Black

The New World

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Christ's Service of Love

The Gift of Influence

The New World

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Preface

HE most casual observer can see that all is not well with religion to-day. The world never stood in greater need of religion, but somehow it is not as effective a force as it has been and as it might be. A great historian says that modern experience has furnished much evidence of the insufficiency of mere intellectual education if it is unaccompanied by the education of the character, and it is on this side that modern education is most defective. Some of the weakness is due to the fact that our religion has not been fully responsive to the thought of the age. It turns back to the past for forms in which to state its realities. It seeks expression in antique ritual and obsolete symbolism. In the face of the great changes of our time the Church as a whole is timid and conservative. If there is much indifference to religion, there is little use in indulging in the common super-

ficial explanations and the usual fatuous condemnations. The real reason is that the message is not holding the intellect and gripping the conscience of men.

The first thing needful is to know the actual world in which we live, the conditions that help or hinder the Christian message, the forces that must be allowed to shape that message before it can be applied to the clamant needs of our age. This book attempts to estimate these forces which are creating the unrest, in order that we may make the adjustment which will bring back to religion the days of its power. The first four chapters were written for *Everybody's Magazine.* This has conditioned the style of the book, and the author is grateful that he has been compelled to avoid technical language, which can be a snare to the writer as well as an obscurity to the reader. It is also a hopeful sign of the times that such a great popular magazine should open its pages to a serious discussion of religion.

H. B.

Contents

I

The Changing Order

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills Himself in many ways
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

—*Tennyson.*

I

THE CHANGING ORDER

E are living in a new world. Change has been gradual and yet in the mass has been very rapid. So that we look out upon a world very different from that of any previous generation. Nowhere is the change so radical as in religion. This is to be expected, since religion has to do with the fundamental aspects of life. Sooner or later we must make adjustment to the world in which we live, if only that we may fit in comfortably with our environment. Success in all types of life consists in acquiring adaptation to environment and adjustment to change. Change in physical climate is usually slow, otherwise life would have perished off the earth, but plant and animal life has to adjust itself to the change, or disappear. Change in intellectual climate is slow, but is none the

less sure, and theological and all established forms of thinking have to make adjustment.

The process is often difficult and sometimes painful, though some of the pain may be of the nature of "growing pains." Men of an older generation find themselves out of sympathy with the movement of thought and the new point of view of life around them. Their attitude often is one of lament for the past, and fear for the future. They assert shrilly that things are going all wrong, and trace every modern evil to the fact that the world no longer stands in the old path. It has to be said that sometimes the difficulty is due to the fact that they have settled down on an ancient foundation of creed, and have never had the courage to reconstruct their intellectual life over again.

Recently I received from a friend a letter in which this sentence occurs: "Things here are much as usual, except that a generation is growing up whose views I do not profess to understand." This is the fate of all of us to some extent as we grow older, but it should not be so universal. It is because we stand still, and let

the procession of life go past us. Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, said that he never knew a man above forty who could be got to believe in his theory. He meant that usually at that age a man's mind had lost its flexibility and was almost impervious to new subjects. Fortunately it is not always so, and sometimes we find men whose mental vigour is continued unimpaired. On the other hand men often plume themselves on their intellectual freshness, who have really closed their minds to a new point of view.

The process has been repeated many times, and will not end with our age. Men reach what they think is final truth, and knowledge gets put into neat little compartments. They can settle back in comfort in a world which they have now learned to know—when lo, that world of thought lies in ruins at their feet, and they are homeless. This is such a time, when old landmarks are being blotted out, and old lines are fading in the light of wider outlooks. Men meet the experience in varying spirit according to temperament and training. Some dread the passage through the cloud,

even when they feel sure that nothing can be lost of the eternal realities. Some have so tied up the spirit with an accustomed form that they speak as if religion is imperilled, should any finger touch even the carved work of the sanctuary. Others face the outlook with courage and faith, rejoicing in it as a strong man to run a race.

In some ways the most pathetic type is that of the defender of the faith, who will not admit that anything has happened, and who shuts his eyes to the fact that we are living in a new world. He appeals to authority which his opponents reject. He is a fighter who is merely lashing the air, or like Don Quixote running a tilt against a windmill. This belated controversialist wages wordy battles over positions that have really been evacuated. A new world-view has turned the flank of old problems. The ground has shifted, and the real interest is elsewhere. Some identify Christianity with doctrines which have ceased to mean anything to the modern world.

It is also true that many oppose religion through ignorance of the movements that have

happened within the Church. Some can be discovered railing at theology, when their whole knowledge of it is confined to what they learned at Sunday-school thirty years ago. They never go on the assumption that their own line of work or their particular profession has stood still all that time, and would resent fiercely if medicine or surgery or engineering to-day were judged by the methods or results of thirty years since. Sometimes in a football game three or four of the players struggle madly in a corner of the field to the amusement of the spectators when the ball is not there at all, and when it dawns on them that they are not in the game they rise from the mud probably feeling as silly as they look. The trouble about their counterparts in the religious field is that they never seem to realize that they are not "in the game." A very successful business man sneered at theology the other day in my presence, and when I asked him to what he was referring he muttered something about the damnation of non-elect infants. Before such an exhibition one does not know whether to open one's eyes very wide

or shut one's mouth very tight. It is like objecting to the modern Church because of the New England witch-trials, or like objecting to modern medicine because an ancient doctor sometimes tried to cure a disease by giving a dose so nasty that he was sure the devil would refuse to stay in the same body with it.

The first thing to do is to acknowledge that there has been change, and that it is inevitable. Even the stalwart, who stands in the old paths and defies the new, is himself the victim of change. There is an immense change of emphasis, even when he thinks that he has not altered a single item of the old creed. As a matter of fact certain points are dropped out or glossed over, some parts of the faith have vanished, and some have been transformed. We can see this clearly if we look back at the controversies of the past. To-day practically no one will attempt either to defend or to deny the proofs for God and religion that used to be offered. We neither accept them, nor refute them, but simply ignore them. They are dead issues, because the whole world has swung away from

them. There is a modern point of view, which gets its work in with all of us more or less. Creeds do not die because they are disproved, but because they cease to interest.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton wrote a book called "Heretics" in which he criticized many of the popular ideas and philosophies of the day. He condemned them in his trenchant way, and the natural feeling was, Well, if this is wrong and that is absurd, tell us what is right. This natural demand for a positive statement he met by his book "Orthodoxy." It is written almost like an autobiography, and that is what it is—the story of a man in his search for truth, his essential experience of life and his practical conclusion, in a word his discovery of God. He tells us how he passed through various phases of unbelief, the common stopping places and halfway houses of our day, how he found unrest in this, contradiction in that, until he found satisfaction of heart and mind in Christianity. It is an interesting experience, and not uncommon.

He is willing to put his theology as a convenient historical summary in the Apostles' Creed, that is he grounds his faith on history,

and sees the truth in the old formularies. Unfortunately, he does not really expound that creed, but contents himself with showing why he came to believe it. The real question from the point of view of theology is his interpretation—*how* he believes it. An interesting point of the story is the surprise of the discovery that he was orthodox. "I did try to find a heresy of my own; and when I had put the last touches to it, I found that it was orthodoxy." If he went on to expound his ultimate faith, he would probably find that he holds the Apostles' Creed with a difference. There will be some personal equation, some necessary restatement in terms of modern knowledge and experience.

Sometimes the religious mind deceives itself as to the amount of change by interpreting doctrines and forms in a sacramental and symbolic sense. The true mystic is indifferent to historical fact; for he values it only as representing something more important than itself, as embodying a spiritual idea. Such a type of mind is not troubled by common difficulties about miracles, for the simple reason that the miracle only stands for something to be under-

stood by the soul. Shorthouse, the author of the famous novel "John Inglesant," had much sympathy with this point of view. In his paper on "The Agnostical Church" he argues for the underlying sacramental principles in everything, and he thinks that the agnostic can hold that and be a churchman and take communion, without troubling about the historical event it celebrates. Since everything may be a sacrament to the religious mind, the special Christian sacrament should be treasured for its ideal truth. He writes, "This principle, which underlies all things, is concentrated in the supreme act of church worship in a touching ceremony, where the most perfect and beneficent creatures of nature, bread and wine, are set forth as a representative of what it is agreed to take as type of a perfect and beneficent life, whether really existent or not is in this aspect of the question of no importance."

Of course there is a great truth in this for us all. We are united not by common opinions, but by a common spirit and a common purpose. If we were always held down to the most prosaic and literal interpretation of everything,

there could be no union for any human purpose at all. In a political party, or a social reform movement, or a religious organization, no two members see eye to eye alike in every detail, or even would describe in the same terms the ideal for which the party stands. At the same time to make too much of this is dangerous. It is surely important whether an event, on which faith builds, is really true in the strict sense or not. Man rests his life on reality. Disproof of God, for example, would sooner or later—and sooner rather than later—make an end of religion. It is all right to rest on spiritual ideals amid the flux of this changing world, so long as we do not deceive ourselves about the fact of the change.

The purpose of this book is to understand the causes of unrest in the religion of our time, and to enforce the need of restatement, and if possible to indicate the lines of the probable statement. I am not trying to prove the truth of the old, nor am I trying to present a system of theology in place of the old. The last thing I would want to do would be to encourage the

desire of people to get their intellectual clothes ready to wear. The most I seek to do is to suggest for a transition time like this a point of view that may enable some to hold their footing. It has been my good fortune to spend a large part of the last few years among the colleges and universities of America, and I can say at least that this point of view has helped many over a dangerous time of unsettlement of conviction.

That there is great unsettlement of conviction we must confess. Thomas Paine begins "The Crisis" with words that became a battle-cry in America, "These are the times that try men's souls," and the words apply to-day. No one can know the modern religious world without feeling, however vaguely, the unrest. The modern world is racked with self-analysis, and the result is a deep disquiet. We do not know where we stand. Many brought up in the old traditional orthodoxy and maintaining it in form, have an uneasy feeling. Even where they retain the old forms and phrases, they know deep down in their hearts that it must be with a difference, realizing that the

words need at least new interpretation to make them true and real. Others feel as if the bottom had fallen out of their intellectual world, and being of more radical temper than others have cast away the old phrases altogether, and sometimes have "thrown out the baby with the bath"! Others are the open prey of all fads and movements, new religions and the revival of old superstitions. Man's religious nature demands satisfaction, and everywhere we see the pathetic spectacle which moved Paul on Mars Hill of men erecting an altar to the Unknown God.

There are elements in the situation that make for comfort and for courage. Amid the change of the old order we are inclined to lose perspective. With the many things that seem to be shaken, we forget that there are things that remain. Human nature stays pretty constant, and the needs of life do not alter. It may be we take too serious a tone about what we call our problems. Every age is faced with problems of some sort, and manages to get through them in some way, even if we conclude that often it only muddles through them.

The world's past in religion cannot go for nothing, any more than in other regions of life. There is always an element of permanence in all transition. It is only a temptation of youth to think that we can start fresh, and shake off all the burden and the glory of the past. The modern man is not a new and original creation. Fortunately there is a lot of the old man in him—and some of the old woman. The fundamental needs of life are the same. We can afford to face our present and our future with courage and with faith.

1. The first great fact to keep hold of is that *religion is of the very nature of man.* It is not anything alien to him, or something even forced on him except by the necessities of his social life. The time has passed when it can be easily explained as the invention of priests, as some shallow thinkers used to declare. That is surely to put the cart before the horse. Priests do not create religion, but religion created the priests. Men are religious by nature, as they are rational and æsthetic by nature. It does not mean that they are

always religious or all alike religious, any more than they are always all alike rational. When we call man æsthetic, we do not mean that all men are born artists, though we may believe that all have some share of the faculty and that with most of us the poet in us dies young. When we call man religious, we mean that religion has its source in human nature and in human life. That is the explanation why religion is universal. Even if somewhere, some time, a tribe of savages were to be found without religion, it would only mean that a group were so far below the level of man, so inhuman, that they had no religion. Herbert Spencer with his candid mind, speaking of the universality of the religious feeling, says, "We are obliged to admit that it is as normal as any other faculty."

All history declares that only two things eternally interest man, two subjects that never fail. Poets have said that these two things are Love and War, but in this they have taken the part for the whole. Of the two perennial subjects the first is economic, and the other is religious. The history of man is the history

of Economics and Religion—the physical basis of life, and the spiritual motive of life. Men have always had to struggle for the wherewithal to live, and have always been interested in finding out why it was worth while to live at all. We need never be afraid that men will lose their interest in either of these subjects.

Some superior moralists speak in contempt of bread and butter schemes, and of what they call the gospel of the dinner pail. They berate the ordinary man, because so much of his life and thought are given to the means of living. They denounce modern politics because so much of it is economic, because the ideals of the ordinary man are for a fairer distribution of the material fruits of labour. But everything in life, even religion, is dependent on the economic state. The superior moralist needs some substitute for the dinner pail before his ethics are possible.

On the other hand some have thought that the way of progress is to ban the whole subject of religion, to give up the long passion of the saints and be content to live on a lower plane. It is as futile as the other attempt. Man, to

remain man, cannot live by bread alone. However we may attempt to explain religion, it is rooted in the nature of man and nourished by the life of man. With capacities above all opportunity for full satisfaction; with deeps in our nature revealed now and again in flashes even to the shallowest; with powers abortive, and instincts starved, and attributes that never reach maturity, with visions that elude us and mock us; with life that confines us and yet taunts us with something ever beyond—we cannot escape the doom of man which makes him incurably religious.

If religion is of a man's nature, we need not fear for its future, still less fear that it is not going to have a future. There will be conditions that for the time seem to menace it, and conditions that tend to maim or hinder it, but the absolutely worst condition it has to meet is the temper of men who refuse to *let it change.* Precisely because religion is of man's nature, it cannot remain unchanged. That would be to doom it to death. We believe that knowledge and art will not pass from the earth, though we recognize mental conditions and social con-

ditions that discourage and hamper them. Religion is one, as knowledge and art are each one, with many broken arcs to find a place one day in the perfect round. The institutions that religion creates will, and must, alter. The practical organization of religion in forms like the Church will change. The intellectual embodiment of religion in a creed must be amended to suit every access of new knowledge. These may change and pass, and we sometimes tremble as if for the very Ark of God when change they must. But religion itself cannot die, till the soul of man dies. If religion is made by the actual forces that make man, its reign is secure. The days of its power are not ended, if we had eyes to see and hearts to understand.

2. A second reason for courage in facing the changing order is that it has not come on us as a cataclysm, but as an *orderly movement.* It gives us time to adjust ourselves. We speak grandiosely about this age of transition. That is a true enough description, but there is nothing theatrical about the change of scenes. The

world is always passing through transition, and is wonderfully patient with its children in giving time to let things soak in. No doubt there are times of sharp crisis when the soul of man seems wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born. But usually change is gradual. Even when it looks sudden, as in a French Revolution, it really had been prepared for long, and the sudden crisis is the climax of a slow process. Our new world-view is largely the result of modern astronomy and modern biology, but the revolutionary discoveries which make the points of departure for these two sciences are not so desperately modern. For one we have got to go back at least as far as Newton. It has taken more than two centuries for the truth to filter through. It is a good many decades since Darwin published the "Origin of Species," and we are only applying the principle of evolution now.

Indeed, to the eager believer in progress the change seems disappointingly slow, and he is impatient at the tardy rate at which the world appropriates the gains of knowledge. In spite

of the Copernican astronomy the minds of many are still geocentric. In thought they live in a world which is the centre of the universe, and not a planet which is as a speck in the vastness of infinity. We have not completely adjusted ourselves to the new universe, and above all we have not accepted the manifold implications. In the same way the thought of evolution dominates all our theories and methods in every region of knowledge, but we have not submitted to the logical conclusions. The old-world view still lingers, not only in the speech and thinking of the masses, but in the philosophy and theology and ethics of the learned. The creeds by which we express our religious beliefs date from a time when a comet or an eclipse of the sun were supposed to presage calamity. We still use language in prayer and praise that does not agree with what we know of the world. But slowly and surely the traditional history and theology have been undermined. Ever more minds are hospitable to the modern views of nature. Some of our present acute distress is because the process has been hurried a little to-

day by a succession of scientific discoveries and by the increase of technical skill. The rate has been somewhat accelerated.

Men have not yet had time to relate the movements in the various departments of knowledge so as to get a consistent view of the whole field of thought, but there are certain presuppositions which are acting everywhere. They are like leaven leavening the whole lump. Presuppositions like the uniformity of nature and the law of continuity are accepted and used by men in every branch of investigation. The results of sciences like geology are gradually being absorbed. Most educated men no longer deny the great age of the world, the comparative antiquity of man, and the fact that death is not a punishment but a law. Bit by bit new knowledge is accepted, and our view of the whole gets stretched to take in each fresh proved addition. All the knowledge from different quarters has not been digested and assimilated, and no wonder if men ask if it is all going to agree. No wonder the questions arise, If men accept the modern view of the world, can they still be Chris-

tians? Has anything happened to affect the essential truth of Christianity? Is the old Gospel capable of being for our age the power of God unto salvation?

3. A third comforting reflection is that *our age is not unique* in its experience of a changing order. There are some historical analogies, with many points of resemblance to our own age. We can find times with the same seemingly sudden breakdown of the standards and sanctions of life. We see a similar critical process laying the old order in ruins. We see the same confusion both of thought and of morals. Even the same types of men are reproduced—some cynical, some sceptical, some despairing. A part of the population turn to the easy creed, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. We see some rich wallow in stupid luxury, and some poor ready to bury discontent if there is only enough "bread and games." We see social unrest going hand in hand with intellectual and moral confusion. We see violent reactions and frantic attempts to revivify the dying faith. And ever some

noble souls, who see not the new vision, live out their life in stern adherence to duty. We see also how the world won out to a new life through those whose eyes were filled with the glory of the dawning day and whose hearts met it with joyful courage.

In many respects there is a close analogy found in the *world at the time of Jesus.* Christianity got its opportunity in the great world through the collapse of the old order. The need for some new power to restore the soul in man and to regenerate society is well seen from the Dialogues of Lucian. He lived at the breakdown of the Greek civilization, when the standards of social life were lost and the old religion was a spent force. I take Lucian as illustration because he reveals the situation all the more vividly that he was not a Greek. Picture a young barbarian, fired with enthusiasm for Greek life, dreaming of it, working for it—and finding out what it was at heart. This gives a sting to his description, that he lived to despise what he had once thought the ideal. A man who knew that the old had broken down, and had nothing to replace it, naturally seems

a cynic, or to one of Lucian's temperament a satirist. Many men of intellect to-day are showing the same spirit.

All his work was critical, destructive, the proud and bitter disdain of a wounded soul. He poured his acid into society, especially the religion of the time. In his "Dialogues of the Gods" he does his most effective criticism by putting the poetry of the old religion into prose, making people laugh by showing how childish it is. Lucian withers all claims, particularly the intellectual classes like the Rhetoricians and Philosophers. In "Timon" he makes Zeus ask Hermes who that squalid fellow down there is using his tongue so loudly. "He must be a philosopher to judge from his fluent blasphemy." He was the typical rationalist of his age, bringing everything also within the range of his mordant wit. When Hermotinus says "You will not accept anything I say," he replies, "On the contrary it is you who will not say anything I can accept."

At the time when Lucian was writing, Christianity was beginning to sweep the world with its new message of God and of man. It rescued

that ancient world from moral confusion, and saved it from intellectual despair. It revived the spirit of man, giving life a new hope and a new motive. It planted new ambitions in the hearts of men, and filled them with a strange peace. Society, which was breaking down, was renewed. It transformed the face of the world.

A better analogy still is the *world before the Reformation;* for, as now, it was a crisis in the life of Christianity itself. Here again perhaps the best single source for a view of the unsettlement of conviction is found in a book also called Dialogues. In it, and in "Praise of Folly," Erasmus pours his satire on the state of affairs. The Renaissance and the Reformation were preceded by criticism. Erasmus was a true rationalist in principle, making his appeal to common sense, withering superstition by the sanity of light. True, he only barked when Luther fastened his teeth, but men like Erasmus made the work of Luther possible.

