainty.

Jesus did not use the plain language of science. He was not describing facts, but stating spiritual

truths. He did not come as a historian but as a prophet. He used the pictures and symbols of the Orient to illustrate his truths. In picturesque parable and vivid Eastern phrase he set the jewels of his thought. It is difficult at best for one race or one age to understand another race and age. Especially is it difficult for the practical Western mind to put itself into the mental attitudes of Hebrew peasants in the days of Tiberius. We must translate their thoughts and feelings into ours or the Bible is either a sealed or a misleading book. Jesus' ideals, his views of his own mission, the people to whom he addressed his message, all convince us that there was an artist, painting a great picture by symbol and parable, with a wide vision of the future and in colors of eternal truth.

There has been endless debate over the literal interpretation of Christ's sayings. Many still advocate taking the picture from its frame, removing the "atmosphere," destroying the perfume, and using the dry husks that are left to feed hungry souls. Literal interpretation is the shibboleth of small minds. It is the surest way actually to distort and pervert Christ's teaching. Emerson once said of Jesus: "The idioms of his language and the figures of his rhetoric have usurped the place of his truth; and churches are built not on his principles but on his tropes." Foolish sophists are those who look only at the literal phrase, thereby missing the deep meaning hidden under Eastern parable and Hebrew simile. By their seeming paradox Jesus' words claim atten-

tion, as less vivid phrase could not do. Taken literally many of these phrases may not compel acceptance. Taken as Jesus intended, to bring out as by a lightning flash the clear outlines of his doctrine of brotherly love, this stumbling block of the centuries becomes a stepping stone to the loftiest truths.

The ideals preached by Jesus, when rightly interpreted, are practicable if we admit there is a spiritual realm which is superior to matter. What a wondrous clarifying of our vision and strengthening of our faith if we look through the visible forms of matter to the soul behind it. What infinite vistas appear and what courage comes to our souls as we "think God's thoughts after Him," in the boundless spaces that loom up before us. What an alluring vision to see God in the petals of the beautiful flower, in the crystals of the rock, in mountain pine and desert palm, in the grandeur of the sea, in all the life-thrilled processes of nature. Science teaches us there is a movement and an activity in the atom that known forces do not account for, as if it were itself an animate, living thing. It requires but little imagination and little faith to see in these minute universes the living spirit of God back of and permeating all material substances with His infinite life, as the human soul permeates the body it inhabits.

Jesus announced to an expectant world the religion of the spirit. God's covenant was transferred from tables of stone to the human heart. From law to love, from the letter to the spirit, from dead for-

malism to life—this was the gift of the prophet of Nazareth. The old dispensation had been a glorious one in the darkness of ancient night. Despite their numerous backslidings the Jews were far in advance of their contemporaries in religious insight and spiritual fervor. On his noblest page Jeremiah had written: "Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. This is the covenant I will make with them: I will put my law in their inward parts and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God and they shall be my people." The first Isaiah and the stern Micah voiced in the night of the eighth century before Christ sentiments so noble that they have lost none of their impressiveness through the lapse of time. But these produced but little effect in the lives of the people. They were the poetry and prophecy of their day, beautiful and lofty phrases, enough to prove their authors inspired. It remained for Jesus to transform these lofty sentiments into a living creed. What had been religion with a poetic dress became religion pulsing with life, burning itself into the souls of men. Was it only the chance psychological moment when Jesus made his undramatic entrance upon the world's stage that gave his teachings their power? Was it his martyrdom, sealing his beliefs with his blood and converting his followers into pious fanatics? Both of these it was and something more. It was the undying truth of God's fatherhood and man's brotherhood set in the silver music of his



struggles its healing balm and all our strife disappears beneath a wondrous calm. We may justify the ways of Providence if we know there is a principle at work which, like the phagocytes in the human body, attacks the opposing enemy and restores health to the wounded universe.

In the light of these reflections do we not realize that Christ's religion is practicable—is indeed the only safe and rational guide for human conduct? This ideal of unselfishness is the key to Christ's message. To enforce it he used the picturesque and effective language of the East: "But I say unto you, resist not him that is evil; but whoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. Give to him that asketh, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away." For nineteen centuries these words have provoked the smile of shallow thinkers and the scorn of those versed only in the practical wisdom of this world. "I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be the sons of your Father who is in Heaven." Foolish words of an idle dreamer on the Mount that looks down on the Sea of Galilee. Impractical visionary, carried away by a lofty but unrealizable idealism. A "*Gott-trunkener mann*," as the German Novalis said of Spinoza. These are the phrases of worldly wisdom, of thoughtless pragmatism.

It was Life that Jesus sought to emphasize, and

is the question really debatable? Is it not eternally true that the life of the soul infinitely transcends the needs of the body? In all ages it has been necessary to startle men sunk in sensuality and selfishness out of the "bonds of the flesh" as Paul phrased it, by some vivid word or deed. Jesus' statement is the everlasting truth put in words of matchless beauty. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth—lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." In a world wedded to wealth, steeped in sensual pleasures, seeing with the eyes of the flesh only, these were startling words of heresy. For amid Roman luxury or even Jewish wealth what could transcend in importance gilded houses, rich clothes, sumptuous feasts, retinues of servants, the homage of the people?

