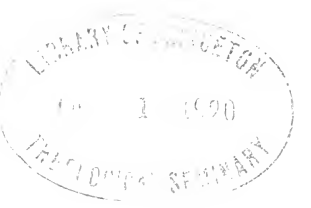
PUBLIC OPINION AND THEOLOGY

FRANCIS JOHN McCONNELL



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Public Opinion and Theology

BY
FRANCIS JOHN McCONNELL
Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church

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TO PRESIDENT CHARLES SUMNER NASH

WISE ADVOCATE OF THE UNION OF THE CHURCHES; HIMSELF A TYPE OF THE MIND AND SPIRIT WHICH WILL MAKE UNION POSSIBLE

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PART I

SOME REAL GAINS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

How can we adjust the claims of Christianity to be an absolutely binding religious system to a day which lays increasing stress upon the popular will as the only source of authority in society? Dogmatists of opposed types are ready with an answer. One declares that the problem is really no problem at all since the voice of the people is the voice of God. The dogmatist of the other camp oracularly replies that the sovereignty of the kingdom of God has right of way over all popular decrees whatsoever.

The dictum that the voice of the people is the voice of God does not help us much. It is very difficult to prevail upon the radical expounders of popular sovereignty to tell us what they mean by the voice of the people. A swarm of questions arise to our lips as this dictum is urged upon us. Who are the people? Is the term to be made all-inclusive? How are we to justify popular

aberrations and excesses with the claim of divinity for a popular utterance? When the champion of divine sovereignty insists upon the absolute sway of the God of Christianity we are beset by a no smaller swarm of questions than before. We all know that the idea of God is influenced and modified and even definitely shaped by the peculiarities of the times in which men live. Plainly, we cannot get far as long as we give heed to the dogmatists alone.

Suppose we begin by looking at some ways in which popular thinking does unquestionably modify the religious conceptions of men. For the sake of at least getting a start we will think of society in its broadest terms as consisting of a mass of persons of enough like-mindedness to live together fairly well as one of the major groups like a commonwealth or a nation, or even as a larger group that we have in mind when we speak of the civilized world or of Christendom as a whole. How does the spirit of such a group affect progress in thinking about God?

The most definite manner in which a social group might bring its influence to bear

upon religious thinking would be in the enactment of law. Law-making is perhaps the most definite and concrete form of social activity. Let us imagine ourselves dealing with a community in which the passage of laws marks definite achievement of the popular will, the laws not being the decrees of an autocrat nor the edicts of an oligarchy or a bureaucracy. In such a community the passage of laws would affect men's ideas of religion both directly and indirectly. Suppose that the practice of the suttee, or the burning of the widow at the funeral of the husband, had been abolished by vote of the Indian peoples themselves, then the enactment of the law would have had a double significance. It would have marked the stage in Indian thinking at which the majority of the people had become convinced of the wrong of the suttee and had deliberately determined to put it away. The observance of the law, too, would have meant that a horrible rite which could have caused only the deadening of the sensibilities of the people was to be a common spectacle no longer. Henceforward religious thinking would move in a more

human and humane atmosphere from the very fact that one abomination had ceased to be. So with popular legislation prohibiting polygamy, or the sale of harmful liquor or drugs. By this powerful exercise of the popular will in lawmaking all thought in the community is directly or indirectly affected, religious thought as well as any other kind. Say as much as we please about the force of abstract thinking, we know that all thinking is colored by the concrete images which actually meet our eyes. The simple consideration that, by the progressive enactment of legislation involving more and more the main ethical principles, we do not have to look upon so many horrible spectacles as we once did has meaning for our religious thinking.

We mention this phase of the significance of legislation for religion because in these days of separation of church and state, when few laws directly bearing on religion are passed, we are apt to ignore the indirect effect of many laws. A law is a deed of the people and a rule by which the people act. The law which says nothing about religion may by the type of social ac-

tivity which it registers and fosters do immeasurable good for religion.