The unrest of Reformation times was due intellectually to new discoveries which widened knowledge, and to new scholarship, including

Biblical. In these respects the age resembled ours. The solution then reached by the Protestant world was, however, only a makeshift. It was a change of authority from Church to Bible. That kept the world going for some time. But criticism to-day is more radical still, and investigates all authority. It has put the Bible also into the melting-pot. Whither are we sailing? On what uncharted seas?

From history we see that when an old religion died, it was always replaced by a new one. There is no religion at the bar of the world's judgment to-day but Christianity. We can only look to the transformation of Christianity itself to save the world. Is it adequate for the task? What part of the cargo must be jettisoned?

II

The Forces of Unrest

It may reasonably be maintained that few greater calamities can befall a nation than the severance of its higher intelligence from religious influence.

—*Lecky.*

II

THE FORCES OF UNREST

HILE we recognize that we are in the midst of a changing order, we are in danger of exaggerating it sometimes. There is a proverb which says that we never eat our soup quite as hot as it is served to us. Those who purvey our intellectual food often give us it piping hot, and it is wise to let it cool off a bit. There are other forms of sensationalism than that of the press and the theatre. Some change is only breathlessness, and some movement is not even change. There is a passage in "Alice Through the Looking-Glass" which comes to mind when one tries to follow the flights of some prophets of change. "Alice never could quite make out, in thinking it over afterwards, how it was that they began: all she remembers is that they were running hand in hand, and the Queen went so fast that it was all she could do to keep up with her;

and still the Queen kept crying, 'Faster!' but Alice felt she could not go faster, though she had no breath to say so. The most curious part of the thing was that the trees and the other things round them never changed their places at all; however fast they went, they never seemed to pass anything. . . . 'Are we nearly there?' Alice managed to pant out at last. 'Nearly there!' the Queen repeated. 'Why, we passed it ten minutes ago! Faster!'"

Not only is some of our motion not progress, but also some of our progress, if not all of it, is accompanied with moral danger. When old standards are let go, men lose their moral bearings and many a wrecked life is the result. This is the real menace of our time. There is a breakdown of the ordinary root-virtues by which humanity subsists. Society will go to pieces without the ancient bonds. This necessity explains the amusing spectacle we sometimes come across to-day of men rediscovering the Ten Commandments, and loudly asserting their value for the world. Offenses against the purity of the family or against the sanctity of human life disintegrate society. Whatever

happens to creeds and churches, life cannot go on without a moral foundation. It will always remain true that men must not steal or bear false witness, if we are even to do business with each other. We ought to recognize the moral danger of a time of unsettlement of conviction, and hasten to put life on a foundation that cannot be shaken.

I am specially impressed with this from my contact with so many students in the universities. The breakdown of faith is not confined to any section or Church. Take these sample illustrations, which perhaps better visualize the situation than any amount of general statement. In one university a young man came to me and after introducing himself said, "I am a Jew by blood but not by faith. My parents belong to an Ethical Culture Society, but there is nothing in it for me. As far as I am concerned I could go back to my room and blow my brains out. I have nothing to hold to."

In another university a student told me he had been brought up a Roman Catholic. I gathered that he was of a pious family, and he had put off his break with the Church for fear

of wounding those he loved, including the priest for whom he had a high regard. But the break had come at last. He could no longer assent to the dogmas with which he had associated Christianity. He was desolate in spirit, and as he described it he felt that he was on sinking sand without foundation for his life.

In a state university a young woman student, of Puritan ancestry, came in similar distress. Brought up in a Protestant Church, she too had given up the dogmas with which Christianity had been associated. She declared she had nowhere to stand. Nothing was certain to her any more—no kind of authority. There seemed no validity even in the moral principles of the early training, no reason why she should believe anything right.

I could duplicate these instances a hundred times. These three cases stand out in my memory because of the vivid remark each happened to make in describing the state of uncertainty, and the poignant cry of moral distress "I have nothing to hold to"—"I am on sinking sand"—"I have nowhere to stand." They were not referring to merely intellectual

problems, as I found, but in each case to a great moral problem. The moral difficulty arose from the intellectual unsettlement. It is because I know how wide-spread this is with the educated youth that I would fain say something to establish and strengthen. Something is done even if some know that they are understood with sympathy.

Some churches attribute all this to the atmosphere of our universities, and think to conserve something by little ecclesiastical preserves in education. It is a vain hope; for the spirit of the age creeps into the preserves. Sometimes the relapse afterwards is far more calamitous when the students leave the protecting ecclesiastical atmosphere. Besides, the forces of unrest are everywhere, acting incessantly in the wide world of human life. What the universities think to-day the world thinks to-morrow.

I recognize frankly that it is not all an intellectual problem. If we could state religious faith in completely modern terms and could adjust every difficulty to reason, it would not mean that religion could go in and possess the

land. The task of religion is not so easy as that. The great necessities of life lie in another region. The real problems that trouble us to our heart are not speculative at all, but practical. These are, how to live even up to the light we have; how to meet sorrow, temptation, death; how to find a remedy for some of the world's woes; how to deal with sin in self and in others. These ancient words are still the modern realities. By comparison the intellectual confusion is only on the surface of life. At the same time the intellectual confusion exists, and to many is the cause of some moral confusion and of some spiritual distress.

In attempting to name the important elements of our own time it is natural for us to be humble and a little suspicious of our success. Contemporary historians have usually been wrong in their estimate about the things in their age that were of account. They make much of the men and the events that were in the spotlight, and neglect the forces which we see afterwards were really dominant in shaping history. Political intrigues, military schemes,

moves on the diplomatic chess-board, the things generally that make a splash—these easily attract attention. It may be that the things in our analysis to-day which seem to us the most prominent are of secondary importance compared to some insignificant movement which will control the future. The history of the world is the history of man's conscience, personal and social, not the history of his material achievements, which end in the scrap-heap. It is the history of ideas and ideals embodying themselves in the complete life. We are, however, in this analysis saved from some danger of mistaken judgment by the fact that we are asking about *forces* in our midst and not about men or events.

There are certain broad characteristics of our age which make it peculiar. There are certain forces which are ceaselessly playing on modern life, and which may be said to be creating our new world. They are forces that make for change, and therefore produce unrest. One is the critical movement, which began with investigating our ancient literature and traditional history, and has gone on to question all

authority. The new criticism refuses to be warned off any ground, and applies its acid to every institution of man. It is creating a new self-consciousness. The second is the scientific movement, which has done so much for practical life. The new science, however, is not content with practical triumphs, but pushes its method as the test of all truth. It has given to man a new world-view. The third is the democratic movement, which is changing society over the whole civilized world. The new democracy is not only making new conditions of life, but is invading the region of theory and making new conditions of thought. It has produced a new social conception. Theology, which is our intellectual statement of religion, is bound to be coloured by our method of thinking and by the background of thought.

1. *The New Criticism.* It may be said that critical methods do not differ, or ought not to differ, from scientific methods. But there was criticism before our modern scientific methods were formulated. For example, literary criticism was creating a problem for religion long

ago, and would have pressed the problem if natural science had never been. The division therefore is worth making for convenience' sake, as we are compelled to consider how the Bible has been affected by criticism. Any change there at once creates a change in theology. Of course criticism of one sort or another is as old as man, but it has always hitherto been exercised within certain limits. Modern criticism may well be called new, because of its radical nature and its breadth of application. Nothing escapes it. Law does not escape because of its authority, nor does religion because of its sacredness. It leaves its mark on everything and its mark is a great Mark of Interrogation. Into the melting-pot has gone Bible and creeds, and also institutions which to our fathers were counted fixed forever, beyond the reach even of criticism.

Applied as it is not only to records and traditions, but also to the very basis of society itself to every form of authority, its first result is a tremendous unsettlement. We feel as if life is built on sinking sand. Customs, social institutions, law, and order are asked to justify them-

selves, to show reason for existence, or at least why they are as they are. All modern methods of education begin with historical investigation and criticism, and at first it brings the settled fabric down about the ears of the student. Take as illustration *marriage*, whose fixed character and sanctity were unquestioned and established. Every one, who knows modern literature in books and magazines, knows how fiercely the critical light is beating on it to-day, and to what weird conclusions some unsettled mortals are coming about it. Of course this critical process does not mean that everything when tested is found wanting. We will find validity in law, and in institutions like marriage. We will find a place for the Church, and for creeds. But nothing is taken for granted and has to "make good." Change of some sort is inevitable.

Thus, religion is not alone in having to meet criticism. In some respects the keenest criticism is directed to other spheres, partly because some of its demands have already been met by religion. The world has escaped from some of the theological dogmas that afflicted it. It

is still in the grip of political and economic dogmas. The chief critical work now to be done is to reëxamine and test some of these—and discard them. Some of the sacred formulæ of the past about business, about government, about the nature of law, about social conditions, are to-day in the crucible to find if there is any base metal in them. Modern politics has changed its character, and deals with a whole set of new questions. Economic dogmas on supply and demand, on competition, on the rights of property, are being examined on all hands. Men are asking even more fundamental questions still about law, its origin and its authority.

The critical spirit is creating for man a *new self-consciousness.* He is trying to find himself. Psychology works patiently to discover the nature and the laws of mind. Sociology seeks to relate the individual to the larger life of society. All this is bound to affect theology. It too is questioned and is forced to question itself. The traditional theology was stated when a different view of man was current. Man was viewed as a being created in innocence, who

fell from his first estate. All subsequent generations suffered from his sin, and became wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. Ideas like that of original corruption and total depravity seem foreign to the modern mind, though it too acknowledges the facts on which these doctrines are based. It would state the facts differently, and would find a vastly different explanation. The new self-consciousness is not that of a worm of the earth "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil." Man looks on himself as risen, and rising, from lower estates, and sees himself as the heir of the ages, to whom it is given to master the world and bend it to his ends.

2. *The New Science.* Here also, science is old, even in the modern sense of physical knowledge. The stream was dammed up for centuries, but its source lies back in ancient Greece with the work of men who investigated and speculated on the natural world. Their work on geometry and arithmetic was permanent, and they laid the foundations of medi-

cine and astronomy. Even our modern science is more than three centuries old, with names in its honour roll like Copernicus, and Kepler, and Galileo. We may, however, speak of the new science of to-day, because of the amazing fruits that have been plucked from the tree of knowledge. The forces of nature have been harnessed to the use of man, and the world is full of the practical triumphs of science. But far more effective of change is the influence of scientific method. It is advanced as the one instrument by which men find truth in every region. It is opposed to the dogmatic method which practically says that if the facts do not fit the theory, so much the worse for the facts. Science begins with facts, and ends by bringing its theories to the test of facts.

There has been slowly growing a new conception of nature, and we hardly realize how vast has been the change. Modern geology and kindred sciences have altered our views of the earth on which we live, and altered our view of the past history of the world of man. We accept the great age of the earth, which at first was thought to be in conflict with the

early chapters of Genesis. With it has come the comparatively long age of man, drawn from such things as the discovery of implements of different periods in geologic strata. Modern astronomy has changed the whole view of the universe, not merely in altering its centre from the earth, which is now an old story. We can no longer think of the solar system as a kind of machine wound up and set a-going, to be as suddenly one day dissolved by the Creator. To the ancient Psalmist the world was like a three-story building, with the Earth the middle story, below it Sheol the shadowy abode of the dead, and above it Heaven set in floods above the arch of the sky. Modern biology adds to the change with its master-key of evolution to unlock many doors. Man has learned to look back over the long way by which the race has come, and sees unity of progress in the mystery of life.

The scientific spirit has created for us a *new world-view*. It is dynamic, not static, a process, not a structure. All that exists is seen as the consequence of a previous condition. Everything is viewed in the light of develop-

ment. Even Cause is not looked on as something from the outside producing its effect, but as within the process, acted on and acting at one and the same time. In life there are no fixed types, but all have flowed from other forms, and themselves are moving to newer forms. The induction made is that a force can be converted into other forces, and that the infinite variety of the world has been so made. In this endless flux the idea of First Cause in the old sense has no place. I am not here criticizing, but merely describing briefly—too briefly—a world-view, which through the thought of evolution is taking possession of men's minds.

It is impossible that such a view of nature can be held by science without affecting theology. Science works by the assumption of a law of continuity. Evolution and the uniformity of nature are only other forms of stating the same law. Science refuses to leave any gaps, and indeed its work consists in filling up the gaps. The traditional theology was stated when different conceptions of the world were current. It spoke the speech of its time, but

the speech has changed and sounds foreign to many. It dates from a time when a comet was a portend and an eclipse meant the anger of God, when witchcraft was a natural explanation for some things and certain diseases were thought to be the possession of a devil.

3. *The New Democracy.* Like the other forces of unrest to which we have referred, democracy is not a new thing. But the features of the modern democratic spirit are, again, its radical nature and its breadth of application. It is being applied with a vigour and rigour hitherto unknown. Other democracies there have been, but of limited character. The Greek democracies were really parochial, the government of a city, and with restricted citizenship at that. Also they were built on slave labour. The slaves of course were excluded, and in Athens they outnumbered the whole free population. All resident aliens were excluded, and even the subject allies. Besides, it was only a democracy for those within the circle—outside were barbarians. Nowhere was possible the conception which

to-day is growing in men's minds, to use the words of Goldwin Smith which have become the motto of Cornell University, "Above nations is humanity."

The new social spirit is seen everywhere, and affects every region of life. It is sweeping over the whole world, even awakening China from what looks like a sleep of centuries. Its effects in Europe and America are not so spectacular, but are as far-reaching. The new democratic movement is altering political theory, and industrial practice, and social life generally. It is a vast movement of which we see hardly more than the beginning, but that it spells change of all sorts no one can doubt. Already the emphasis is on social ethics not merely private, and on social responsibility not merely individual. We see it in the new sense of social guilt. Religious leaders sometimes speak of men to-day being hard to convict of guilt. That is true of some things, but probably more men have an uncomfortable conscience than ever before. There are even new sins recognized by the conscience that is enlightened by the social spirit. Again, charity of the old

type is not so highly esteemed, and men ask for justice, and resent the superior air of the distributor of alms or tracts. Some rights that were once thought to be purely private are brought within the sweep of public control. Everywhere the waters of our social life are troubled, stirred to their depth by a new spirit.

This democratic spirit is creating a *new social conception*. The rising tide of democratic ideals has altered the whole configuration of the coast, so that we need a new map. Theology cannot help but be affected—not only in some of its institutions like the Church, but in its whole statement and emphasis. In the long run there cannot be an aristocratic Church in a democratic State. The traditional theology was stated when society was viewed differently, when the natural title for God was King and men were subjects. Even when old names are retained, their meaning has changed. When I first lived in America I used sometimes to refer in the common English phrase to the "liberty of the *subject*." I found I was not understood and that the phrase was unknown, but instead men spoke of the liberty of the *citizen*. The two

words in the English-speaking world meant precisely the same thing. I realized how a word can remain, and yet have its meaning transformed. The great English democratic movement has made the old word subject mean simply citizen. So in religion the word Kingdom to-day is much nearer to the thought of Jesus than it has ever been before; for to Him the head of the Kingdom was not King but Father.

We have hitherto been merely making an analysis of conditions, but that in itself is worth while. It is a mistake to despise the necessary work of diagnosis. The same man may not be able to give at once a correct diagnosis and an infallible prescription. But surely the way is opened for at least a possibility of cure by finding out exactly what is happening. What Matthew Arnold said of Goethe is itself a great achievement:

> He took the suffering human race,
> He read each wound, each weakness clear;
> And struck his finger on the place,
> And said: *Thou ailest here, and here.*

We are always inclined to look for a nostrum, a quack medicine that will by magic produce a state of perfect social health. But there never is—or can be—a state of absolute fixity. That would be death. Mr. Chesterton speaks of a certain theory as "satisfying the mind with a full and false explanation." It will bring us far on the way if we realize that even we will never be able to say the last word, and that we can be content to have enough light to walk by and enough truth to live by.

These three movements are ceaselessly playing on modern life. We may dread them, or welcome them; we may exaggerate their influence in some particulars, or underestimate them, but that they are forces that make for change we cannot deny. Movements so subtle and so penetrating cannot have free course in our midst without affecting our statement of everything that affects man. We may differ as to the results. We may differ as to this or that item in the program, and may think that a particular doctrine need not be changed, but we agree as to the process. The general theological machinery that satisfied our fathers

looks strange to us. While it is not our part here to specify in detail how particular doctrines seem to be affected, there are certain things that can be said in general about the whole subject. We will content ourselves with three evident results of the process. Already we see how unconsciously a change of emphasis has taken place.

1. Theology does not attempt so much as it used to do. We have even discovered that we can get along comfortably enough with a good deal less than our fathers thought necessary. The old was an attempt to put the whole universe into a single system of logic. Some of our present distress is due to this; for when the view of the universe changes, as it has changed through the access of new knowledge, trouble begins. If the old seems bound up with religion, we feel we must defend it at all costs, and when we find we can honestly defend it no longer, everything goes to pieces. Thus Christianity was identified with doctrines no longer vital to us and doctrines out of keeping with modern thought. We discover that there is no real connection. We learn that we do not need

to tie up theology with a theory as to when and how the world began, or with a theory as to when and how it will end. These are very interesting subjects known as cosmogony and eschatology, but they are not of the essence of the Christian faith. Theology in the broad sense has to deal with these and other abstruse subjects, but it is not tied up to any ancient or mediæval ideas about them.

2. We have a truer view of the nature and limits of theology. It is merely the attempt of the mind of man to explain the facts of religion and to interpret the experience of religion. There is therefore nothing sacred about it. It is not an inclosure from which intruders must be warned, like the grass in front of the house of David Copperfield's aunt, who could not endure any donkeys on it even for a moment, and who spent most of her time in chasing them off. Even donkeys can come to it at their peril. Anybody can try his hand on theology—and mostly everybody does! But some who claim the right to alter their own views object to the Church changing her doctrine. Naturally a church with a creed moves more

slowly, and does not alter a doctrine till the faith of the church compels it. This at once puts creed in its right place, which is certainly not at the door of entrance. We do not begin with a creed—we *arrive* at a creed. The true point of view is that theology is the servant of religion and not that religion is merely the material for theology.

No science is complete. It is always ready to alter its conceptions with new facts or new explanations. If theology is in any sense the scientific formulation of the facts of religious life, it follows that no theology can be accepted as the final statement. It is the interpretation of religious experience, and each age has to interpret it anew. The language, the thought, even the experience itself change. The more vital and central a truth is, the more it demands restatement. Above all, no theology, no matter how new we call it, can alter the facts. It can mean at most a new setting of facts. The Copernican astronomy displaced the old Ptolemaic astronomy and made astrology impossible, but it did not do anything to the facts. The sun and the moon and the stars

went on exactly as before. It set them in new relations. The new chemistry made the astronomer's stone and the elixir of life impossible—though one can hardly think this from the advertisement of patent medicines! But everything real was just as before, only the facts were classified, and related, and tested. So, any new theology can only put the religious facts of human history and experience in new relations.

3. There has been a change of emphasis from the speculative to the practical and social. Christianity has never entirely lost sight of the true emphasis, as it has never entirely lost sight of its Master. But there is always a danger of making true opinions the test of faith. In every age the great leaders of religion have put the emphasis right. Henry Crabb Robinson in his "Reminiscences" tells how, when a boy of fifteen, he heard John Wesley preach not long before his death. He was so feeble that he was held up in the pulpit by two men with their hands under his armpits. The picture of that reverend countenance with his long white locks before the vast crowd of his lovers

and admirers was one never to be forgotten. After the last prayer Wesley rose up and addressed the people on liberality of sentiment, and spoke against refusing to join a congregation on account of difference of opinion. He said, "If they do but fear God, work righteousness, and keep His commandments, we have nothing to object to." We learn that Christians are united not by a common creed, but by a common purpose, and they find their purpose in the great purpose of their Master.

III

The Acid of Criticism

The Bible is a "library" showing how men variously gifted by the Spirit of God cast the truth which they received into many different literary forms, as genius permitted or occasion demanded.—*Driver*.