What is of most value in life has engrossed the thought of serious men in every age of the world's history. Is it food, raiment, lands, sumptuous palaces, lordly revenues? Or is it peace, virtue, unselfish joy, spiritual happiness? Jesus' answer was good not only for Jew but for Gentile, for Roman Empire and American Commonwealth.

"What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Here is the eternal conflict between two opposing systems of thought—the philosophy of this world and the religion of two worlds. Jesus had the larger vision, the deeper perspective. Above and beyond the literal in his speech we are to see the spiritual import, what he intended to convey to his few ignorant Jewish hearers, to the multitudes

through countless generations. His was the religion of two worlds, the religion of the spirit.

To Jesus man was an individual soul. He did not think of men in terms of social groups. He was not interested in kingdoms or rulers or systems of thought. If you could set the individual in the way of truth all things else would follow. It would then matter but little what science he possessed, or what mode of government he adopted, or whether he were ever charmed by philosophy or ravished with beauty in any of its protean forms. There was but one important thing in the universe, the human soul. There was but one important question, to get man to love God and his fellow man. His was a spiritual democracy. These ideals were the chart and foundation stones of the kingdom he came to set up. Like the constitution which a nation adopts Jesus stated only fundamental concepts. How these were to be worked out and applied in the complex relations of human society he did not prescribe or determine. But the truth is there, unquestioned, immutable, eternal. Like the star that shone at his nativity, it gleams and glows above the hills of Judea, a light that shall forever guide man toward the heavenly city.

It remains for men to translate the gold of Eastern phrase into the language of every day life. How to relate Christian truths to individual conduct and social relations is the human part of the problem. It would not have been feasible for Jesus to lay down minute prescriptions for all the possible affairs of life.

His religion is practicable as the constitution of the United States is in its field practicable, a great chart, above the passions and selfishness of the hour, good for all time, capable of interpretation to meet all conditions that may occur. It is the pole-star—to guide the mariner across the trackless seas of life to a sure and immortal destiny.



## DEATH

**I**T is related of Baron Rudiger, one of those Knights of the Middle Ages whose name a fickle record has preserved for us, that, upon feeling the approach of death, he summoned all his retainers to a feast in the great banqueting hall of his castle. In full armor, with his sword at his side, he sat at the head of the groaning table, and with true knightly courage challenged Death to mortal combat. The world still remembers the beautiful simile of Homer, "generations dropping from the tree of time like leaves from the trees of autumn." The dying Hebrew King David gave to Solomon the solemn injunction, "I go the way of all the earth. Be thou strong therefore and show thyself a man." And one who was even more inspired than Grecian poet or Jewish seer declared that "we are such stuff as dreams are made of and our little life is rounded with a sleep." Dickens speaks of death as an "unknown sea that rolls round all the world."

There is nothing so common as birth and death. Birth ushers us into the world with all of life's duties, privileges and responsibilities. What change does Death bring to the human soul? Does it cease to exist? Or does it pass into an existence either of happiness or misery as determined by its acts in this world? Do we live and grow after death, and is

existence then merely a continuation of the earthly life?

It has already been made evident in these pages that we believe in the soul's immortality and that it enters a future life exactly as it leaves this. Life is not a probation that ends with death. Life is a school and we shall continue to grow and learn in all future worlds we shall inhabit. It is not my purpose, however, to enter into any argument over the solemn question that has puzzled every generation of men. I am calling attention to Death only to suggest a few thoughts as to how it should affect our lives in a very present practical way. All our acts are conditioned on the certainty of Death.

The wise and the ignorant, philosophers and babes, the artist in his studio, the laborer at his toil, are all confronted by the inevitable end of life and the practical question is how shall this omnipresent fact affect our conduct during the brief years of our earthly existence.

Death, then, raises first of all the supreme question of life. Bring to bear upon its solution all of history, all of science, all of experience, all of imagination. In the tents of Arab nomads on the rim of a boundless desert; in the shadow of grim pagodas, eloquent witness to the aspiring reverence of the stolid Chinese; in the jungles of Africa under an equatorial sun; in libraries and factories and palaces of the more highly civilized races—we find the same great problem of the meaning of life.

First of all of course there is the Christian hope. For Christianity is a religion of two worlds—the present and all the future. What is imperfect here reaches fruition yonder. What is unjust here yonder is rounded into justice. The evils and wrongs of time, the sorrows of individual lives, have in that future realm the opportunity of redress and consolation. No other philosophy can console or satisfy the reasoning mind. And this is the distinct promise of the Christian religion. We are citizens of two worlds and in the life beyond there will be a completion of the schooling process which is attended with so much pain and rebellion here.

Perhaps the Great War has taught us that life is not an individual thing and that it can not be lived in selfish and splendid isolation. The echoes of that struggle resounded on every continent and in all the islands of the seven seas. We are all bound together. We are all on the same great ship, sailing over the same great ocean and destined to reach port or suffer shipwreck together.