A second channel through which popular opinion influences theological discussions is the creation of a demand for certain types of ideas or for certain modes of expression of ideas. One who has any large experience of churches knows that religious thinkers do inevitably to a greater or less degree adjust themselves to the demands of congregations. The influence of a congregation itself upon preaching never has been adequately expounded. We all know, however, that be the prophet of God ever so devoted, and his message ever so original, he must get his truth into statements that fit in with the modes of thought of the people to whom he makes his appeal. Now, anything that shapes those modes of thought will in the end have its influence on the utterance of the prophet. It would be almost impossible to get a hearing in religious circles to-day for the type of religious utterance of a thousand years ago, or even of a hundred years ago. If a social group, for example, has heard enough of scientific teaching to be under the sway of complete emphasis on

what we call natural law, it will be very unlikely that a teacher who lays stress on miracle will attract much attention. If the times through which particular groups are passing are predominantly tragic, theology inevitably will take on a somber hue. It would have been manifestly absurd to expect much light play of fancy or much leisurely speculation from theologians writing just at the close of the Thirty Years' War, or from the Pilgrim Fathers struggling with the bleakness of a New England winter. To be sure, the efficacy of a prophet's teaching cannot be judged by the size of his audiences. But before the prophet can affect the life of any time he must speak the language of that time; and the language of a time may be molded by forces over which the prophet does not have the least control. The teacher finds himself inescapably noting what his hearers listen to, and he frames his message more and more with the aim of compelling their attention, just as the author of the religious book has to consider what the publisher will publish and the buyer will buy.

This is not to suggest anything unworthy

in the province of religious teaching. We are certainly not trying to belittle the individual. But social cohesiveness makes the power of the individual possible, and the social constitution gives the individual his chance. Those who understand their own times most deeply are very likely those who will influence the remoter times most profoundly. In fact, that vague and almost mystic something which we call the spirit of an age—produced as it is by the utterances of hundreds of preachers or by the play of myriads of physical and spiritual forces upon the masses, causing the multitudes to half-think or half-feel the same thing at the same time—never comes to its full force until a leader incarnates the spirit in his own life and speech. Some theological utterances are achievements of a whole age or period in the world's life.

The situation here is somewhat parallel to that in the field of physical discovery. We would not seek to minimize the historic significance of Christopher Columbus for boldness both of thought and deed. His work stands alone forever. But every year's historical study makes it increasingly

apparent that the discovery of America was the exploit of the age in which Columbus lived. Enough men were thinking about the road to the East by way of the West to beget an atmosphere of expectancy; enough support could be found from men who believed the enterprise at least worthy of a trial; enough of a spirit of adventure was abroad in western Europe to make sure of response to a call for explorers. Moreover, western Europe flatly demanded, and demanded with growing vehemence, that every possibility of finding a route to the East be exhausted.

So in the history of thinking about God it may almost be said that some periods in the world's life have peremptorily demanded that religious leaders find a larger conception of God. As an illustration consider the extent to which the doctrine of God has been adjusted to the evolutionary thinking of the last fifty years. If we hark back to the idea of God's method of creation which obtained before Darwin published the Origin of Species, we see a conception totally at variance with the idea of Christian thinkers to-day. There can be no question

that the God of Christianity has been with measurable success fitted into the evolutionary theories of our time, or, rather, the evolutionary theories have been adjusted to the Christian conception of God. This result has been achieved not by the superhuman efforts of this or that philosopher but by the determination of the general thinking of the last fifty years to have it so. To be sure, no important question affecting any moral element in our conception of God has been before us. The problem has been as to our view of the divine method. After what we call the "Christian consciousness" became convinced that no injury could be done the New Testament teaching of the love and holiness of God by the scientists' insistence upon the evolutionary method in creation, the popular demand for the interpretation of the divine activity in evolutionary terms became irresistible. There is a sense in which the quality and the supply of theological speculation are determined by the popular demand.

To say this in other language, we may reflect for a moment that there are styles in theological formulas as well as in houses or

garments. Who sets the style of house of to-day, or of hats or coats of the present season? Somebody, somewhere, gives the initial impulse, but a style does not become a style until the public sets its approval upon and adopts the fashion. Similarly, ideas become the rage, as we may say, in the realm of philosophic and religious discussion. In dealing with a cut of garment people soon find that there are boundaries set in the nature of things within which the style must move. It would not do for the current fashion to call for too thin a coat in the winter. This only means, however, that there are limits of good sense within which the public mind will confine itself. It becomes incumbent on anyone discussing our theme to ask if there are limitations within which public thinking must remain as it considers the deeper problems of life and destiny. This problem will be the theme of the second part of this essay.