III

THE ACID OF CRITICISM

RITICISM is one of those words which have suffered from laxity of speech. It is often used as if it must mean censure of the thing judged, and sometimes a querulous "picking holes" in it. It also has suffered from being looked on as something personal, the private opinion of the critic. Disraeli in "Lothair" even says that critics are the men who have failed in literature and art—a strange remark to make when the English list includes men like Wordsworth and Coleridge and Hazlitt and Sir Joshua Reynolds and Matthew Arnold.

Criticism in its technical sense is the art of judging the merits and values of a work of art. But the word has a much broader meaning than mere appreciation of an æsthetic object. It is used for the spirit which questions authority, which asks fundamental questions about all

established beliefs and institutions. It breaks down all unthinking acceptance of old positions, and applies its acid to the most venerable conditions. In many respects it is the most radical force at work in modern society; for it not only questions all existing forms of authority, but also asks what authority itself is. Men everywhere are asking why things should be as they are, and how they came to be so. Criticism of course is not new. The first man was a critic—certainly the first woman was. But the critical spirit in the world to-day goes to the roots of everything, to the very basis of society itself.

The effects on religion are of a piece with those in other regions of life. Customs, traditions, established ways of thinking, are questioned here as elsewhere. For Protestantism the most important struggle has been over the authority of the Bible. So, naturally, we take this subject to illustrate the methods and results of the critical spirit. Preachers of another time may have been confronted by hostile speculation and had to adapt the faith to new positions, but the modern preacher has to consider the whole new attitude towards the Bible.

He may envy the minister of olden days who simply came to his people with a "Thus saith the Lord," and was satisfied if he could nail a truth with Scripture. If he could get chapter and verse he had done his duty, and he did not worry much as to what the chapter was or where the verse was.

When I hear an older minister use any Psalm indifferently to illustrate the life of David, or use David to illustrate a Psalm, with a sublime disregard of the critical study of the Psalms or of David, I feel he has some advantage over me, at least in the ease with which he can construct a sermon. I know that the Psalm is the same, and the real truth of it is unchanged, but I feel he has the advantage in being able to recall associations that lie deep in the hearts of his older hearers, who may find a more scientific interpretation of the Psalm a little cold by comparison, without David's warm flesh and blood. Association means much, especially in worship, as we know in other ways. Men, otherwise awake to modern conditions, sometimes resent anything that disturbs their old way of looking at texts and passages, partly from the natural

and beautiful association in worship with which the whole traditional view of things is bound up.

Now, for good or ill, criticism has affected our material. We cannot deal with it in precisely the same way, and this to many minds means almost irreparable loss, a feeling with which we must be very tender. It has been said that vast tracts of Scripture which were luminous and comfortable to our fathers are bare desert to the younger generation. That is the natural first feeling after a battle—what we have lost. The time comes to count up the gains—what we have won ; and the first task of the pulpit is to reclaim these desert places. And it is only right to say, over against that wail of loss, that to some of us modern Biblical study has resulted in what has almost been a rediscovery of the Bible. The message of the Bible has come with fresh force to heart and conscience.

It is worth while noting that the very success of Christian teaching is in part responsible for the changed view of the Bible. It really became a necessity for the sake of the Gospel

itself. The ethical spirit of our time is the work of Christianity, and there had been a growing sense of protest against associating in the old way the imperfect morality of some parts of the Old Testament with the highest religion. For long the protest was delayed by the habit of spiritualizing passages when they conflicted with Christian teaching, reading mystic meaning into details, and generally evading difficulties with some sleight-of-hand. The Christian conscience condemns some things which the Old Testament approves. Unless we are to play fast and loose with the natural meaning of the word, the ethical standard of our day demands that the traditional view of Scripture be modified. This moral difficulty disappears when we recognize the fact of development, which of course implies that we do not put all Scripture on the same level of authority.

At any rate, we have now to accept the fact that criticism has come to stay, that there is no use merely opposing and fighting it. It is like trying to sweep back the ocean to say to the mind of man, Thus far, but no farther. However much the minds of many simple, pious

people are disturbed by the work of theological and especially Biblical criticism, we cannot escape it, partly because a critical stage is necessary before a stage of reconstruction, and also because the mind of man has slipped from old fetters.

It is not enough to attempt to discredit criticism by pointing to its mistakes, its rash judgments, its amended verdicts. The mistakes of applying a method do not vitiate the method, if the method is essential. And we do not dispose of criticism by the sneer about doctors differing, pointing to scholars fighting each other for different explanations of a disputed point, as if it were all a matter of words. We cannot escape the whole problem by assuming that nothing has been really settled by criticism, and that we may wait till authorities who differ come to agreement. It is well to bear in mind that some points are now fixed in the view of the great majority of capable scholars.

The traditional view still goes on fighting rear-guard battles, withdrawing but never admitting defeat. This is natural, since many men feel that so much dear to themselves is at

stake; but it is unfortunate, not only for the common man who is troubled by the din, but also for the combatants themselves. For it has induced in some cases a wild and rash and impatient criticism among some forward scholars —a little like the rage of besieging soldiers at the stubborn defense of the besieged. Indeed, so fierce has been the fight that it may be said that our generation is not able fully to comprehend the complete results, and it will lie with some of the younger who have not been brought up under the older régime to estimate the gain and the loss.

Criticism is often spoken of as a very modern device sprung upon the Church by willful men. It is a mistake to assume that it is so very modern. A book like Cheyne's "Founders of Old Testament Criticism" traces the movement from some of the early precursors of it in England, which takes it back to the eighteenth century, through a now long list of scholars who gave themselves to the scientific study of the long-admitted problems of the literature of the Bible. We talk of Biblical Criticism, but we must remember that there is no special connec-

tion between these two words, as if there were a peculiar science of that name. It is the application to the Bible of the principles by which all literature is tested. This is really the central point in the fight—whether the uniqueness of the Bible is such that it cannot have the tests applied to it which we would certainly apply, and do apply, to all other ancient literature.

It can never be a gain to lose intellectual veracity, and we know that men often fight for what is of no real value. Many a time the Church would have said, and did say, that everything went if a certain theory of the ministry or the sacraments were touched. The Church thought that Galileo's theory was subversive of everything sacred. Luther denounced Copernicus. And so on through a long list of mistaken judgments which honestly thought things vital that events have proved not so.

These mistakes in the past have all been due to the attempt to isolate the Bible from all other streams of knowledge that pour in upon man. The young science of geology was frowned on and denied, because it was supposed to contradict certain views of the creation of the

world in Genesis; but no one to-day thinks that we must either get rid of Genesis or of geology. The astronomy that held that the earth went round the sun was declared infidel for similar reasons. We should at least have learned from all these futile fights that we cannot cut off the Bible from the influence of other studies. This is what essentially the present fight with criticism is about. The general conclusions of critics are established on the principles by which all history and literature are judged. The ultra-conservative is saying over again what the Inquisition said to Galileo, and what Wesley said to Newton—practically that the interpretation of the Bible has no relation to other knowledge of our time. We surely see that we cannot isolate the Bible from all other subjects, and have an air-tight compartment in our minds for it.

The right attitude is the courage born of faith. One thing is certain, that we always suffer and never gain from the theologian in a panic, who brands all critics as atheists, and seems glad to prove that all faith disappears if a critical position be accepted. He is showing a lamentable

lack of faith in the power of truth. Theological hysterics are the worst form of that disease. We ought to believe in truth and be sure that only truth can permanently satisfy us. Truth is not to be reached and not to be conserved by repression of thought and taking away the liberty of research. That is only to minister to superstition on the one side, and to skepticism on the other. The problems raised by criticism must be decided by criticism. If we feel that some scholarship has been rash and irresponsible, so that its findings are false, then scholarship alone can conquer it on its own ground. When Strauss's "Life of Jesus" convulsed religious circles in Germany, the Prussian Government proposed to interdict the book, but Neander said, No, let us answer it by argument, not by authority. He was surely right.

There are two great influences of our time which have put the Bible into the melting-pot. The first is the modern principles by which all literature and history are tested. This of course is what is meant by the foolish name Higher Criticism. It means historical criticism

as distinguished from textual or Lower Criticism. The place of Textual Criticism is admitted by all. But Higher Criticism analyzes the sources, makes pronouncements on authenticity, on age, on historicity. This is why it raises such opposition and such tumult, because it comes so near to the very foundations of the historical faith. It is, as we have seen, part of the modern treatment, and is applied to Homer's "Iliad," to the early history of Rome, the mediæval history of Germany, with the same rigour and vigour as to the Bible. It asks about a book of Scripture, not merely, Is this a faithful text, and if not, can we get at the text? It asks questions like this: Is the author such as is stated? Was he contemporary with the events narrated? What were his sources of knowledge—from first-hand, or from previous documents, or from tradition? Had he any axe to grind, any theological or partisan or priestly bias? Can we analyze his sources of information? Was the book re-edited, or touched by other hands? Is there any external evidence which confirms or controverts any statement?

We see what a large order all this is, and how we let ourselves in for all manner of subjective dangers. At the same time the Bible cannot evade this process, and if a book is proved to be a compilation, or if the traditional date is rejected on grounds that would be universally admitted in the case of any other ancient literature, we must candidly accept facts, and not start with assumptions as to what the Bible must be before going to the Bible to find out humbly what it is.

The second great influence which has made modern criticism a necessity is the now recognized principle of development. This principle has altered the study of almost every subject, and nowhere so markedly as the study of history. Such a vital principle at work in men's minds must sooner or later be applied to the history of Israel and the Church, and must result in modifying the traditional views. The recognized results of criticism are such as these: The literature of the Bible was gathered into the Canon largely from the point of view of edification and not by historical investigation. So that for one thing we cannot

assume the order in which the books exist. Dates and authorship were not subjected to what we would call scientific criticism. They are often the result of mere tradition. Further, the ancients had not our ideal and our customs regarding literature, and reëditing and writing under another name were common.

At first sight the old view of Scripture which simply accepted the traditional dates and order of the books seemed to give a consistent and imposing development of Israel and of Israel's faith, beginning with the patriarchal times of Genesis and the Mosaic deliverance of the Law; then through the checkered history of Judges and Kings, with the Psalter and the prophecies giving the blossom and the fruit of the law; then the exile and the return and the descent into ritual and formalism; till in the fullness of time Christ came. In the old view the law was first in time, as to the Jewish Church it has been first in importance.

Criticism has changed this whole position. The books placed first in the Old Testament are not first in time as we have them. Their final form was reached long after the periods

with which they deal. It is thus not merely a documentary rearrangement which is demanded, but a complete reversal of the conception of ancient Jewish history. In the old view the Law given by Moses regulated and conditioned all subsequent revelation; so that the Prophets were men recalling the people to adhere to that elaborate system. This has been the consistent view of the Jewish Church. They practically identified religion with the Law, which explains the attitude of the Scribes and Pharisees of Christ's time. They made it their work to apply and expound and explain the law of Moses, to interpret it. It follows naturally that they should wrap up religion in legal forms, and that books like the prophecies and Psalms, which are to us the books of religion specially, were less valuable than the Law, and really inferior in quality.

The modern critical position reverses this order both in time and in quality. And, for one thing, we see how in this matter criticism confirms what has been the practical custom in the whole Christian Church even when the theory has been all the other way, namely, the

custom of finding the truest inspiration in the very books which, according to the old view, are merely expansions of what has been given by God in more definite form as Laws. Jesus changed the estimate of the Bible; and the Church has always believed that the permanent value of Revelation did not lie in the Law as such. Note how instinctively we turn to the Prophets or Psalms for religious quickening and comfort and for spiritual truth. The new critical position, then, is not that the Law was first and prophecy was an interpretation of the Law, but that prophecy was first and the Law is the crystallizing of the truths of revelation into institutions and customs and life. The emphasis of the new standpoint is laid, not on a priestly system and ritual, but on inspiration and spiritual experience.

I would not underestimate some of the difficulties raised by criticism and the unsolved problems and even the dangers to faith by the necessity of readjustment of some items of creed; but the fact is that criticism is really driving the Church to build her faith deeper, forcing her out of all makeshifts and half-way

houses. The spiritual authority of Scripture is not undermined by any results of investigation. Indeed, it is put on a surer basis to the believing heart. While for the time the old preaching has lost verve and grip, there may be a new note of spiritual power in the new preaching, and my one purpose in this broad and hasty review has been that we should take the right attitude towards this whole process and should calmly assert the facts of religion and live the life of faith.

There are some things to remember in connection with the subject of criticism in our thinking. One thing is that criticism is *not an end* in itself. Personally, I willingly give it its full innings, but I will not let it monopolize all the field. After criticism comes the opportunity for getting at new values and truer appreciations. After analysis comes the need for a truer synthesis. The critical analysis of documents undoubtedly affects all our results and influences interpretation, but it only calls for a new interpretation. Sometimes this interpretation seems poorer and we seem to suffer

loss of old comfort; but often it is richer and nobler, and we discover that things have only suffered a sea change into something rich and strange.

A second practical lesson—this time especially for preachers—is that they should *consume their own smoke.* They should give results rather than processes. It is not their business to discuss in the pulpit critical hypotheses, and all sorts of scholastic and academic controversies. It is their business to expound truth and to apply it to life. By putting the stress on the right thing they shape their hearers' minds even in the matter of criticism. They learn the real things of religion. Critical processes should affect the thinking and the presentation of a subject, but should not be the material of preaching.

There follows from this lesson a third one, going deeper into the true place of criticism. Questions of authenticity and discussions of dates and documents and authorship are useful and interesting and necessary; but religion as spiritual experience with a history of the past and with a living present does not depend on

these discussions. If we live as religious men, we do not live by these things. The living realities of the Bible are not affected by scholarly researches or even doubts and denials. Life does not stop while biologists inquire into the unsolved problems of their science. Religious life does not stop while experts examine records.

In any case, it is worth while insisting that you do not account for the Christian life by any sort of literary criticism. The life remains a fact of history and experience, to be explained if you can, but not to be explained away. Literature did not create it, and no dealing with the literature for or against can destroy it. The institutions that life creates can be criticized and analyzed, but the life itself cannot be explained by any kind of analysis. The literature of the Bible is the genuine expression of the religious life of the Bible. The literature does not even verify the life any more than it generates the life: the life verifies the literature. It is a question of life—this question of religion; and criticism cannot touch life. It deals with the fringe, the methods and

the outward manifestations of life. There is room for criticism, for thought, for reason in the unfathomable depths of divine truth, but these do not generate the truth. It is intuitive. The child, the ignorant, the unlearned may see it. It is to be seen, not argued about. Men spoke before the laws of grammar were propounded. Men reasoned before Aristotle built up logic. Men sang before the theory of music was dreamed of. Men ate before the chemistry of edibles was studied. Men believed before theology was built up into a system to formulate their faith. The explanation may be difficult, but the thing itself is simple. The science of it may be imperfect and hard, but the thing itself is intuitive—a flash, a gleam, an inspiration, an act.

We have to beware of the paralyzing effect of criticism on religion, and this is to be done by realizing the limitations of all criticism. We can see this paralysis in literature and art when criticism is allowed too large a place. A poet may be so finical about the right words, so afraid to venture anything, so concerned about perfecting his poetic apparatus, that he

can produce nothing, or when he does it may be refined away to mere elegances of speech without virility, without thought, without any special meaning. The vision, the intuition, the poetic impulse, are often weakened by a too great regard for the formal standards in vogue. In all art, such as the interpretation of beauty in painting, or the interpretation of thought by writing in literature or by speech in oratory, the first and chief factor is intuition. It is not attained by analysis, by criticism, by resolving the thing into its component parts. It is creative, constructive, a great emotion which opens the eyes to the beauty or the truth. Criticism is not incompatible with it, nay, is necessary for it at its highest, but if it is dominated by too great regard for rule and convention, it loses all distinction and takes its place among the great crowd of mediocrity.

In practical life also criticism will paralyze beneficence and philanthropy, as it paralyzes poetry. Charity organization is dearly bought at the expense of charity itself. In religion the same effect is often felt. This temptation is specially prominent in our day. Every doc-

trine, every article of faith, every form of creed, every authority, has been tested and examined. All this is good and necessary. But the very real danger arises of mistaking the scope and function of criticism. The fact that theology is in process of restatement does not mean that religion may be given the go-by meanwhile. The forms of religion, its history, its foundations in the past and the present, its formulæ of statement, can all bear investigation. But no microscope or test-tube can alter the fact of it. It is spiritual life and it lives by its own divine right.

Religion is ultimately no more affected by the Higher Criticism than the earth is affected by geology and the flight of the eagle is affected by biology. It is stupid to think that Christian life and work ought to be suspended meanwhile, because men are investigating the records of religious history or are criticizing the statements of theology. Life must go on, and we cannot call a halt to wait for ultimate decisions of criticism.

IV

The Method of Science

Science is the hypothesis of constant relations between phenomena.—*Boutroux.*

IV

THE METHOD OF SCIENCE

 OR myself, I am a Celt by origin, and some of the gloom and poetry of the hills is in my blood. In certain moods I do not care a rush about the scientific universe. In certain moods I would rejoice in a world where fairies dance, and ghosts walk, and mystery broods over the every-day life of man. When a little boy I shuddered with fearful joy at stories my grandfather told of second-sight and death-warnings. The lowland Scot smiled with contempt at such a childish world. Yet he was himself living in the same sort of universe, only the Celt made poetry of it and got some thrills from it. The Saxon did not imagine such interesting things about the world as fairies and ghosts, but his world was if possible just as irrational, if we can judge from his theology and

his general thinking. I speak of the fairies because when we dismiss them, we have to find a place for poetry, or no scientific universe will compensate for the loss to the life of men.

When we say that the greatest factor of change in thought is modern science, it means more than that scientific investigation and discovery have immensely enlarged the universe. Of course, that in itself has compelled some changed views. A universe *extending endlessly in space* has altered our manner of thought if not our manner of speech. Men used to think of the heavens as somewhere above and near the earth, and could speak naively of ascensions. But in our universe there is no longer up nor down. There are moments when we seem to cower despairingly in the presence of immensities and eternities. We have lost the comfort of a snug and companionable earth. When the world seemed smaller, men more readily knew themselves at home.

We can, however, exaggerate the fancied difference. As a matter of fact men have al-

ways lived in what seemed to them a vast and immeasurable world. There was always a great unknown spreading out on every side from the borders of the known. The soul of man was ever awed and inspired into poetry and worship and romance by the sheer magnitude of the world. "When I consider Thy heavens," says the ancient Hebrew poet, "the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?" It reads like the reflection of a modern before the wonders of astronomy. It is probably as easy for us today to feel ourselves at home in the universe as ever before; for though the world has infinitely expanded, it has in another sense shrunk. As phenomena get gathered under laws, and forces of nature are harnessed for use, and the mysterious becomes explained, and effects are tracked to causes, we lose some of the dread of the unknown. However vast the universe appears, we treat it as rational, and trust it not to play us false.

If some change comes from the thought of a

universe extending endlessly in space, perhaps more change is the result of a universe *extending endlessly in time.* When the world began only a few thousand years ago, the history of man was a very simple story. It could be told in a very few chapters, and a few controlling ideas could explain everything. A fall from an original state of innocence explained why man did not stay as he had been created. Otherwise in all essential features of his nature man had always been as he is. Logic had a very easy task; for reason was a quality of mind and was the same everywhere. But the story of the world has been carried into millions of years and the comparatively great antiquity of man has made the human story no longer the simple thing it was.

Once more, we may exaggerate the difference of the two points of view. The soul of man was awed by the story, which looks to us such a simple and childish one alongside of the new story of the origin and growth of life. The ancient story inspired epics of creation, of man's fall, and man's redemption, with a grandeur of conception which makes them

among our treasured possessions. There is a sense in which the modern view has made the story of man more simple, explaining things that were insoluble mysteries, enabling us to look back over the long story of the ascent of man with pride and to look forward with hope. The mere extension in time has not in itself made so great a difference, any more than the mere extension in space.