Another lesson, perhaps as impressive, is that life is not the pursuit of pleasure, a mad striving for wealth in order to gratify the desires of sense. In the Great War, the individual sank into a mere piece of intelligent mechanism. The war also elevated the individual into a new and glorious personality. If we were asked to declare who had performed the greatest service to his country and to mankind we might have difficulty in deciding whether it was the

soldier in the trenches, the angels of mercy who ministered to the wounded and dying, or the brave true-hearted women who gave up ease and health in munition factories. The army of martyrs, too, were a glorious company.

And this brings another great conviction that death may be of greater value to the world than life. The supreme sacrifice often kindles a flame of divine enthusiasm and sublime devotion that lifts a whole nation to unimaginable heights of consecration to a noble cause. Life was dear to Edith Cavell and to Captain Fryatt, though they met death like the true soldiers they were. But their deaths were worth far more to their country than their lives. The sudden arrest, the narrow prison cell, the unjust trial, the shots in a prison yard which snuffed out the life of Edith Cavell, what did they matter in a conflict that was shaking the world? Germany counted but one more enemy silenced, one heart less to beat for those in need. Little did she think that the rattle of the musketry in the early light of that memorable day in Brussels and the pitiful appeal of a life surrendered for a holy cause would summon legions of armed men to battle for the cause for which she died. Around the earth went a shudder of horror which awoke into existence invisible and mighty forces of which the Germans never dreamed.

Death may be worth more to the world than life. No one can estimate rightly the social value of his own life. It may seem a cruel loss to the world when

the Christian statesman or the profound scholar is suddenly struck down in the very height of influence and usefulness. But it by no means follows that it is a loss without recompense. No one, however great, is indispensable. His place is soon filled and the world rolls on. Sorrowing relatives and friends may mourn for a day, the cup of personal grief is for a time filled to overflowing. But somehow the world's duties are still fulfilled and time heals the scars which fate has made. A successful business man or a faithful mother dies and leaves the threads of business life or family cares rudely broken. What a cruel loss, you say. Yet the lesson must be learned that, since life is fleeting and death certain, in some inscrutable way the purposes of the universe are being fulfilled.

Life may be long or short, full of useful activities or apparently aimless, but the supreme lesson is to accept the call of death without fear and with perfect equanimity. If it seems to come to me too soon, perhaps my usefulness is really ended. And how can death injure the soul that has lived a useful life?

Hamlet's soliloquy is immortally true. "I do not set my life at a pin's fee. And for my soul what can it do to that, being a thing immortal as itself?" Life is a journey and death only a passing incident in the great adventure. We cling to life as if it were a rare and valuable treasure for which everything else must be sacrificed. Is it not a truer vision to accept with philosophic calmness whatever life may bring and to regard death as part of the order of things which it is

neither wise nor desirable to escape? Therefore the true philosopher says: "Do not weep for me, my friends, when I shall die. If I have fought life's battles to their end and achieved something, is it not that something which was my share of the world's life, whether it be great or small? And when that work is accomplished it is the part of wisdom to lay down the burdens and cool the heat of a dusty day, allowing others a chance to toil and accomplish and suffer. For no one can perform all the tasks or endure all the trials. Each in his narrow way furnishes a plank, or drives a rivet, or hoists a sail for the great ship humanity is building, and if he does that well his life has become a beneficent part of the great world voyage of humanity. Whenever the tasks of life end with death, then let us lie down without a fear or regret, but rather with philosophic serenity approach the end of life's little day."

It was not only Christ that was crucified. It is the fate of all mankind. Sooner or later to all men come the sad hours of Gethsemane, the cruel pangs of Calvary. And may it not be truthfully said that every one in his daily life dies for others, so that his life become a vicarious atonement for the common good? In strange ways sometimes, in ways we do not recognize at the time, we pay this debt and perform this human service to our fellow men. Sometimes we stand in the trenches when the bullets rain death and destruction around us. Sometimes it is the quiet tragedies that are unrecorded in the pages known and

read of men that sear and bruise the soul. Whether our lot be in palace or cottage, in college halls or rural fields, the sharp arrows pierce us as they did St. Sebastian, though winged by no visible enemies. You do not need to be a soldier to tread the thorny way. Your victories may never be crowned with laurel or blazoned forth before the multitudes. And yet your battles may be as brave as any recorded in the history of war. Your sacrifices may be as real and necessary in their humble way as those made in his great way by the lowly Nazarene.

The Christian teaching thus becomes the profoundest lesson of philosophy. We strive in daily prosaic fashion to perform the duty that seems nearest and most important. But in supreme crises life takes on a new radiance. It is more than meat and raiment, more than work and pleasure, greater even than duty and responsibility. It is sacrifice, perfume, a spiritual atmosphere. The child dying in infancy sets in motion a train of influences that reach the shores of the remotest continents and the latest generations. A good deed or a kindly word awakens echoes that resound on the heavenly shores.

Life is no more a journey, a battle, a tragedy. It is a sacrament.

Death is not the dark, the pitiless, the avenger. It is an incident in the cosmic plan, the opening of a door from one phase of an endless existence into another.





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