Far more effective for change than the thought of a greater universe introduced by science has been, and is, the general scientific atmosphere in which we live, and above all the conviction of the validity of the scientific method of proof. With the ordinary man this is vague and general, and he speaks mistily about the men working in science as "THEY." He gives to scientists the place of authority which he used to give to rulers in political affairs and to ecclesiastics in religious questions. It is an even more unquestioning authority; for he does not even know the names of these intellectual leaders, and probably has never come into contact with one of

them. He speaks hopefully about the way in which "They" are sure to master the secrets of Nature. "It is wonderful," he declares, "what They are able to do in these days"—"They will soon construct a flying-machine to cross the Atlantic." But however vague and indefinite this feeling may be, it is only the more proof of the influence of science in our modern world.

The effect of it on theology has been vast—far more than a change in doctrines; for it has meant a change in the whole foundation. This is strikingly seen in the way in which the great Apology of Bishop Butler and the arguments of Paley are superseded. They are neither affirmed nor denied, but simply neglected. They do not apply. To these scholars miracles—whether as fulfilled prophecies or supernatural events—were the final, incontrovertible proofs. The masterly argument built up by Butler does not affect the modern mind, because a new view of the world has dislodged the presupposition on which it was based. With the snapping of the foundation the whole structure topples down.

Belief in God was largely founded on a view of the world which meant the direct intervention of God in creation and in the possibility of constant miracle. Religion naturally built on this, because it was the accepted way of looking at the world. So the proof of religion began with this. Modern science, and especially the work of Darwin, has shifted the whole ground of proof, and religion to-day never dreams of staking all on the supernatural interposition of God. How deep this has gone we can see by what were common practices and by the common thoughts of devotion. It was natural to pray for rain or sunshine, natural to look upon an earthquake, drought, or plague as signs of God's anger. Miraculous healing from a pilgrimage to Lourdes was an all-sufficient argument for the whole dogmatic teaching of the Roman Church. It is all part of the natural instinct of man, which makes him look up and find God a very present help in times of trouble. But we see how many of the forms, which that instinct took, conflict with some of the presuppositions of science, with its assurance of law.

Take, for example, the presupposition on which science builds, which may be stated generally as the law of Continuity. It will not give that up, because only by it can science do its work. The old explanation of a mysterious thing as due to God interfering with the laws of the universe, which was such a natural explanation, is to science the one incredible thing. It will try any and every explanation before that, and even if it fails, will still not accept that. Rightly, for that would be to discredit the whole past of scientific achievement and rob it of any future. Science does not deny the mystery. What it denies is the explanation of it as a suspension of law. It tries to account for the miracle; and if it fails, lays it aside as something yet to be brought within the sweep of natural law and one day explained. A miracle would evidence nothing worth while. That a man to all seeming turned a rod into a serpent would be no evidence of the truth of anything he might say. The act itself would be treated as legerdemain, but even if it could not be so disposed of, it would be merely a new fact to be considered

in the total summing-up. It would not help to establish any religious truth.

The method of science has been so successful and has led to such remarkable results in mastering nature, that all other methods are cast into the shade. Science to-day takes the place in the estimation of men that philosophy once held, and triumphant science presses its method on philosophy and on all other departments of knowledge. With what right? What justification has the claim that there is indeed no other method of attaining truth? Well, the method of science is only the ordinary method of men, more carefully and critically worked. It is more anxious to get its facts right, and submits its conclusions to more rigid examination. Huxley called science organized common sense. It is a good definition, because it brings science to our doors, and does not make a mystery of what is at bottom a very simple thing. It suggests that science only applies the common way in which the common man acquires any knowledge, only guarding it more carefully from error and relating each fact to the other facts.

What are the common methods by which men accept a thing as true in ordinary life? When we declare that a statement or proposition is true we mean that it agrees with facts, and to assure ourselves we submit it to the tests that are open to us. We apply our senses to it if it is open to that test, and we seek corroboration from the testimony of others. If it is a question of something that can be seen, we expect to be able to see it if we have normal sight, and we expect that others also can see it. If a thing is declared to have as a property that it is bitter or sweet, we taste it and ask others to confirm our judgment. If the proposition is out of the region of the senses, we try to bring it to the test of whatever experience is applicable, and we compare our finding with that of others. It is thus at bottom always an appeal to experience. We make a distinction between what we alone have cause to believe for ourselves and what others also experience, even when we believe both kinds of statements.

It does not follow that an experience is false if it is not corroborated by every one we meet. In common life we recognize this and make

allowance for difference of capacity in different people. We pay no heed to the judgment of a colour-blind man on questions of colour, or of a tone-deaf man on music. The sensation of sound is produced by vibrations, and there is a definite range below and above which we cease to hear at all. Some have keener susceptibility than others. Perhaps only one man out of a dozen will hear the shrill squeak of the bat. A majority of eleven to one will not —or ought not to—convince the minority of one that he has heard no sound. We normally hear through a range of eleven octaves, but there are thousands of octaves beyond that. Sometimes a false antithesis is made in this connection between ordinary knowledge and religious knowledge. These limitations of knowledge are simply the limitations of humanity and apply to everything human.

In all the branches of science—physics, chemistry, and biology, and all the subdivisions of these—the method is ever the same. In a word, the method consists of observation and experiment to find the facts, and inductive and deductive reasoning to find the relations of the

facts. The raw material of science is facts, as they are the raw material of all knowledge. "The man in the street" has his mind full of all sorts of facts; but they are unconnected and separate. Prof. Henry Drummond used to give his new students an examination on what he called Common Knowledge to test their common ignorance. The kind of question was, Why is the sea salt? or, Why is the grass green? He was mistaken in calling that common knowledge. The sort of facts that man picks up is—that the sea is salt and the grass is green. That is common knowledge. The scientist takes these facts and relates them to other facts. When you know the part which chlorophyll plays in intercepting the red rays of light, in decomposing carbon dioxide so as to make the grass green, you are in the region of the science of botany. The one is common knowledge, the other is scientific knowledge.

When facts have been gathered and classified and related so that some finding is reached, it has to be submitted to other competent observers or experimenters. Just as we saw that in ordinary knowledge men do not feel sure of

anything unless they get the support of others' testimony, so in science an experiment at Cornell University which could not be verified at Columbia or Harvard or anywhere else would be considered with more than suspicion. It might be true, but it would not be accepted as true, and would not be taken as a part of science.

The last stage is when the verified and tested facts find their place in a system, and are brought under a "law." A scientific law is only a summary of experiments—a summary of past experience. It is therefore a guide for future experience. Science began with the rough classification of the ordinary things with which savage man had to do. Progress in science means simplifying the mass of facts under formulæ. The mind could not hold all the facts in one department of natural science; still less could the mind grasp at once all the relations of all the departments which make up universal knowledge. It is only made possible to us by grouping facts in classes, so that one fact becomes an illustration of all in that class, and is accepted as representative. These

formulæ are only a description of nature's order.

These usual stages are these: First we have to find out facts, distinguish between the true and the false, the actual and the probable. Then comes the process of organizing knowledge by classifying facts. Last is the summing up in a simple formula or law.

All science of course begins with certain postulates—and once more they may almost be called the postulates of common sense. It assumes the world, and some other things which the ordinary man assumes in every action of his life. But there are other specific assumptions—causation and uniformity—the assumptions that nothing in the world happens without a cause, and that a "law of nature" is true for all time. Science leaves these two things to be puzzled over by metaphysics, and if possible proved. It simply takes them for granted and believes them true, because when at any point they are tested they seem to be verified. This is why science is not afraid of hypotheses, and indeed works largely by means of hy-

potheses, which means the frank use of the scientific imagination. The use of the pure Baconian method was found in practice too slow and laborious. Practically all great discoveries have been made by bringing the imagination into play and making some hypothesis to explain the facts.

Some of the hypotheses have been discarded after doing good work in aiding discovery. It has practically been found that a false or imperfect hypothesis is better than none at all. Some of them were nothing but wild guesses. Some of them have been accepted and dignified by the name of laws. Thus, science does not limit itself to facts, as is so often said. It is always going beyond facts. The one thing that saves it is that the hypothesis must always be a verifiable one. Sooner or later it has to submit itself to facts and be tested there. Science therefore is always provisional, because always ready to discard the less certain for the more certain. In this sense science is never dogmatic, never reaching finality, defining even her laws as merely the recognized way in which things are seen to occur. All the

generalizations of science are merely probable. In this, too, she is following the common sense of the ordinary man to whom probability is the guide of life.

There is a criticism of science which tries to get room for religion by making much of this tentative attitude. These critics point out that science never gets absolute accuracy, never can even repeat experiments that are identical. That is a scholastic objection, and pushed far enough might make for skepticism. There is a sense in which absolute proof of anything is impossible. Some have argued from this for skepticism, and have declared that the uncertainty of proof makes knowledge impossible. The reply of science is simply a paraphrase of the Master's reply to the disciples of John the Baptist, "Tell what things ye have seen and heard." By this we construct our system of scientific knowledge with consistency. We also by it build our bridges and tunnels, and speak a thousand miles, and transmit power for locomotion, and discover radio-activity and X-rays, and do all the wonderful works. What a list one could make of triumph, in medicine,

and surgery, and astronomy, and chemistry, and electrical appliances!

Whatever be the right way to find a place for religion, it is not by searching for gaps in scientific knowledge or method, and sensing a spiritual world through loopholes. That has been too long the way of escape for religion. Beaten here in the question of a sudden creation of the world, it stood at bay on the question of a special creation of species. Beaten on that, it found a loophole in the peculiar high origin of man. Dislodged from that, it stood for the miracle of life. Generally, it has made much of "missing links" in the chain of scientific discovery. It is a futile method, and for one thing does not make for courage. It is of a piece with the lawyer's advice, "when you have no case, abuse the plaintiff." One by one the gaps are closed, and the loopholes get filled up.

Is it any wonder that the method of science is regnant among men, who look at its triumphs and see how surely it closes up the gaps in knowledge? When philosophy protests, it

calmly replies, Well, if you want to live, you had better amend your methods also and make them scientific. As a matter of fact, philosophy has been slower to adjust itself to the new standpoint than almost any other branch of thought. All the sciences, the study of history, even theology (with its new insistence on experience), have more quickly altered their method than philosophy. Philosophers still begin, in spite of evolution, with categories of thought, with conceptions of man and the world viewed in idealistic form, with ideas of the absolute, with the objective validity of the moral consciousness, with Kant's "thing in itself" or with Plato's "idea of the good." They use the word evolution and even the method, but they have not begun to accept all the implications of evolution.

Much of our thought is still cast in pre-evolutionary form. It takes long to bring our general thinking into harmony with the results of new knowledge. The nature of mind itself is a subject which has been largely left where it was, and we find controversialists on both sides arguing as if the idea of evolution had never

dawned on the world. The human mind is treated as something structural that grinds out thought like a machine, which is fed by the raw material and pours out the finished product. On the side of materialism this antique view is constantly stated that the brain secretes thought. One German philosopher of that school declares that thinking is a necessary and inseparable property of the brain. Another, with a half-apology for expressing himself somewhat coarsely, says that thought stands in the same relation to the brain as the gall to the liver or the urine to the kidneys. This point of view is opposed by the opposite school, who, however, have the same underlying conception of thought as something definite, the product of an organ called mind. There is no human mechanism for producing thought like a machine producing sausages. It is a social inheritance. We need a genetic conception of mind to replace the old structural concept.

In a halting, hesitating way philosophy is at last trying to follow the method of science. Our new psychology and our new sociology were

born of this attempt. When I was at college, psychology was taught as a by-product of metaphysics and a rather unimportant one at that. To-day it is taught as a science, gathering its facts, collating and classifying and relating them, and constructing hypotheses to bring them under laws. This scientific pressure also is really responsible for movements like Pragmatism and the new Realism. Sometimes philosophers of other schools permit themselves to sneer at the pragmatists as unphilosophical, as incapable of the higher thoughts and great abstractions which have occupied orthodox philosophy. It is rather pleasant for once to notice how orthodoxy treats heresy in another region than that of theology. At bottom it is a question of method, and philosophy like other things must sooner or later submit to scientific method.

There are regions of knowledge other than bare matters of fact. There is, for example, the whole world of the beautiful. Physical science admits that all it can do is to describe a part of reality, that it can give only an installment of truth. We do not describe all the

reality of which we are conscious if we do not give an account of the regions where the facts are summed up by words like beauty, and goodness, and justice, and righteousness. We may call these ideals if we will, but that does not make them any the less real. An ideal of beauty or of goodness is governed by the same method. It is born of experience, and is submitted to the judgment of our fellows and to the test of practice.

These estimates of value make up the most important part of human life. There is this about them, that they seek to realize themselves. An ideal of social reform strives to embody itself in law and in institution. The test of its truth is precisely the same as in its own sphere is the test of any scientific hypothesis: Is it a genuine experience? Can any others be made to see it and know it? Can it impose itself on the facts? It lives by faith that it can.

If we must make distinctions, science deals with what has been and is; religion deals with what is to be. Science is descriptive; religion is prophetic. Like most distinctions, this has

too sharp lines; for science often predicts, and religion does not live entirely in the future. But the distinction has point to it. To a large extent science describes processes, and knows a thing by its natural history, and states what it is. Religion seeks to find out what ought to be, and then strives to bring it to pass. You cannot explain a picture by the chemistry of colours. You cannot explain a poem by an analysis of words and rhymes. You do not account for Michelangelo's statues by his studies in physiology. The limits of science are not limits of its methods, but limits of its sphere. Science and religion deal with the same world, but they ask a different kind of question about it, and are satisfied only by a different kind of answer. Science searches for means to learn adequately the natural order in which we men live. Religion searches for means to fulfill what she conceives to be the true destiny of man.

In this, religion uses the very method which science also employs. Natural religion used to speak of rising from nature to nature's God. It had some difficulty to meet, as when the

poet in describing nature speaks of her as "red in tooth and claw." But the Christian does not get his God from nature. He brings his God to nature. He finds God in Christ, and in human life, in his own heart, and in social experience. He interprets nature in the light of that. All interpretation is done, and has to be done, in the same way. In every region we do it by what we bring to it, not by what it is in itself. It is not anything in itself.

This is true of art, for example. Much unmeaning nonsense is spoken about art copying nature. Of course it has to copy nature and submit the finished result to the test of nature, but the artist is an artist by virtue of what he brings to nature. He brings his selection of material, his thought, and vision, his arrangement. Photography could do the job better, if it was only nature's arrangement that counted most. The artist imposes his own ideal on nature, and interprets it best because of that.

Science also does its work in a similar way. The scientist brings to nature the whole foundation on which he builds. He too selects and

arranges, and, what is more, he isolates his facts, takes them out of their setting. He "unscrambles eggs" all the time, in the effort to get at the constituent elements of the mixture. He puts things under a vacuum pump, or under a microscope, or in a test-tube. He even brings them into the most artificial conditions, into a laboratory. He applies to them his theories and hypotheses. It is not all guess and peradventure. If it did not meet the necessities of the case and solve particular problems, men would lose confidence in scientific method.

Similarly with religion. It too must meet the needs of man. It must give him the mastery over the world, and over life, and over self. By the measure in which it does that, it is judged. The proof of religion is found not in finding breaks in the natural order, but in transforming the world. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."

Knowledge is one, and though for convenience' sake we can make divisions and break it up into departments, there is always seen a certain unity of direction. So to-day there are

movements in the three great departments of human thought—science, philosophy, religion—which have much in common. In science the mechanical view of the world has broken down, and a new interpretation emerges in terms of growth. In philosophy there is an impatience with the old categories and abstractions, and a rebirth in experience. In theology God is no longer thought of as outside the world He has created, and once more the emphasis comes on experience.

To come back to the fairies—poetry and romance and mystery and the ideal have not left the world. It was a narrow science that appeared to be crushing the soul of man and taking the dread rainbow from the sky. A truer view of what the method of science really is only shows us how we may get back the things for which the fairies stood. "Glory and loveliness have passed away," cried Keats. That might be true if the last word about nature were said when we agreed that the sum of energy is constant, or that natural forces are interchangeable. There are some other words

to be said about nature besides these, and the poet need not be afraid to say them, nor need the religious seer be afraid to picture his new earth and new heavens wherein dwelleth righteousness.

V

The Movement of Democracy

In this open democracy every opinion had utterance; every objection, every fact, every acre of land, every bushel of rye, its entire weight.

—*Emerson.*

V

THE MOVEMENT OF DEMOCRACY

ERHAPS the greatest influence on life and thought in the world to-day is the democratic movement. Its effect on religion calls for some estimate. In this chapter I feel that I can do little more than open the subject, and express some of my convictions and hopes about it. The chief difficulty lies in the fact that we must speak of a *movement*, of whose result we are ignorant, and whose goal we can only guess. It is probably impossible for one in the game to see the whole of it. Only the spectator can have the chance of that, and to be a spectator one must be somewhat removed.

We talk of our time as one of transition. It is not unique in that, but certainly we are in the midst of change. As we have seen, three forces which have been compelling change in

the region of religion are the critical movement, the scientific and the democratic. We have to some extent estimated the results of the first two, and have seen the direction of adjustment. We see more or less keenly what they are doing in affecting our material, and we have shaped our course accordingly. We know we cannot state doctrine as our fathers did, nor derive doctrine from the sources in the same way. As for the third great influence, we feel it and we vaguely realize that it spells change, but we have not made any estimate. We do not even know the price of indemnity.

Some there are who believe in the ultimate future; for their souls know things that cannot be shaken, but who are fearful of the actual process of change. They feel themselves in the presence of a force that cannot be calculated. For good or ill, or both, the people have entered into power after centuries of comparative impotence. Ultimate authority is passing from the few to the many. The philosophical observer, whatever his own taste may be, must confess that democracy is the next necessary stage in the evolution of human society.

The progress of civilization has been through the conquest of nature and the growth of the social order. The one was not possible without the other. It has meant not only increase of sustenance, but also of security. With the means of living made more abundant by conquering nature, and with security achieved through social order, there has come the possibility of leisure with all that leisure can mean of knowledge and culture. After the wherewithal to live, civilization means these very blessings of security, leisure and culture. Hitherto these have only to any extent been the possession of the very few. Democracy is not content to leave it so any more. Soon it will not be possible to frighten people with the scarecrow of socialism. If you tell them this is socialism, they will reply that if socialism gives them the hope of attaining these ideals they will try socialism!

The first place where we need something like a definition is what we mean by democracy. If we could give a scientific definition, we could proceed to predict with some-

thing like mathematical accuracy some of the results, but that kind of definition is impossible. All the sciences dealing with man have two places for correction, even of observation. If you are examining the stars through a telescope you must always make allowance for your own personal equation. But if you are examining man, either single or in society, you have to take into account not only the personal equation of you the observer, but also the personal equation of the observed. It is like shooting from a moving platform to a moving target. You can't always tell how you will act in a certain given situation, even though you know your own personal equation, your own bias of mind. Still less can you tell what the other fellow will do.

The democratic movement is a human movement, and there are vagaries and freaks and there will be side-issues and stoppages. Sometimes it will look like a glacier, but even a glacier moves, and when it gets to the melting zone it flows. It is difficult to estimate the democratic movement because it is often blind, does not know itself always what it wants,

and is driven by blind needs and blind ideals. It is also to a large extent dumb in spite of the blatant noises; for in speaking of it we are trying to speak for the voiceless mass. Better than any definition of it is a recognition of its ends. What it is really wanting? Towards what is it striving?

I suppose there are various brands of democracy, some of them with conflicting ideas, and some opposition to it is due to misunderstanding of its character, as some opposition to religion is due to similar misunderstanding. To some opponents it means an attempt to drag all men down to a dead level, to settle all questions by the counting of noses, to destroy initiative and originality, and to swamp the individual. Well, of course, the indictment may seem to be true if we admit that a complete democratic organization of society will effectually curb some presently rampant traits of individualism. Most of us will think this can be done without much real loss to the world. Even it may be that some who speak for democracy appear to look forward to a state where we shall be numbered and garbed

and fed and ordered like the inmates of an asylum. If the world is incurably mad, that may be the best way of treating us, and the only question worth asking is, *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* Who will guard the guardians?

But the only democracy I am interested in, and I believe the only kind the democracy cares about, is that which looks forward to a world of *persons*, each with equal right and opportunity to be and become all that true manhood may mean. It looks to a social state where each member will be guaranteed a chance to make the contribution of his complete self. Instead of being the end of the individual, it will really be his true beginning. The ideal to which the movement looks is the Kingdom of God. That is why it cannot do without religion. The highest Christian motive is necessary for its full attainment. I must concede willingly, joyfully, that if reasonable leisure, culture, opportunity of education are good for me, they are good for Tom, Dick and Harry. I must be eager to grant to others all that I claim for myself.

The movements of an age, however diverse they appear, really converge and seem to be the varied expressions of one spirit of the age. This is true of the three movements we see at work in our own time. It is not difficult to see the connection between the critical and the scientific spirit. They began independently; for there was a literary criticism of the Bible before modern science came on the scene, and science was not thinking of its effects on criticism when it set about its work. Yet the two forces really work by the same principles, and meet in their findings. The connection between these and the democratic movement does not seem so evident, and yet here too we see them reaching the same end. Of the three this is by far the most powerful for change. This should comfort and encourage us. Truth has driven scholars to certain conclusions, for example, about the Bible and about the historic creeds. Sometimes we have felt in despair of making good people understand. In the churches many excellent ministers have conscientiously opposed us, and have bitterly denounced us as subverting the foundations of

religion. They do not seem to be able to see the force of our arguments, which are naturally scholarly arguments. They have fallen back on the authority of Scripture, or the authority of the Church. And sometimes we have despaired of making headway against prejudice. Now the democratic movement has turned their flank, and before they can rub their eyes in astonishment the position has been evacuated. There are loads of men, who discover that they are really standing beside us, who thought they and we were in opposing ranks.

The democratic movement has altered the emphasis in the precise way and in the precise places where criticism had done it—and far more effectually, since it works practically where the other worked intellectually. Men alert to the new emphasis on the social teaching of Jesus are impatient of some of the positions which made critics impatient. Sometimes they do not know that they have really changed ground, but it is obvious by their changed emphasis. The battle has been fought and won, but the victory has been secured not by us but for us. This then is the first great

influence of the democratic movement on our whole religious thinking of which we ought to take count. It is by far the most effective ally for the position reached by our critical and scientific methods. It is forcing the Church to consider the whole question of authority.

Indeed, in that one word *authority* we can almost sum up the whole process of change. Democracy has "made hay" of old forms of authority. Hitherto in our theology authority came from above and was imposed by sacred sanctions, as society was held by external authority. Law, order, government were done for us. Democracy is changing that, and our whole thinking must be adjusted to find a new basis for authority.

Let us take the *changed view of law* as illustration. At first, the change seems to relax its binding authority and take away from its sanctions. Men do not think of the sacredness of law in the old sense, which really looked upon law as supernatural, given straight from God to the lawgiver. The only

thing man could do to that kind of law would be to interpret it, he could not change it or repeal it. We see law to have grown out of the needs of life, and to have changed with changing conditions. Certain laws, some of which we call the moral laws, are so ancient and are so imbedded in immemorial usage that they may well be called sacred. Society itself as we know it depends on these laws, and would go to pieces without them. They are thus of the nature of social man, based on fundamental principles. Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not kill—society rests on certain rules of conduct and these naturally take on a sanctity which is not less to-day than in previous days. Such laws have really lost none of their force if we see them to be necessary for life, even if men believe that they did not come down ready-made from heaven. There is real sanctity in the principles which alone seem to make society possible.

Other laws we see society making, and unmaking, and remaking. There are taxation laws for the carrying on of government and

for the protection of the community. Some laws are for the general welfare, laws of public health; some are for the care of the weak, the education of the young, the protection of women and children in industry. They often work by limiting individual freedom, reducing hours of work, prohibiting the sale of certain things, or conditioning the sale of other things. Some laws are the fruit of ideals that are growing in the social mind, edicts against gambling, against offenses that were thought nothing of by our fathers. There is an experimental element in all such lawmaking. Many laws are found to be mistaken, and are repealed or are altered to meet the case better. Laws which are passed for the benefit of the public health may be seen to have diagnosed the condition wrongly.

The people see quite plainly that there is nothing sacred about these laws. There is a legal type of mind which is greatly impressed by words like "constitutional" and "the code of law," and gives an undue sanctity to enactments. But we realize that we manufacture these laws, that sometimes they were carried

through by a bare majority, that often lawyers themselves differ about the interpretation; that one court will set aside the finding of another court. There is nothing sacred about vaccination. We want to know if it does what it claims to do, and so we ask for scientific evidence and experimental evidence. When most sensible men get that, they are content to believe that the law is wise. Formerly the law was something imposed from without, from above, enacted by authority to be received with due humility, and obeyed with trembling. Any criticism was blasphemy of the powers that be, *lèse-majesté*. We may as well admit that all this has changed. The democracy assumes the right of criticizing the law; for it realizes that it is the ultimate lawmaker.

There is danger, of course, in the new attitude. The criticism is not always intelligent nor always just. Minorities display impatience, and sometimes are willing to break down respect for the law in their haste to have a particular edict abrogated. The conventional sanctity that hedged around the whole legal code has gone, and sometimes the reverence

that was a distinct social gain is lost with it. The remedy, however, is not to hark back to an old-world view of law, but to bring a new binding force which democracy itself can give. Law was made for man, and not man for law. The more fundamental social our thinking becomes, the more we see a new sanction for social enactments. If laws are of our own making and if we seek to make them the expression of the highest justice and humanity, we will not look on them lightly but will view them with all the reverence they need.

Other questions emerge in this connection, such as the question of force in applying law. That society has the right to use force to protect itself, to defend the weak, all sensible men will admit. The motive must not be hate or revenge. Tolstoy's doctrine that we must not resist evil is cursed with literalism. That is precisely what we must do with evil—till it is rooted out. The doctrine, however, did good in bringing us to the motive which should underlie our resistance. Too often it was revenge, which only brutalizes. Democracy is not possible except as the expression of a spirit of good

will. This true democratic principle gives us a way out. Men are coming to see that evil social conditions and hard economic conditions create crime, and that an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure. Education, more humane treatment, more tolerable conditions, will obviate a lot of what we now call crime. It has been proved a hundred times that much crime is caused by intemperance and, as things now are, society sprinkles saloons in the path of the multitude, or in a panic now and again in spots "puts on the lid" and shuts the saloons, without offering any substitute for the social features of the saloons.

The whole purpose of *punishment* also is receiving revised consideration. What is its first and chief intent? Is it to avenge the wounded majesty of law? That tends to become savage and merciless. Obviously with the new viewpoint about law itself that conception of the function of punishment departs, and with it will go all juridical theology, juridical atonement.

Is the purpose of punishment to protect

society as the old English judge in sentencing to death a horse stealer declared, "You are sentenced to be hung by the neck until you are dead, not for stealing horses but that horses may not be stolen." That motive tends to become selfish and cruel with the timid cruelty of fear, and as Ruskin says somewhere, it is to hang a man not as a malefactor but as a scarecrow.

Is the purpose to correct and restore the culprit? Well, we must acknowledge that that may become weak and sentimental and sometimes stultify itself. That, however, is the point of view which is growing and is altering our whole penology. It is the motive most worth while pursuing. It will sweep away some of the barbarities and stupidities of much of our penal code. The sooner men realize that they make the laws, the sooner they will see it a point of honour to keep them. There still lingers even in a democracy the old idea that laws are made by a superior class and are administered against other classes of the community. When penalties are recognized as punishment for unsocial acts, even the law-

breakers will admit the justice. They will feel that the social disgrace is the real sting of the penalty. Only for this there must not be the glaring inequalities that now exist, which allow the rich rogue to do what the little swindler must not.

Already in this vague way we are seeing the immense region of change. But besides altering the whole basis of authority and giving a changed view of law, making all the doctrines founded on law antiquated, such as a forensic atonement, forensic forgiveness, and besides altering the view of punishment with the inevitable changes in all the doctrines affected in this region, the democratic movement is altering values in the whole sphere of ethics. I do not stop to indicate what is so evident as the new emphasis on social ethics and social responsibility. Nor do I spend time on an analysis of the new temper of mind which makes the people resent charity (even when they take it) and ask for justice. The old charter of America which demanded "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" was con-

strued in a personal way. The same words can still be used as the ideal of the new democracy, but this time construed as the inalienable rights of the society.

Further, with the whole democratization of knowledge there has come a new necessity to appeal to the people with all our thinking. Christianity cannot be maintained as an esoteric faith. The questions are not such as can be relegated to the scholar. The doctrine of Jesus has always made its real appeal direct to the heart of the people. Difficult problems of literary criticism and historical investigation and philosophical statement there are in plenty, and an ample place is afforded for all manner of erudition. But religion itself is not erudition. In the Christian system there can be nothing too difficult or too precious that it must be kept from the multitude. The common man has his life to live, and has the things that belong to his peace. It has been found too that the common man has often been the uncommon Christian. It comes to this that the doctrine which cannot be preached is not Christian doctrine.

Deeper still, the democratic movement has affected the central doctrine of all, the doctrine of God. In the old theology God was the sovereign of a monarchical system, the despot of heaven, though a benevolent despot. Theology spoke of His prerogatives. Law was His will. Salvation was His fiat as creation had been. "God said, Let there be light, and there was light." It was all as easy and as simple as that. We have not yet worked out all the implications of a democratic doctrine here. But there are obvious indications of the working of the leaven. Even the philosophy which arrives at a pluralistic universe is the fruit of the democratic movement. We have to state our doctrine of God in terms of democracy. Should that be very difficult for us, who believe in the God of our Lord Jesus Christ?

The truth is that democracy is driving the Church back to a closer touch with its Master's ideal. It is obvious that the social teaching of Jesus was not something added, but was the very burden of His message. He conceived of His mission as a social task. Salvation is related to the Kingdom of God as a society of

saved men. The teaching it is true is never left in the clouds, but is addressed to individuals. So there are these two complementary truths, one of which is usually obscured by us. First, as the individual does not exist apart from society, so he cannot be saved apart from society. A life cannot be transformed without transforming all its relations. Secondly, society can only be saved by individuals being renewed in heart and soul. The Kingdom comes, when men come into the Kingdom. Jesus gave the single soul new value, gave dignity to personality, and worth to the individual. But the new birth of the soul is *into a society*, as every child is born into the world of men.

Christianity is essentially a democratic religion. It is the irony of history that it should have become often almost a synonym for the respectable if not for the rich. Jesus the carpenter's son was born and lived and died in poverty. His first disciples were poor fishermen. Judged by His life He had no interest in worldly pursuits. His teaching is in keep-

ing with His life. In the first days of the Church not many wise after the flesh, not many noble, not many rich were called. The very emphasis of Christianity on the spiritual is democratic. The soul, not outward conditions, makes the man. All the great Christian movements came from the people—St. Francis, Luther, Wesley, Booth headed popular movements.

The theory lying back of democratic government is that when all is said and done there is more chance of getting justice and right feeling than by any other way. Democracy if you like is an amazing paradox. It seems absurd to expect wisdom from all the brands of human folly of which the world is full. It is like the companion paradox of free speech. Why should you let men teach nonsense, and utter blasphemy, and air all manner of lunatic notions? The theory back of free speech is simply that truth is larger than any select number can grasp, and it is wiser to have all sides expressed. At any rate, along that way of democracy progress lies. It is education *for* freedom, and the only method to attain that is *by*

freedom. Better than being controlled from above is it that the people should control themselves.

The freedom of modern democracy is, however, not an insulated individualism, indeed it is less so to-day than ever it has been. This is why it is no longer content with the ethics which sought to raise the standard of personal morality. There is an insistent demand for new social ethics, and even for international ethics. Already it is not enough to tell the poor to be submissive and the rich to be charitable. The democracy has the right to ask the Church to pronounce on some of the glaring defects of our social life, the city slum, the wrongs of women and children, the sins of high finance, political corruption, industrial oppression. The democracy also asks the Church to pronounce on the false ethics which ultimately were the cause of the tragedy of Europe, the lying diplomacy, the breach of public faith, the disregard of the rights of weaker nations, the shameful violation of treaty and the pagan ethics that might is right. All the Churches have sinned in their measure of neglect of the

weightier matters, careful over the tithing of the mint and the anise. Church courts spend indignation on heresies of opinion and have nothing to say to the damnable heresies of cruelty and selfishness which make the Kingdom of Heaven impossible. Our feet are well past the threshold of our new age, which demands new ethical standards to inspire the new democracy.

VI

The Spirit of the Age

Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul!

—*Gray.*

VI

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

O very many this is a time of great moral distress. They feel that the foundations which they thought secure are slipping from under us. Many causes are contributing to this and the situation of the world at war is only confirming fears that had already arisen.

These fears were due to the forces at work in our midst that seem to disintegrate old positions. We see movements which compel change in the region of religion. There is the critical movement which has altered our view of the Bible. The scientific movement has altered the statement of almost every doctrine. The democratic movement is only just getting in its work. Of the three this will probably be by far the most powerful for change, because it is forcing the Church as well as society gen-

erally to consider the whole question of authority.

On every hand we hear of the failure of religion in the face of the tragedy of Europe. It is true that organized religion has failed, but the failure is equally true of other organized powers. Civilization itself as seen in the organized State has broken down. Where could there be a more lamentable failure than that of the university system of Germany: failure to direct opinion, to control passion, even to display some of the boasted objectivity of truth? But we do not despair of education on that account, and we do not despair of civilization. No more do we despair of religion.

It is perhaps too soon in the face of the terrible calamity, with the agony of Belgium still in our ears, to ask ourselves to take long views of history. Yet sooner or later we will recover heart and take at least a longer view. We will see that all is not lost, and indeed the fact that the world is in the death grips of struggle indicates that there are conflicting ideals.

Temperament plays a large part in the way we meet the prospect of radical change. Some dread it, hate the discomfort of adjustment, fear the result on things they hold dear, and are always considering the inevitable loss. Some welcome it eagerly and are impatient to see the new day make itself an "awful rose of dawn."

We must not pay too much heed to the general wail about the decay of religion. It often means only the decay of a certain kind of religion, or even of a certain church. If, for example, Christianity is bound up in one's mind with a certain practice of adult baptism, one can easily assume that religion is going to the dogs if less attention is paid to that particular rite. A religious man may be tempted to despair of religion because of changed views of the Sabbath. In every age we find traces of the pessimism, which asserts that civilization is breaking to pieces. We see now that such judgment was vitiated by a narrow standard. A political creed will affect judgment as a religious creed does. Sometimes the very growth of democracy has been assumed to be a sign of decay. Even a sociological creed will

bias the mind of judges. In the estimation of some the falling off of the birth rate is proof positive of degeneracy. Sectarian laments are not confined to religious circles.

Perhaps our greatest need is to be able to hold by a rational optimism. Various forms of slushy optimism are common among us. They mostly consist of some scheme of shutting our eyes to fact. No honest man wants to get peace that way. We need a truer and more courageous view of what actually is. All that a brave man needs is a living faith in the order and sanity and purposiveness of the Universe. He is content with the wages of "going on." He renews his strength; for he believes that lying back of the world and life there is something that he can call *purpose*. For all intelligent working and living we need to be sure that there is an end, more than an end in time, an end in purpose. If we see this in history and touch it in experience, we can look steadily and clearly at all the facts.

We look then into the age in which we live and see if what we call the Spirit of the Age

is after all antagonistic to the highest life of men which we call religion. Some of course content themselves with simply damning the age. It is to them the age of the Devil, and we are here to fight it. They say that all our trouble and all the restlessness of which we find evidence are due to the fact that we live in an irreligious age. This is not so. It is true that we live in an age different from any other. Man has created a new world for himself. But he is blind to the forces at work in our midst who calls this an irreligious time. If it is true that the highest form of religious life must have at its heart social service, there never was a time when this highest religious ideal was more insistent. One of the forces in our analysis which demanded reconstruction was the democratic spirit, and in its essence this is the Christian ideal of brotherhood. It is fed by the great vision of Jesus.

Perhaps what we need most is to call out into consciousness what actually exists in us and among us. We are often blinded to the very things which are most characteristic. Even the disciples after living with their

Master and having experience of His Spirit, misunderstood His purpose so tragically. Once because the Samaritans were ungracious to Him and offered Him a personal indignity, James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume the village. He rebuked them by saying: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." That was the pathos, that men could have been so near Him and have seen something of Him and yet could so misunderstand Him. All through the centuries the men who have tried to enter into Christ's spirit and carry on His work have often misrepresented His aim and have been blind to the very things for which they themselves were standing.

It may seem like bravado, but it is in solemn earnest that we assert that there never was an age more fervently Christian than this one. The very negative forces which have been compelling change are really in line with the essential religious spirit. The golden age is not behind us like a burnt out star, but before us as the master-light of all our seeing. Our optimism is surely rational, if it is based on ascertained facts.

Taking then a broad view of our time we can sum up results in these three positive ways. First, the spirit of the age is seen to be a spirit of truth and the love of truth. When we say that our age is preëminent in this, it does not mean that men did not before believe in truth. That would be false and foolish. Many of the noblest men of the past have been martyrs in the search for truth. But it is true as never before that we are seeking to get reality everywhere. It is the watchword of all our education. We test all our scientific method by how it agrees with what is. We seek to get our feet on fact.

We are coming to see also that this ideal of truth is something bigger than knowledge. It has to be related to life. It is not merely something to know but something to be. We cannot know truth till we are true men. There is a flash of revealing light in the word of Jesus, "I *am* the truth." This spirit of our age needs only to be led to its natural conclusion to be of the very essence of Christianity.

In the second place the spirit of our age is certainly one of coöperation. The age of individualism has passed, and we see that there is no progress that way. In every sphere of life we know that we cannot stand alone. We know the value of team-work in play, and all labour worth while is done by team-work. Education does not mean that a certain number of teachers get an opportunity to say things which students can get down in note-books and possibly get into their heads. We must work together in education and the best teachers realize that the finest results come when the scholars work along with them. A modern university is an experiment in co-operation. Knowledge is too vast for any one to think to cover all the ground. A professor in Cambridge, when a visitor spoke of the smallness of his own special library, replied, "In Cambridge when you want to know a thing you don't turn up a book, first of all you turn up a man." Every true university must have this ideal that men are working not only for their own department but in a spirit of co-operation.

In the world of business we are getting past the stage of bare competition. Many of our difficulties to-day are due to the attempt to make adjustment to the new demand. We are not content with the old state of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. One of the strongest movements of our time is towards truer communal life. It does not spell impoverishment for the individual but enrichment. The welfare of the group means ever greater welfare to the member.

It may be that this is one of the ultimate causes for the terrible war in Europe that this spirit of the age is breaking through the bonds of spurious nationalism. It is seeking the widest kind of coöperation. It looks for even international relations that will one day make war itself impossible. In its highest flower it will reach a brotherhood of man of which we already see traces.

We must see how near this is getting to the spirit of Christianity. Even the idea of the Church itself, however far short it has come, stands for this dream of brotherhood. There have been times when it even realized to some

extent its dream. Certainly the Kingdom of Heaven, of which the Church is the poor instrument, points to this ideal. We are groping towards the imperial vision of Christ, of a realm of God which oversteps all barriers of class and caste and colour and race. The diffusion of good-will among men, the sense of human brotherhood, of being bound up in the one bundle of life, the growing trust in men, all this is of the very essence of democracy—and it is not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.

We refuse to let the world's tragedy to-day daunt us. Out of the welter we see emerging something nearer our dream. And there are elements of hope even in the present desperate straits. One of them is the revolt of the conscience of man, the distress of the soul of man. The bloody struggle fills us with dismay because it so contradicts what we recognize to be the true spirit of the age.

The third fact in our analysis is that our age stands for the spirit of service. This is the demand made everywhere. In the last result the value of a gift is seen to be its value for others.

This test is being applied to everything. The great statesmen of America are preachers and all of them in some fashion preach this doctrine. This is really what democracy means. In its final issue it is a spirit of service. Business is asked to judge itself by this judgment. Our heroes are ceasing to be the warriors who ride to their ends through the blood of men and over the ashes of ruined homesteads. The men who serve their day and generation, helping us to nobler life and juster laws and sweeter conditions, are the heroes we are learning to enshrine in memory and in heart.

Privileged classes of some sort there have always been and will always be. In a democracy the most privileged class consist of those who receive opportunities for the higher education, opportunities of leisure and knowledge. We expect and will increasingly expect from them that they pay in service the price of their privilege. The man whose one thought is to get and never to give, who uses his gifts or his position for selfish ends is already being condemned by the common ethics of the world.

We are learning that society even demands

sacrifice, as baseball sometimes demands a "sacrifice hit." This spirit of service spells for every noble soul if need be sacrifice. Once more we see how that line runs right down through Christianity. At its heart stands a cross, a lonely cross that yet is calling all men unto it.

All this is not to say that the age is always and altogether Christian. Now as at all times there are forces antagonistic to the higher life of man. There are foes to be overcome as in other times, and the great struggle of the ages goes on as of old. Indeed, there are the same old foes with only new faces. All that we assert is that the Kingdom is nearer than when we believed. It may still be hard to be a Christian as Robert Browning sighed, but it is probably easier than ever it was; for the gains of the past remain as part of our inheritance.

There is of course danger in the shift of emphasis which has taken place. Danger comes from some of the conditions that accompany the changes of our day. For example, the spirit of broadening truth has meant a break-

down of the sectarian spirit in religion. This may lead to a general attitude of indifference, as if one thing were as good as another. All cats are gray in the dark, and if we live in a haze we may assume that nothing matters. The loss of loyalty to a religious group has often brought moral weakness to young men of liberal mind.

But this smaller emphasis given to sectional and sectarian religion has also meant great gain. Lord Melbourne said cynically that the Church was the last bulwark against Christianity. An institution may be the greatest enemy of the life which gave birth to the institution. The spirit of liberty which gets enshrined in a constitution and a code of laws may be endangered by its very children. It is too true that often the organized Church has been put into the place of religion.

We must not forget that the breakdown of sectarian religion has been largely due to the recognition that the Kingdom is bigger than the Church. The Church must be judged by how far it is an efficient instrument for advancing the interests of the Kingdom. Organiza-

tion is needed to embody and preserve life, and a great opportunity now emerges to give the religious spirit a wider and nobler kind of institution. For instance we may well ask that the American genius for organization might start on the problem of the country church. All over the country are villages with four or five struggling causes—with mighty little effect. The community is divided up in the pettiest kind of fashion in the very thing where true union is needed. Instead of a Church which might be the centre of the fullest social life and the centre of spiritual influence, there are broken fragments pulling against each other. As for the ministers there is not a man's job in it for any of them. If we allowed the true spirit of our age to work on the situation, there would be opportunity for the best man God ever made to put in a life's work at the head of such a Church in any country community. Is it too much to ask that some of the business capacity in our midst should be consecrated to this practical purpose?

Again, there is undoubted danger from the loosening of creeds which is a sign of our times.

Many are tempted to take the position that it does not matter what a man believes. We say superficially that it is not what one thinks but what he does that counts. This is true if we mean opinion or speculation. If by faith we mean the fundamental position of a man's living, then this statement that it does not matter what he believes is the silliest and the falsest ever made. By comparison nothing else does matter. The real faith will soak through every thought and feeling, and mark the whole fabric of life. Teach a nation to believe in war, tell them of the biological necessity for war, the right and the duty to make war—and you will have war.

The decay of creeds which marks our time has come from a sense of the futility of much of our hair-splitting on points and propositions. R. L. Stevenson tells of an old Scotch lawyer who was arguing with his minister about Calvinism and was interrupted by an intolerable pang of pain. "After all," he said, "of all the 'isms I know none so bad as rheumatism."

Further, the decay of creeds is largely caused by a truer understanding of what faith is. It

is not the acceptance of propositions however true. It is an attitude of the heart and life. We see that the essence of religion is not in propositions any more than it is church organization. These are necessary and inevitable, but they exist for life, not life for them.

The added emphasis on the practical and on the social side of religion is in keeping with the spirit of the age. There may be danger here of making our religion shallow and even of developing a new kind of formalism. But surely there is hope in the modern attitude. It means the end of much false emphasis. In a district of Liverpool where there were constant religious riots between Catholics and Orangemen there was a Chinese laundryman. He realized that he was in the war zone, and one day he put out a sign with these words, "Me have no religion : me washee clothes." It is a sad commentary on much that passes for religion that such a story has sting to it.

The final test of a religion must be practical, and the test of practice must be a social one. Does it give men mastery over self, over life, over the world? The truth is that the Church

is being driven back to a closer touch with its Master's ideal.

The teaching of Jesus on the Kingdom of Heaven made it among other things a brotherhood. The righteousness cannot be attained in isolation. It was a society which He founded. Because the essence of personal religion is trust in the Heavenly Father we are related at once to the other children. This thought of the family runs through all the teaching of Jesus. It means ties of love and mutual sympathy. And it means service.

The Kingdom was part of His faith in God the Heavenly Father. The man of faith is always a critic of the present—and there was no keener critic of present affairs than Jesus. He saw the multitude of men as sheep without a shepherd, and His heart was moved with compassion. He saw the strong lording it over the weak, the powerful nation drenching earth with blood in lust of dominion. He knew from experience what grinding poverty was, and bootless labour. He saw the sorrow of the people and the luxury of the rich and the shame of

courts. He saw the ignorance of the little ones, and the pride of the great ones. He saw greed, and hatred, and selfishness, and oppression. He saw men spending their strength and squandering the treasure of their hearts for things of no account, giving money for that which is not bread.

The more the world's misery oppressed Him, the more He felt that the Kingdom which He preached was "good news." The ideal society had to have deep roots. It could not come by a few moves on the economic chess-board. It had to begin in the heart and conscience of men. The social ethics had to be built on personal ethics, born of the soul brought into relation to God the loving Father. The Kingdom had to be the Kingdom of God. But ever the end was the ideal society, not to save the soul but to save the world. So He preached it as good news to the poor and the maimed.

Men say that this Kingdom is visionary and impractical. Well, it has lifted the world in its steep ascent more than anything in history. It is still the inspiration of this world in which

we live. It is its only hope. We have courage to face the future and to endure the present because of the power of that vision. This light that never was on sea or land is the life of everything that lives in man.

All the problems of America are religious problems. They are all problems of human relations. Take any one of them, the problem of immigration, labour problems, the problem of the Trusts, race and colour problems. We may do something by legislation and by economic arrangement, but an ultimate solution is only possible through religion. Religion works in the sphere of relations, and our problems are all due to the fact that the true relations have been lost. We must get back into the right attitude towards each other. For this we need faith and the courage that faith can give. We need faith in God and in man. In the true spirit of our age we move forward and make the old adventure of soul, which has ever led men to serve the purpose of God.

VII

The Principles of Reconstruction

He who wishes to have a useful influence on his time should insult nothing.—*Goethe.*

VII

THE PRINCIPLES OF RECONSTRUCTION

O one can foretell in detail what the actual changes will be in creed and institution. All that we can wisely do is suggest the lines which we should frankly follow. The first principle which should govern every change is that it should honestly suit *the age*. The poorest sort of service any one can offer is to condemn the time in which we live, as if the sole function of religion is to damn the present age. We are in, and of, the age also. The fact is that the chief reason for reconstruction is not pressure from without but from within. It is needed not so much to make faith more reasonable to outsiders as to be a better interpretation of the facts.

If the modern Church is to serve the world of to-day, it must seek to state its creed so as

to satisfy the intellect, and it must provide an organization that will satisfy the spiritual needs of man. Its theology must suit the age. If it be thought that the Church is a close corporation for maintaining the *status quo* in thinking and in social living, its day will soon pass, and men will turn to other institutions that will meet their needs better. As a matter of fact the average man in the churches thinks of the Church mainly as designed to foster religious life and not to guard the deposit of theological opinions. He is more interested in life than in creed, and church leaders could easily have more courage and faith than they have.

Ecclesiastical authority is too much given to settle questions not by evidence and proof and reason, but by police methods. It is an easy way to get a semblance of peace by ejecting every questioner as a disturber of the quiet. It is no wonder that the charge is made against the Church of lack of intellectual veracity. Some "defenders of the faith" speak as if the theology they inherited had never changed. That is only because they do not know its history. It is a false reading of the New Testa-

ment and of Christian history to speak of Christianity as something handed over *en bloc* —a plan of thinking and living once delivered, and once for all delivered to the saints.

Christianity has always been a vital force changing the world, and itself in process of change. In the first centuries it moved out from its little Jewish environment into the world of Greek thought, and its relation to that had to be worked out. It came into the world of Roman dominion, and it took from that a distinct ecclesiastical form which of course reacted on doctrine. After the Middle Ages it passed into the world of new nationalities. It is now in the world of modern science and democracy, and again we find a process of adjustment both of creed and of revised ecclesiastical government. In each case the process began with criticism. The early Church spoke in the language intelligible to its age, stated doctrine in terms of the accepted philosophy of the Greek world. Its successors made the mistake of thinking it final, but though no single attempted explanation of the infinite can be final, the first creeds were the true ex-

pression of the experience of religion in the natural thought of the time.

We can say the same thing of the institution of the Church. It was the fruit of history and of the needs of the world at that period. Its unity and centralized power were necessary to maintain its existence. Its sacraments and sacerdotal ministry ministered to sick souls and fostered spiritual life. Its ethics guarded and guided civilization through the dark ages. To-day it can only survive by playing again the same part, by understanding the world of modern life and by meeting its needs. What is more important than even its own survival is that only thus can it serve and save the world.

We cannot go back to the age of the Apostles, and copy their institutions and mimic their language and think again precisely their thoughts. The common cry to go back to the age of the Apostles, or back to the Pauline Theology, or even the more popular cry to-day to go back to Christ is due to the fallacy that it is possible. It is a historic illusion to imagine that we can divest ourselves of all that the intervening years have brought.

We go back in the true sense that we may go forward. We need to make our own theology, and can correct it by examination with the source. We are in the true apostolic succession when we attempt no slavish imitation, which cannot sound sincere on our lips.

This is true of all that we see reflected in the New Testament of apostolic life and ways and institutions. We are inclined to contrast the state of the Church to-day with the conditions in apostolic times, the simplicity of organization and life, the simplicity of creed. This contrast is useful, and many lessons are to be learned from it; but to become a mere praiser of the past and to condemn all later developments is to make the Scribes' mistake over again. It is to assume that the Gospel came to its height in the usages and organization of those early days, which are to be unvarying precedents for all time coming.

A close study of the New Testament itself should be enough to warn us from this, and to convince us how really futile it is. After all, we see change going on even in apostolic times, changes even of such things as that of

the Christian Sabbath from the last day to the first day of the week, changes in the Lord's Supper. Wisely, then, when we go back to primitive institutions and theology of the New Testament we go back not as to a fetish, not to attempt a servile following of even apostolic models, but to imbibe again the spirit of devotion and love and reverence, to drink of the brook by the way and to lift up our head for our warfare.

For the task of the Church in seeking to satisfy the intellect, we ought not to be afraid of controversy. Indeed we should welcome it. There is a false peace in intellectual life, as elsewhere, which consists of creating a desert and calling it peace. In every other sphere of knowledge progress comes by criticism, by fearless dispute. Untrammelled discussion is the only safeguard for truth. When we recognize that truth is an ideal which we can only hope to approximate, we are not distressed by comparative failure. Dogmatism which lays down the law would be an offense in any science. It is no less an offense in theology. The early Church acquired its theology by free discus-

sion. The first creed won out on its merits. We must seek to shape our system of thought by translating into modern language and modern thought the doctrines of faith.

To do this satisfactorily we should grant willingly and gladly freedom to investigate, to think and to propose. We who believe in the triumph of truth may well believe in such freedom. Renan compared the liberal theologian of his time to a bird whose wings are clipped—as long as it is at rest it looks all right, but when it tries to fly, it has not much to fly with. That may be so, but clipped wings can sprout again, and noble flight become again possible. Whereas the orthodox theologian, who will not allow growth or progress, is like a bird in a cage. He cannot even try to fly.

Our theology must not only suit our age intellectually, but it must also do this morally. It must meet the demands of conscience as well as of intellect. We must not be asked to accept a theology which outrages reason or conscience. The moral conscience of our time is asking for changes that amount to social

reconstruction. Religion believes that this cannot be done in external fashion alone. A condition imposed from without will break down. There cannot be a brotherhood without brothers, and only religion is adequate for the task. We are told that social service is our duty, but even that will not suffice if we ask why it is our duty. Only religion can give the sufficient sanction to modern social demands, and supply the sufficient motive for them.

Our theology must take into account these demands of modern life. It has to be the basis for new social ethics and can no longer be run on individualistic lines. We may even have to revise our scale of virtues. The private and personal virtues inculcated in individual ethics will still get their place, but chiefly because they contribute to the social good and make for the Kingdom of Heaven.

The second broad principle is that our theology ought also to have a relation to *the ages*, as well as to this age. The demand we make for freedom does not mean license to disregard

all that the past has brought. If there is a stupid conservatism which keeps tight hold of decayed forms and dead rituals, there is a no less stupid radicalism which is blind to the value of the old. The reformer in a hurry always jumps to "cut the painter." The true reformer comes not to destroy but to fulfill. He knows that we cannot start all over again with a clean slate. He would not if he could; for he knows the values which have already been proved.

In every sphere we suffer from the hasty reformer, who sees only the defects of present conditions, and who is impatient to make a clean sweep of all that is. It is to assume that nothing has been gained in the long story of the race. Criticism can be easily directed against the actual state of affairs in politics, and the Church, and industry, and the family, and in every human relationship. There ought to be freedom for criticism and there ought to be change where change is needed, but there is nothing gained by pulling things up by the root. There is anything but wisdom in assuming that wisdom began with us, any more

than that it will die with us. Every now and again some one thinks out a new religion over night and proposes to endow the world with it. We learn that we cannot wisely serve the present without taking into account the past.

Every new proposal needs to work out its relations to what has gone before. Human history is not a series of disconnected events or even periods. Things are not cut off from each other, but slide into each other. We make clean lines of cleavage only for convenience' sake. We talk of eighteenth century philosophy and nineteenth century science, ancient and modern, this age and previous ages, but everything is relative. History is like some of the old English cathedrals, which took so long a-building that the styles of architecture changed, and we see the Gothic growing out of the Norman simply and naturally without any violent breaks. Nothing that man has made is more interesting and beautiful than such a noble building. It is like a great living thing which grew and blossomed, with roots and stem and branches and foliage, each dif-

ferent but springing out of each other. A true conception of history is the best equipment for theology as for some other things—not events in history but what history itself is.

We see the importance of this second principle, that our theology must have relation to past, from the following considerations. For one thing the subject matter of theology is not all new. The ultimate questions are old, as old as the heart of man. We still ask the same age-old questions. If a man die shall he live again? How shall a man be just with God? Why do the righteous suffer? Oh, that I knew where I might find Him. These questions are all asked in the Book of Job. We might state them differently, but they raise the selfsame problems which meet the mind of man to-day. We are not coming for the first time to consider the enigma of life and the enigma of the world. We ought to know something of the answers which men have given to the age-old questions. Other ages have searched for answer to the old inquiry of Whence and Whither. Unless we dismiss them as insoluble, it is the part of wisdom to assume

that other generations have made answers worth our knowing.

Then, a great deal of our present problem of adjustment is due to the modern principle by which we study everything, the principle of evolution. A consideration of this implies the necessity of considering the past. We think that we understand things better in botany and biology by tracing the forms through which present forms arrived. Surely we must apply this to theology if we are to be consistent. Evolution implies variations, but no gaps, no violent leaps. The more in earnest we are to carry forward the view of truth of which we have glimpses, the more must we see it grounded in truth previously held. Knowledge is a growth, whose roots are in the soil and subsoil of history.

Further, for purposes of valuation we must go back. We cannot know the present without the past. We cannot even value things in the present without seeing something of their history. The way to repel some of the deadliest criticism of institutions and ideas and primal faiths is to see their work. We have to trust

to history rather than logic in valuing some things, and this is in line with the true empirical experimental method of science. There grows up a body of experiments, with established results in science. Man has been longer at the job in the matter of life than he has been in the matter of science, and there has grown up a body of experiments with some established results in life. We do not need to repeat every vital experiment in life that has been made throughout the ages. Otherwise the world of social life would be a wild welter of individualism. It is not enough that an idea seems good to us and appeals to our tastes or inclinations or even our reason. We must test it in life, and see what it will do in actual practice, and what its final results will likely be. Fortunately that does not always mean that we must try it out in actual experiment, that we must perpetually risk burning our fingers with it. We may see it exemplified in history, see how it tends, what it has done, and judge what it may do.

The value of an institution like marriage is proven by history more than by abstract rea-

soning. Some of the criticisms levelled against it are disproved by actual facts. The arrangement, that some interested persons or some light critics think would be better, has been tried and its effects are known. The world has not exhausted its experiments, but it is not merely beginning them. Man has not exhausted his experiences, but he has already had some experiences. We do not start fresh with a new world. History, the experience of generations, has revealed values which we dare not let slip. All our actual problems have their roots in the past, though our particular concern with them is in the present and the future. Religious truth has to be established and tested in the same way as any truth. It has to bear the test of practice, but we are not confined to our own practice. History here too is a means of knowledge. This is one of the practical values of the Church to us that it brings us into relation to the normal and the universal. Other feet have trodden where we tread, and indeed the path on which we usually must walk is well-worn, so that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

All that we have been advancing implies recognition of the value of continuity. To think of our age in a fragmentary way, cut off from all the past, would be to lose the fruitful thought of growth. Our best thought and work would wither in the shallow soil with no depth of root. We do not want to leave ourselves "up in the air" religiously any more than in any region of life. It would be serious loss all round if we cut ourselves off from the historic religious life, especially when we see how fundamentally social religion is. It seems incredible that this individualistic policy should be adopted to-day when we are accepting the social basis of religion.

This principle that religion naturally has relation to the past must apply to our statement of doctrine. Theology is the attempt of the mind to understand the facts of religion and to interpret the experience of religion. The ancient forms stood for realities. The explanation they offer may no longer be adequate and may have to be amended, but the experience that lies back of it has still to be explained. We must be careful to appreciate the religious

value of the older statement. This can be carried too far and let the old creed be emasculated, altering statements by interpretation, and assuming that nothing really was needing change. At the same time if a creed is designed as a basis of union it must be largely looked on as a symbol and there should be a large freedom of interpretation. No society is held together by common opinions, but by a common purpose.

The principle should also apply to a very large extent to language. Living speech is never stable. Words grow richer or poorer, adding to their significance or losing their ancient force. We cannot deal with words as we do with numbers. They cannot be kept fixed and definite, so long as they are in use among men. To discard all old words rich in association because we cannot use them with the old precision of meaning would be to impoverish modern religion. The vocabulary of religion is itself an asset, and comes down to us freighted with the memory of the saints. There is a prosaic type of mind which tries to tie us down to legal definitions and would com-

pel us to invent new phraseology whenever the meaning of the old has shifted.

There can be no invariable rule and much can be said for the more radical position that the old language should be discarded. It may be disingenuous to use words in a different sense from which they have been understood. Also, it plays into obscurant hands if we use their words without indicating the difference. There are certainly times when it is duty to make a clean-cut line that will indicate where men stand. This needs to be in the interests of truth. Again, some old language may have become unintelligible and be a hindrance to earnest minds. Thus, a cast-iron rule is impossible and each case must be judged on its merits. If the Christian world no longer thinks of God in terms of the Nicene Creed, it ought not to go on using obsolete phrases. But after all the purpose of the Church is to unite all who have experience of God, all men of good-will, all who assent to the purpose of Jesus. We seek coöperation and service, and do not want separate battle-cries over every point of difference.

Our principle would mean that it is better to keep to an old phrase, if it can be made to serve the new needs. Take the word Church itself—what a different conception we have as compared with past theories of the Church, and what a gain that the word has been kept with its gathered treasures of the ages! It is safe to say that no man now in practice thinks of the nature and functions and power of the Church precisely as was once held, even in the Roman Church itself, where in theory there has been no change. As for Protestantism no two institutions could be farther apart than the modern Church admittedly is from the Church of the Middle Ages. Would not all acknowledge some sense of loss if we felt compelled to search for a new word to mark our new conception of the Christian society? The word has quickly altered its meaning, as the thing for which it stood changed. It is now, and will surely always be, of value to know ourselves linked on to the Church of the ages, in communion with the goodly fellowship of all the saints. This sense the very word Church gives us, and we would be the poorer if it were

made hard to feel ourselves belonging to the great society of the noble living and the noble dead.

Or take the phrase which meant so much in the teaching of Jesus, the Kingdom of Heaven. Some, who object to the emphasis in modern theology given to this phrase, have tried to prejudice us by pointing out that the word Kingdom is not suited to a republic or a democracy. It is a very cunning objection, though it sounds strangely in the mouth of those who are fighting any change in theological thinking. The objection is foolish as we have seen; for words have a history like everything else, and this one need not be ashamed of its ancestry. It is not only foolish, but it is ignorant. As a matter of fact the phrase was not invented by Jesus, but was taken over from the religious language of His time. In taking it over He added to its content and so altered its meaning. Jesus changed the thing and kept the word. To Him the head of the Kingdom was not King but Father—"Our Father who art in Heaven: Thy Kingdom come." We are only following His

example, who came not to destroy but to fulfill.

This care to avoid needless break with the past applies to the statement of all doctrine. Of course when a doctrine has become meaningless or useless it would be absurd to advocate its retention, but in that case it is not worth while bothering about it; for it simply gets eliminated for all practical purposes. But the great needs and ideals remain pretty constant. The big fundamental things of man's relation to God, of God's relation to Jesus, of the work of Christ for the world can be still stated in old phraseology. The heart of them remains the same. We risk something if we needlessly change and lose the impulse of the whole past.

In any case the spirit of our action is more important than the action itself. I recognize that if we had to make a new creed for our day, both the words and the concepts would need change. Whether we seek to change or not, it is surely right and wise to keep in the great tradition, and not to sail over uncharted seas. It is the duty and privilege of some to go out on great intellectual adventure. We

must offer an open gate out to discoverers and an open port home when they return with the tale of their triumphs. We will add their new knowledge to the long story of the soul's achievements, but we will not forget that past story nor let go our heritage.

The principle, that we have to think of the ages as well as the age, applies also to our relation to the Church as an organization to-day. It will be a loss to ourselves, and a loss to the Church, and through that a loss to the world, if we cut loose. We can put the emphasis on what we consider the true things and leave room also for growth, and at the same time hold by the necessary principle of continuity. This is needed for effectiveness. Above all question of the nature of the Church or the character of its ministry, is the question of its purpose. It exists as the instrument to bring the Kingdom of God to men and to bring men into the Kingdom. In loyalty to its Founder and to His purpose lies the one and only test. Identity of opinion would be a weakness and not a real strength ; for the highest unity in all human relations is not uniform-

ity but unity in and through difference. As a fact in spite of all seeming, no society of men could be kept together for a day on a basis of common opinion. We belong to the Church not because we all see eye to eye on all questions of speculation, but because we all see something of the vision and seek to bring it to pass. To make the Church an effective agent for its work in the world we must repress in ourselves mere divisive courses.

There is a sin that we have the right to call the sin of schism. It is not always those called schismatics who have committed that sin. Not John Wesley, but the English Church that drove him out, sinned the sin of schism. Great departure may be now and again needed, but progress is by evolution not by revolution. It may be said that the Christian Church is itself a great departure, but it was not by the will of Jesus. He would have grafted it onto the old. He has been sometimes called an open-air preacher, but it was because the synagogue was closed to Him. Similarly with Paul and the apostles, they made for the synagogue in every town which they visited and only turned to the

Gentiles when the Jews thought themselves unworthy of eternal life.

If it become a choice between stifling the free spirit and holding a barren form, we must choose the way of freedom even if it means going out into the wilderness. Surely, however, with mutual Christian charity and courtesy Christian men can live and work together and make the Church serve the needs of the modern world. Let it not be said that a narrow liberalism made this impossible by an insolent disregard of the past. Some one has said that the form of religion which denies its ancestry is not likely to afflict the world with posterity. To acknowledge our debt to the past is a sure sign that we have something to give to the present. Goethe, who declared that the man who would have a useful influence on his time should insult nothing, adds, "Let him not trouble himself about what is absurd; let him concentrate his energy on bringing to light of good things. He is bound not to overthrow but to build up." The world broadens slowly from precedent to precedent, and the age we seek to serve is itself the heir of the ages.

VIII

The Things that Remain

This word signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that have been made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.—*Epistle to Hebrews.*

VIII

THE THINGS THAT REMAIN

UR age has known the searching, chastening power of change, and religion has passed under the tribulation of it more completely than anything else. There has been a disintegrating process, and naturally we have thought much of the many things that are shaken. Many of the formularies by which the Church expressed her faith are seen to be inadequate for an age affected by the scientific spirit. Some items of ancient belief are discredited, and some have been simply displaced among educated men. In a previous chapter we analyzed the forces which have been at work. The whole theory of the universe with which ancient theology was bound up, explaining its origin and presaging its destiny, has had to be disentangled from modern religious faith.

It is natural that in calculating loss and gain we should be at first affected chiefly by the sense of loss. We think of the comfort of ancient ways of thinking, and of the vanished grace of ancient days. When earth and heaven are shaken we are fearful of the loss of things precious to the soul. Amid all the wreckage will the foundations themselves hold fast? In the shakings and changes, in the loss of venerable opinions and of old presuppositions, is anything left sacred and secure? When the crucible swallows up Bible and creeds and hallowed institutions, will any pure gold be given back to us from the melting? This mood of fearful questioning is natural, but the time comes to count up gain as well as loss. We look to see what consolations come through the trials of our time. From the vanishing of the things that are shaken we ask what are the things that remain?

Often history has shown that in a time of change much that seemed to be loss proves to be really gain, if only in turning the mind from the provisional and accidental to the true essential. Amid all the distresses of a changing or-

der the soul reaches the unchanging order to be found in communion with God. Men discover that what they thought necessary parts of truth were only veils which obscured the splendour. With anguish they saw the veil removed, only to find a purer light stream in. It is a law of every crisis of change that gain comes through the painful discipline of loss. This very experience itself is part of the assured profit in the final summing up.

At all times we recognize a danger of confusing the accidental with the essential, but it is specially prominent in times of change. Many things to-day have been shaken, above all the whole idea of authority. Weak and sluggish human nature longs for infallibility of some sort on which to rest—an infallible Church, an infallible creed, an infallible book. When these fail, as fail they do, it seems a remediless calamity. To many it means the wreck of faith. But should it be so? May it not be that the authority of Bible or creed or Church creates the danger of interposing something between the soul and God, endangering true personal religion? Faith should spell

courage in the face of the crumbling of external authority. We discover that all is not lost. We come back to the Bible and find in it food for the soul. In it is the classic and normal religious life. We find the creed expressing for its time the great experience of faith. We find the Church to be our natural home among men who care for the things of the spirit.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews deals with a historical situation which in many remarkable ways resembles the present. For Jews who had become Christians there was the same crisis which seemed like the crash of the old world. They too had to abandon the letter of their sacred Scripture. They lost the comfort of their ancient ritual. They had to give up their national hope sanctioned alike by religion and patriotism. If they went on to follow the fortunes of the new faith, they would feel themselves outcasts from the immemorial commonwealth of God. They seemed to lose so much that they were tempted to draw back. The writer sets himself to show that they only lose the shadow and gain the substance, they lose the type and gain the reality, they lose the

transitory and gain the eternal. He tells them that the things that are shaken are removed that the unshakeable things may remain.

It would be useless and stupid to deny that old landmarks have disappeared and that our time has seen an upheaval of cherished things, which has brought a crisis as great as the breakdown of Judaism was to the first Christian generation. Like them we are tempted to look back longingly to the settled times when the soul dwelt securely among certainties. We are tempted also to wonder whether anything gained was worth the price that has been paid. The hardest part of the price is the loss of peace. A state of doubt is never a comfortable condition, especially when it is doubt of something once held sacred. To very many the present distress is due to vague doubt, spreading misgiving on everything religious. It would be well to make plain to ourselves where exactly the prevalent doubt operates. Doubts of the Church do not mean doubt of the value of religion, nor doubt of the great contribution it has made in the past to the world, but doubt as to whether it is rising to its opportunity to-

day and is giving adequate expression to the soul of modern man.

When we speak of religion we do not usually distinguish clearly the sense in which we use the word, and we often mix up things which are really separate. There are four distinct meanings, or rather the one subject appears in four separate departments. There is first of all that which alone is *religion* in the true sense, namely the spiritual experience which links man to the world of higher realities. We sometimes try to emphasize this sense of the word by calling it personal religion, or experimental religion, but as a matter of fact the heart of all religion is a spiritual experience. It is an attitude which the soul takes to God, a relation in which the life stands to God. Acts of worship such as prayer presuppose a fellowship with the eternal. Religion is not confined to the private and personal attitude; for it is a social experience also, but in any case it is in this region that religion is born.

But this experience claims intellectual statement. It cannot be left as vague feeling. The

mind will always want to understand and interpret the experience. This is the place of *theology*. A great deal of our trouble is due to the natural confusion between religion and theology—so much so that some seem to think that it is not necessary to have any theology at all. But the theology of a period is only the attempt made at that time to express the faith held by believers and to state the contents of the Gospel as received and understood by them. It is true that the religious life does not depend on any intellectual understanding of metaphysical doctrine. It does not depend on correct thinking, and when the two are joined a protest is inevitable in the interests of religion. But in every sphere when we get facts we naturally seek for a theory to explain them. If this be so, we need not plume ourselves that we can do without theology.

Further, religion works itself out in life, and produces a code of conduct, a system of practical *ethics*. The Church has therefore to teach the implications of Christian faith in actual living. It has a standard of morality, virtues which it encourages, duties which it imposes,

evils which it denounces. There is a characteristic type which gets looked on as the natural fruit of the faith. Religion seeks to enforce a personal morality, with the marks of what it would call a good man. Since man also lives in society, the morality has to have some social bearing, and religion teaches an ideal of conduct to others and points to a better state of society. In past centuries the Church has successfully raised the standard of personal morality, and has enthroned certain things as good and branded others as evil.

Again, religion embodies itself in *institutions*, among which is the institution which we call the Church, the social groups who use practical ways of achieving their common purpose and expressing their common faith. Life must clothe itself in institutions. As we cannot conceive ourselves as disembodied spirits, life must be embodied somehow. The practical problems we have are due to confusion between the two. The life creates the institution, and yet the institution sometimes terrorizes over the life, as the body chains the soul. Religion embodies itself practically in the Church. Church

of some kind there must be, if there is to be religion, but the two are not identical.

When we speak of Christianity we do not always distinguish in our own mind which of these four aspects of it we mean. It is primarily religion, but it is also a way of thinking or theology, and a way of living or ethics, and a set of institutions commonly summed up by us in the word Church. Criticism may be directed at each of these different aspects. It may ask whether the experience of religion is real. Granted that, it may ask whether the way of thinking of the experience is intelligent and true. It may also ask whether the way of living is the best, whether the ethics is the highest. Or it may ask if the institution of the Church is fitted to serve the purposes of religion. All these are legitimate spheres of criticism. The mistake is in confusing these different things. It is not to the disparagement of religion that objection can be raised against the forms in which religion organizes itself.

While theology of some sort is a necessity, no particular theology is sacred. One great

good from the disintegrating process of our time is that we are done with the idea of finality. We see that in every age the theory of religious life presents itself differently, and this is largely brought about through the influence of other contemporary thought of the world as a whole. We cannot hold certain definite scientific views regarding the relation of man to the universe without these views affecting religious thought. We can never assent to a theology which binds the mind to the bondage of dogma. Faith is not the intellectual apprehension of any proposition however true. The Christian salvation means the fellowship with God into which Christ brings the human soul, and whatever it may be accompanied with of thinking about God and Christ and that fellowship, it does not depend on the thinking; and men have known the fellowship who could not put their experience into rational propositions. It follows therefore that a creed may break down and have to be changed without religion itself being affected. Indeed when religion is identified with intellectual acceptance of creed, it is well that the storm

should come and shake earth and heaven, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain.

Similarly there is room for criticism of ordinary Christian ethics as well as of Christian theology. The Christian way of living of our time is no more sacred than the way of thinking. The standard of personal morality has been raised in the Christian centuries, and that heritage must not be endangered. It still remains a task of the Church to create men fit to be members of the Kingdom of Heaven. But it is also true that a bigger task is before us to create a state of society worthy for a Christian man to live in. The great need is the development of ethics dealing with the social life. The contrasts of wealth and poverty were never more startling, not because they are more in fact but because the world is more sensitive to the contrast. It is no longer enough to preach contentment to the poor and charity to the rich. The conscience of some of the wealthy is sufficiently exercised to make them look on philanthropy as a duty, but the new ethical standards are not content with this.

The Church has asked men to consider how they spend money. It will ask them rather to consider how they earn it. We need new social ethics and new international ethics. If the leaders of thought hark back to the old and show no courage and faith in anticipating the new, there can only be calamity in the shaking of earth and heaven.

There is room also for criticism of the institutions created by Christianity. Here also the way out is forward not backward. If we tie up the spirit with the letter, the life with the institution, we risk the loss of the essential with the accidental. As in every sphere of human affairs the life creates the institution, and is in turn menaced by it. It is ever in danger of being devoured by its children. The free political life of Revolutionary times in America created the Constitution, and the Constitution becomes a fetish that hampers freedom. The free religious life of the first Christian centuries created the creeds, and the creeds become sacred and immobile and crush the freedom of the spirit. The religious life of the Reformation issued in Confessions, like the

Westminster Confession, which threaten the life that gave them birth. Religion embodies itself practically in the Church, and we have often to apologize for the Church in the interests of religion. We have to assert again the freedom of life to create anew its instruments and its organizations.

When we refuse to tie up religion with its present particular forms, we realize that the two do not stand and fall together. The form is temporary and transitory; the spirit is eternal. Even when the one is shaken, the other remains. Religion remains, because man remains—his achievements, and history, and experience, and above all his needs. And God remains, whose desire has been towards men, who has led men up to spiritual communion, and who has met and satisfied the deepest needs of man. What is more, it does not mean, when the storm has shaken and shattered the past forms in which men trusted, that we are left naked and impoverished. When we look closer, we discover that all the values remain even in the external forms in which religion

has clothed itself. Bible and creed and Church are not really taken from us.

We have lost a false view of the Bible, and have gained a truer one. Biblical criticism has analyzed the various books of the Bible and has altered previous views of dates and authorship. It has deprived them of the ancient infallible authority with which they had been invested. This has only given them a new authority. They have lost nothing of their significance as records of the development of religion. They have been robbed of none of their value as expressions of the spiritual life. The Bible remains as the great storehouse of religious ideas and ideals. It is still the classic literature of religion, and the history of faith, and the record of the great experiences of the soul of man. The roots of our best life are deep in its soil. Our reverence for the Bible is only deepened when we bring to it all the equipment of knowledge. We see how it touches the life of man at every point. We see how it sets forth and extols the ultimate values of life.

Huxley in opposing the removal of the Bible from the London schools wrote, "How is the

religious feeling, which is the essential basis of conduct, to be kept up in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion without the Bible? By the study of what other book could children be humanized and made to feel that each figure in the vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between two eternities, and earns the blessings or the curses of all time according to its efforts to do good and hate evil." The religious soul knows more value in the Bible than even all that, has had experience of moral and spiritual enlightenment, has through the Bible seen the radiance of the love of Christ and heard the gracious speech that would win us to God. The old false authority has gone, but who can fail to see in the Bible the authority of spiritual vision? Who can fail to thrill to its message of power and love and hope?

We have lost a false view of the Church and have gained a truer one. There have been theories of the Church which have ministered to superstition, to intellectual servility, and to moral decadence. If these theories are now en-

dangered it is a good riddance. A magical view of sacraments and a sacerdotal view of the ministry make for a certain kind of comfort. It is pleasant in any stress of conscience, or in any doubt of duty, or in any difficulty of faith, to shut the eyes and fall back into the arms of mother Church. There is an immense temptation to many people, and perhaps to all in certain moods, to get rid of obstinate questionings and blank misgivings by handing over the whole business to an institution which claims infallibility. It is a false security and a false authority. Moral life is developed like all other life by taking all the risks. In great moral crises we are thrown back on self, on conscience, on God. We can get counsel, comfort, support, reënforcement from without, but in the last issue none can take from us the burden of decision and of conflict.

This is not to say that we are single souls fighting a lone battle, going to triumph or defeat in solitude. There is a place for the Church which is a Brotherhood of kindred spirits. There is a place even for the Church as the minister to sick souls, bracing the con-

science, strengthening the will, enlightening the mind, comforting the heart, cleansing the life, inspiring the soul. There is a place also for the Church of common purpose, the company of courageous and believing men and women, who have seen the vision and seek to realize it, who work for the coming of the Kingdom. There is room for public worship, and common prayer, and mutual help. It is not possible in a short paragraph to state all that the Church is and can be, but when its false authority is gone it is seen invested with a true authority. We still are comforted by the communion of the saints, and befriended by the company of the disciples, and inspired by the fellowship of the prophets. We come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus who mediates the new covenant.

Also, we have lost a false view of creed and have gained a truer one. From the distinction ever to be maintained between religion and theology it follows that we cannot judge a Christian man by his intellectual acceptance of

creed. This means also a lesson in charity and in patience. We see that the theology of an age or a man is apt to lag behind their faith. It follows on halting foot, and often the form persists long after the spirit has changed. The personal religion of a period may have little connection with its formulated creed, though there is a constant effort on the part of theology to reflect the faith of the time. A Church cannot alter its creed until the opinion of the great majority of its members demands the change. Before the Church officially can take action, the personal faith of the Church must have for years departed from the points affected. We see also that no dogma is final.

The reaction against theology has perhaps gone too far. The mind of man certainly demands some scientific system, the record of discovered truth, and unless we affirm that here truth is undiscoverable it is absurd to deny a place for theology. Every system is only a temporary working one till a better and truer comes. The Ptolemaic system of astronomy was broken down by criticism, a growing inability to account for the facts.

Many might give it up in despair and deny the possibility of a science of astronomy at all. Then came the new Copernican theory with a new distribution of the facts, and a new explanation, making a new system. It was the same science: it did not alter the facts, the sun and stars and movements.

The old theology has been subjected to criticism, incessant, unsparing. Men are saying in despair that there is no need for theology, and that we must do away with doctrine. But the human mind cannot help systematizing, and the faith must again crystallize itself into a new system. It too will be the same science. The facts will remain the same. Newton's hypothesis did not affect the existence of the sun and the planets. The facts of religion are unalterable, God and Christ and man's need, and the experience of spiritual things. There can only be a new statement of relationship. The realities are the same, though we approach them differently.

For example, to-day we start often from psychology, but no psychological explanation

does away with the facts it tries to illustrate. We may analyze the human will and describe its working in conversion, but conversion remains none the less a fact after we have accounted for it. If there is a normal Christian experience, it is likely that it will fit in pretty easily with a normal creed. It has of course a history of development; it ran on Greek lines of thought till it was formulated in the Nicene Creed; it got a more Latin form from Augustine and ran again in the Western world; once more at the Reformation it was revivified. To-day we call for men to state it in terms of the new knowledge, believing that Christianity will get only a richer interpretation from every widening process of the mind of man.

We will probably discover even in the matter of creed that there will not be so much difference in the important matters as some have feared. The facts will only be differently stated. This because we approach them differently. The older theology began with a presupposition about God, declared His nature and attributes and character. From that it proceeded to a

doctrine of man and a doctrine of sin. Then it stated its doctrine of salvation. And so on through a strictly consistent system to a doctrine of the last things. It is a magnificently logical system, which if you grant the premises carries you to its conclusion. It really tries to do too much; for it puts the whole universe, including God, into a series of propositions. But it does seek to explain facts in the nature of man, and facts of history, and of experience.

To-day we rather begin with these facts, facts which can be observed and investigated. We begin with the sciences that deal with man, psychology, sociology. We take man with his religious history and his spiritual experience, and make a presupposition about him. The presupposition is that man is by nature such that he seeks and can find communion with God, that he bends to an authority above him and moves to an impulse within him. We may describe this in different form, but it means the same as the old saying that man in some sense is made in the image of God. The whole history of religion declares that man was born for the love of God, and is restless until he finds

rest in Him. This implies a doctrine of God, and when we state that however imperfectly we are at once brought up against the tragic fact of man's exclusion from his own best life, of man's alienation from God. There is the tragic fissure in man's nature, the failure to be or to do as he would, so that the cry that sounds through the centuries finds response in his heart, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" We may explain this differently, we may describe it in other words, but we are stating what amounts to a doctrine of sin, and if we have no doctrine of salvation to offer we may as well shut our mouths. So that the difference is largely one of approach. Modern theology is not so ambitious, does not pretend to pronounce on God's attributes, nor to give a theory of the universe, to explain how it began and how it shall end. But the facts of man's life and history get their place, and that place does not differ essentially from the older views.

For, of the things that cannot be shaken, there remains the Kingdom of God as the religious ideal of the race. It carries with it

the ideal of service, even to the height of sacrifice. This has gripped the conscience of the world to-day as never before. But it can only live if it is fed by some sense of eternal values. In Jesus Christ, who is bound up in the bundle of human life, and who lived and died for the Kingdom of God, we have the pledge and the promise that man is more than the child of time. He proves His power to lead men still into faith in God and communion with Him. To those who trust Him there still comes the peace which passeth all understanding.

IX

The Victory of Faith

One in whom persuasion and belief
Had ripened into faith, and faith become
A passionate intuition.

—*Wordsworth.*

IX

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

E have seen that in spite of all that seems shaken much remains, and we have indicated that everything of ultimate value remains. It is not merely that to a strong and true heart there always remains *courage*, though that stoical attitude may be a fine nobility. In the distresses and surprises of life courage, even when it is only grim determination to hold by life and life's tested values, is not to be despised as a motive. It has given us many instances of heroism in practical life. There is always left man's unconquerable soul. Something in us vibrates to the trumpet's sound. To see another put up a brave fight with life commands our admiration. Courage will never fail of its meed of sincere respect.

When that courage is more than stoic despair,

when it is born of a living faith, it can survive amid the crash of a world, when earth and heaven seem shaken. True courage is only another name for faith. We need to believe in something in order to keep going in the face of difficulties. We believe that we will win through, or we believe that there is something worth enduring for or worth dying for. There is always some emotional content in the mood. Faith of some sort underlies all our life. When the faith is rich and warm with religion it becomes the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen. Faith in the meaning of life and in the value of the future is easy to hold when it is fed by faith in the purpose of God. So that nothing is lost if faith be not lost.

The first thing of importance is to define what we mean by faith. The word has to carry a heavier load than most words. It runs up through the whole gamut of tones of meaning. It is because it is so universal a human quality that the word is used with such different shades of thought. The result is that it is

hard to keep it from being ambiguous. Sometimes faith is used in the sense of credulity. Sometimes it carries the ugly meaning of superstition. The schoolboy's definition of faith as "believing something that you know ain't true" is even a common enough conception of it. Or it is supposed to be an attitude of shutting the eyes and opening the mouth, a blind acceptance of a benefit from some condescending donor. In "Alice through the Looking-Glass" the Queen tells Alice that she is a hundred and one years five months and one day old. "I can't believe that," said Alice. "Can't you?" the Queen said in a pitying tone. "Try again, draw a long breath and shut your eyes." The word has sometimes also been used to justify something without reason and even against reason. The more impossible a thing is, the more credit there is supposed to be in believing it—*credo quia est impossibile.*

What a man means by faith gives a sure line on what he means by religion; for the one is the reflection of the other. When religion is debased, faith is a kind of password into the lubberland of bliss. When religion is formal,

faith is the key to the easy peace of ritual and traditional observance. When religion is dry orthodoxy, faith is agreement with certain propositions. When religion is spiritual, faith is the agent of the soul and is the pathway to spiritual reality. Faith acquires a rich meaning and exercises a vital function, when religion has its place of power.

There are some legitimate uses of the word in ordinary life, which, however, need to be distinguished from religious faith. For instance in common speech faith rightly enough means intellectual assent to truth. It is the acceptance by the mind of some proved fact or some deduction from fact, as when a man says he believes that two parts of hydrogen and one of oxygen compose water, or that he believes in the law of gravitation. When religion calls on us to have more faith, it does not mean even that we should have more beliefs, more correct opinions and doctrines, or a better elaborated system of thought, or a truer philosophy. It is a much simpler thing than all that. These uses of the word are in the region of opinion,

and are on a different level entirely. The trouble is that this conception of faith is often carried over into the sphere of religion.

One obvious objection to this is that the propositions which satisfy one age become inadequate for another age. Indeed some of the present distress is due to this very fact. Religion was tied up to a view of the world which modern man repudiates. The necessity for restating some doctrines arises from the fact that a formula which at one time satisfied the mind of men may be insufficient now, partly because its form may suggest erroneous ideas, and partly because it is not in line with other knowledge. Faith cannot be the same as precision of doctrinal statement; for as we have seen there can be no absolute precision. Theology is merely the intellectual attempt to state religious facts and forces in terms of knowledge. When the knowledge changes, the statement has to change.

There is a deeper objection still, a religious objection. We must protest against making faith any sort of scholasticism, the intellectual apprehension of any propositions, however true.

Men instinctively know that the Christian salvation does not depend on any such intellectual understanding of metaphysical doctrines, but is a deeper and more spiritual thing than that. The religious instinct revolts against this conception of faith, which is always in danger of ousting spiritual religion. The Church has the right to make its official interpretation of Christianity and formulate it in a creed, but that does not constitute religion.

Faith is an attitude of the soul in which it makes a venture on life. Through it we make contact with a world of spiritual reality. It is proved by acting on the assumption that it is so and finding it to be so. Faith in essence is the committal of self to God. It is the adventuring of one's life on an assurance, the entrusting of self on God. Of course this cannot be left vague, and out of the experience there grow propositions which the experiencing soul trusts, but the two are not identical. The central thing is the experience of throwing oneself on an unseen spiritual order which is taken on trust. The external world is only part of what

is, and beyond it there unfolds a spiritual realm, and our relation to that is the most important thing in our life. William James defines it for himself thus, "A man's religious faith (whatever more special items of doctrine it may involve) means for me essentially his faith in the existence of an unseen order of some kind in which the riddles of the natural order may be found explained. In the more developed religions the natural world has always been regarded as the mere scaffolding or vestibule of a truer, more eternal world, and affirmed to be a sphere of education, trial, or redemption."

Faith becomes the assurance of the reality of this spiritual world, so that a man acts on it. It is the power by which he lives, the light by which he walks. Faith begins by staking the life on what the intellect sees to be a bare possibility, and the only proof it can have is that it should verify itself. When we define it thus and see what it is, we understand why such emphasis should be laid on faith by all men of religion. It is the substance of things hoped for. This is inspiration, that a man should be able to see this. Every prophet saw it, judged

all events by this standard, made pronouncements on history and life through this. It is what made them prophets—the assurance of the reality of the spiritual world.

All through His ministry Jesus seems to have been constantly brought up in pained surprise by the strange discovery that men had so little faith. It was a continual wonder to Him. When He went to Nazareth, and found no response from the people of His own town, we read that He marvelled at their unbelief. To Him who lived in the ever-present consciousness of God, to whom the spiritual world was His home, to whom the unseen was the natural, the wonder was that men should be so spiritually obtuse.

Even when He gathered a little band of earnest men, who were drawn to Him by their simple faith, He had ever to consider their blindness and slowness. He said once with the mystery of this heavy on His heart, "How is it ye have no faith?" We are struck, when we think of such things at all, by the sense of mystery that there should be anything except

the material things which we see and touch. But the mystery to Christ was that men should be so absorbed in these things, like a child with new toys. We live as though these material things were everything; whereas to the spiritual mind they are but temporary expedients, the body which hides the soul. How often could Jesus begin a sentence, even to His disciples, who were the very pick of Israel, with "O ye of little faith." Even after these months of constant intercourse with Him, after laying bare to them His heart and mind, after making them familiar with His way of looking at things, they were ever harking back to their old standards and judgments, and wounding His spirit with their worldly views. "Where is your faith?" He asked, as if He had expected by that time that they would have understood.

This demand of religion for faith is not irrational; for it underlies all our life. It is the open door through which we must go to all success in life. Even business is built on credits and confidence, and if that is shaken a

panic ensues and the whole structure collapses. All our social life in every form is built on faith. The family, the Church, the State, all associations of man are held together by this cement. As Pascal says, the heart has reasons which the reason does not always understand. We live not by logic, but by primal faiths and passionate intuitions. We are forced to take ultimate risks in order even to live. Faith is the pathway to the possibilities of human life.

All thought also is built on faith. We cannot take a step towards knowledge without it; so that the common antithesis between knowledge and faith is a foolish one. Faith is the only way we have in order to know. It is not merely that science must begin with presuppositions which it cannot prove, must assume the truth of uniformity and causation. There is a much bigger assumption still. There is no bridge between the intellectual world within us and the actual world outside us except by faith. We build up a picture of reality, which we believe not to be essentially false. We believe that we know a reality outside us from the acts of mental activity within us. We believe that

there is a correspondence between our own nature and the reality of things, so that what we think is not delusion.

Similarly we create a picture of a moral and spiritual world. We have ideals of beauty and goodness. By every vision that visits us, and every prayer that breaks from us, and every aspiration that moves us, we assert that we do not live by bread alone. We have the right to assume that this world of spiritual intuition and moral worth corresponds also to a reality of things outside of us. As we make our venture of faith in order to know, we make our venture of faith in order to love. Knowledge is surely more than a mere outside description of what is. A catalogue of qualities in an object never tells the whole truth. There is a richer world than that of bare and rigid facts. We actually live in that world—a world of values, of purposes, of ideals—and we believe that it is no less true than the other.

Science is made possible by faith in a rational order of the world, and religion becomes possible by faith in a moral order. Science believes in the final victory of reason in spite

of ignorance and temporary failure—this is the victory that overcometh her world, even her faith. Religion believes in the final victory of good, in spite of evil and temporary failure —this is the victory that overcometh her world, even her faith. The mission of both science and religion, each in its own sphere, is to make their faith triumph. The very existence of the faith is a prophecy of its realization, and helps to create the world in which each believes.

Faith thus is an act of will, or rather is the will to act. We must be willing to put it to the test. We cannot be said to believe in the truth of anything unless we are prepared to act as though it were true. We must be ready to stake our all on the assurance that the result will prove worthy of our trust. This is what religious faith really means and does. It throws itself on the hypothesis that it is right in believing that life is ruled by loving purpose. The only proof is that it should turn out to be so. Belief is measured by action, by its fruit is it to be known.

Faith becomes our conscious choice of values in life. We take up a certain attitude towards life. Some speak as if men could be divided into those who have faith and those who have not. We have seen that this is not so, that all men must live by faith of some sort or other. What we usually call unbelief is only a different kind of belief. It is not a question of faith or of unfaith. Even in the matter of our fundamental faith, which is our religion, there is no real escape from the necessity of choice. It is as much a leap in the dark to deny a basis for religion as it can be to make the venture of faith, and even to refuse the leap at all is only to leave ourselves in the dark, where

> Each will have one anguish—his own soul
> Which perishes of cold.

There is a certain kind of world in which we conceive ourself to be living, or better a certain kind of world in which we will ourselves to live.

In this vital sense our faith is something other than our opinions, or our speculations

about the origin of the world or about any other subject however serious and important. These we can take up, or let go, without much result one way or the other. Our real faith means that by which we are actually living. We throw the weight of our life on one of the great alternatives. If we live in practical materialism, assuming that God and the soul and life eternal are only words without reality, that is as much an act of faith as the other. It is to say that that is the decision we make in the age-old problem. In any case our faith is central, creating our world for us. Of course it affects conduct; for this faith soaks through the whole fabric of our life. It may be unconscious. We may not know that we have made any choice. We may think that we have not taken any decision. The judgment may go against us merely by default, but it is judgment nevertheless, and it is we who have judged ourselves.

On the one side we can throw the weight of our life on the assumption that there is no purpose of good at the heart of the universe, and

that all the facts that have made men reach out groping hands after the unseen and eternal are only bitter delusions. In act and life we are asserting that we believe that there is no rational meaning, no real end towards which the whole creation moves. An end in time of course there may be or will be, and if we are logical we can only welcome the catastrophe which puts a finish to the farce. For farce it all is, the sport of some cosmic irony. As for human life, it is no more than a fleeting vapour that appears, and disappears, and reappears, born of the mist and withered by the sun. Men who deny a place for religious faith often think that they are merely making a negation and do not always see that their negative carries in its bosom a positive. They are not always logical, but their attitude is one of sheer faith. It is not, as they sometimes assume, that they are rational and scientific where others are credulous. They can have no formal proof that the world is as they assume. In blind faith they make their venture.

They have the right to do this and to take the risks of their venture. There is indeed no

lack of seeming facts and arguments in support of their step. They look in vain for a just and loving God in nature, for there they see only non-moral force. They stand as all of us do before the ultimate mystery, and they refuse to be appeased by the surface interests and the glamour of the present. It is all poisoned to them by a specious unreality. They look at human life with the barriers down and see so much wrong and oppression, so much misery and despair. They refuse to dull sense and thought by the usual opiates. The hard facts of existence seem to compel them to the conclusion that the force that moves the universe neither loves nor hates, neither pities nor desires, and has no meaning nor purpose in the blind drive to doom.

The average man who rejects the religious hypothesis does not push himself to the logic of his rejection. He does not become a suicide, refusing any longer to live a life so tragically barren of good. He does not even declare that all is vanity. Nor does he flounder at once into the bog of gross living, treating everything with cynical levity, only careful to eat the fat

and drink the sweet "for to-morrow we die." He does none of these things, partly because he is held by customs and social sanctions and the mere habit of living, and partly because he does not take his faith seriously enough. But what happens is this. Assuming the universe to be not moral, he gradually slips down from higher levels of thought and purpose. Duty has no imperative to him. He cannot be enlisted by any high cause and any noble passion. The moral interests slip away from him. In life and character he becomes the fruit of his faith.

On the other side we throw the weight of our life on the assumption that there is an unseen moral order, and that therefore all the facts of man's spiritual history are prophecy of some blessed fulfillment. In act we are assuming that life means something and that something good. We believe that there is an end in purpose, with which we can coöperate however weakly and blunderingly. We cannot read the whole riddle of the universe and solve the ultimate mystery, but we assert that the best we

know of love and goodness and beauty are not illusions. We assert that the great summons to which hearts have thrilled is justified by man's own nature and by the nature of the world. Human life is not the sport of chance, and may be the arena for other qualities than low cunning or other brute force. This attitude also is one of sheer faith, choosing to make this venture on the world.

We too have the right to do this and to take the risks of the venture. There are supporting facts and arguments. Even nature is not all, nor mainly, red in tooth and claw. Human life is not all a dreary misery. It is not merely that we see good as well as evil, but that sometimes we see good triumph over evil, and even we see good emerging from the evil. Many times in history and sometimes in experience we have known occasions when the spiritual forces said the last word. We do not read only failure in the long story of idealisms, and heroisms, and pathetic faiths, and noble hopes. They did not always come to wreck, but brought home a rich freight to nourish man's higher life. We too have the right to

risk our life on the hazard of the great faith. We too claim the right to walk where the saints have trod.

Here also the average man, who naturally accepts the religious hypothesis, does not always accept the implications of his faith. In times of crisis he acts on it, but often it is not brought out into active consciousness. Or he may have periods of doubt when his faith is paralyzed. Often though he does not question his faith, he does not use it as a motive. If he did he would have more power in his life, with a sense of security and a depth of joy. In so far as he does act on the faith he knows the peace, which comes from believing that the world hides no treachery against the soul, and that life does not play him false. It is the task of organized religion to keep before men the vision of their heritage, to feed the spiritual life, and to restore in the souls of men the faith that will give them mastery over self and the world.

This living faith was the most marked feature of the life of Jesus, that which gave it its calm poise and its assured tread. Everything He did

seemed to have reference to the larger life. So that to Him the worth of a man was always the worth of his soul. When we look at Him, we realize that human life was meant to have this spiritual basis. We are convicted of failure when we are engrossed by the things of sense, so that the soul falls away into the dim background of life and the things of the spirit are as in a land that is very far off.

The only proof of faith is that it should verify itself. There is countless testimony that it does. We find that it fits in with the whole case. It suits the needs of human nature and meets the necessities of human life. Man has grown to be man through such faith. We look back over the long story of the past and see a track of light; for we see a divine purpose in the whole creation which has travailed upward in pain and joy until now. We look forward into the darkness and see a track of light; for the same divine purpose leads the world. Only faith will bring victory for the highest interests of man both personally and socially. Life follows absolutely the fortunes of faith. Only

faith in eternal values will brace man for his colossal tasks. By this sign we conquer.

We must be willing to act on our faith, and to risk everything on the hazard. Otherwise it is mere opinion. We need to make up our mind as to what we want from life, and what purpose has taken us captive.

> What think ye of Christ, friend? When all's done and said
> Like you this Christianity or not?
> It may be false, but will you wish it true?
> Has it your vote to be so, if it can?

The alternatives of life spread themselves out at our feet almost at every step. We can listen to pleasure with her siren song or to duty, "stern daughter of the voice of God." We can live for self, sensitive to every call of flesh, content with the material; or we can live for larger ends, giving ourselves in richer service, spending and being spent for noble causes. We can fritter away our life in petty purposes, or we can find our life in losing it for the Kingdom of Heaven. Has it our vote to be so, if it can?

The richer the contents if this faith is, the more potent it can be. It is true that some

men are able to go on, without further defining their faith, leaving it vague, only sure that earth is not all, that there is a spiritual order above and beyond this natural order. And faith is not something merely to be embalmed in creeds, but something to live by. Faith, however, makes its victory secure when it is more than vague trust in a goodness somewhere in the universe. It takes on deeper colour when this belief in the worth of life and in the purpose of the world is born of personal trust in the love of God. The light that illumines becomes also heat that warms and comforts. This is the new assurance which we have in Jesus Christ. We believe not only that God is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, but also that He is love. Such love is seen to be the redeeming power of the world. It is also the clue to guide us in the labyrinth of life's difficulties. It means that we are not only in a world of reason but in a world of right, not only in a rational order but also in a spiritual order. We are not only in a safe universe, but we are in the hands of eternal love.

We learn to state our hypothesis as an affirmation, and it becomes a firm foundation on which to construct our lives. Faith becomes an inspiring motive which gives us a new world, lifting life to a higher level and endowing us with peace of heart. When we make the affirmation and live out our faith, we discover that we have not built on sand, and when the storm comes the foundation is unshaken.

> Couldst thou love Me when creeds are
> breaking,
> Old landmarks shaking
> With wind and sea,
> Couldst thou restrain the earth from
> quaking,
> And rest thy heart in Me?

We find in experience that we can. Jesus, the Master of the spiritual world, is the assurance to us of eternal things, the assurance of God. He is the way of access to the Father. We bow our heads and hearts to Him, and say with the disciples' tongue, "Lord, increase our faith."

Only faith in eternal values is a sufficient

motive for the high tasks, which through faith man has set himself. In the search for truth, we will fall wearied by the way if we cease to believe that there is abiding truth and that it can be built into the life of the world. In the age-long attempt to establish the City of God, we will give up in despair if we cease to believe in the worth and supremacy of the soul. Democracy itself stands or falls with this faith. It cannot be attained nor kept by force, or skillful economics, or prudent legislation. There can be no lasting peace which is not built on justice, and no permanent social state which is not founded on righteousness. The highest social interests of man can only be safeguarded by the glowing faith that spiritual interests are paramount. In faith we move to realize the visions of human brotherhood which have visited the high heart of man, when the wilderness of our modern life will blossom as the rose. In faith we take possession of the new world.

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