We have been treating of the spheres in which public opinion shapes thought by making a definite demand for this or that type of conception. There are other and less direct roads along which popular

opinion presses upon theology, the influences being all the more effective from the fact that their presence and activity are often unsuspected. We speak of types of social atmosphere in which some beliefs come to birth and grow with prodigious vitality while other beliefs die out. We have in mind the set of circumstances in which we cannot say that public opinion definitely calls for one type of belief as over against another, but in which, nevertheless, the public opinion is favorable to the development of ideas which seem to spring naturally and spontaneously out of the social soil of the time.

Suppose we are dealing with a cycle in a nation's existence when the national tendencies are strongly bent toward imperialism. It would be too much to say that in such an era there is any popular demand for an embodiment of the doctrine of the church in imperialistic terms. Nobody is asking that preachers or teachers phrase the preaching of the church in any such fashion as to lend force to the claim that the church is to adopt the terminology or the methods of political or military imperialism.

Yet as a matter of almost obvious historic truth imperialism in the church is very apt to follow imperialism in commercial or political development. We repeat that this is all the more probable because the tendency is so unconscious on the part of ecclesiastical leaders. Many of the most devoted churchmen may not be able to detect this parallelism between the national and the ecclesiastical movement even after it has been pointed out. It might be noted, in passing, that this is the explanation of the intense resentment of some ecclesiastics when a keen-sighted prophet puts his finger on a dangerous tendency in the activity of an imperialistically minded group of church leaders. Those who are rebuked because of their subserviency to politics and finance are not conscious of their subserviency. They have breathed the social atmosphere of their era as unconsciously as they have breathed the physical air.

Ideas are tied to one another by a bond of inherent kinship. If one idea dominates a given movement, a brood of similar and yet secondary ideas sweep up with it into power. We cannot go so far as the Hege-

lians and speak of history as unfolding with inevitable logic. It would be sheer dullness of sight, however, to fail to recognize that a regnant idea makes a path and a place for the ideas to which it is akin. A strong tendency toward a monarchical form of government carries with it almost irresistibly a notion of ecclesiastical rigidity which may become quite powerful. The propagandists for monarchy may protest that they have no interest in church questions whatsoever. But the fact is that strict monarchy and strict priestly control keep step with one another in a comfortable touch-of-elbow. If we pull one idea up into prominence in the world's thinking, we, by the same effort, drag into importance all other ideas or half-ideas with which the controlling notion is interlaced. Or, to change the figure, if we select one idea for supreme honor, that idea's boon companions—some of them poor relations, but relations nevertheless—clamor successfully for a share of the applause.

We may go farther and say that public opinion shows its power not only over the ideas for which it definitely calls and which

it nourishes by making a social soil and climate friendly to them, but also by tolerance toward conceptions of another sort. Toleration is one of the mighty achievements of the public mind, limited and inadequate as toleration may be. A cynic might avow that toleration is, like justice, everybody's second choice; that every man would prefer to have his own way made the way of every other man, but will consent to the other man's following his own way for the sake of like liberty himself. Cynicism apart, however, the positive insistence upon toleration means everything. There are some doctrines toward which the ordinary man probably would take a critical or a hostile attitude if he were compelled to express an opinion concerning them when he first learns of them. But public opinion has back of it now a tradition of toleration in religion: the average man knows that he must be acquiescent—except that he may speak his mind. The very fact that he cannot interfere with the belief by repressive act gives the belief its chance. Then, if the belief seems to be attractive to any considerable number of people, the common man

who in himself reflects the common sentiment looks upon the belief as having a title to respectable standing before the world, whether he agrees with it or not.

Look for a moment at the spread of theories of mental control of matter in this country in the last half century. There can hardly have been any very widespread demand in popular thinking for such theories as those of present-day healing by mental force, etc., though it may be that to-day's emphasis on the omnipotence of mind is inevitable as a reaction from the crude materialism of the later '60s and early '70s. Surely the raw advocacy of materialism of the Tyndall type ought to call for a swing toward idealistic opposition. But the popular thinking has not taken much account either of extreme materialists or of extreme idealists. A system which at first statement appears to be directly opposed to the ordinary man's common-sense view of things was disseminated in a land of tolerance until it had won a goodly number of devoted adherents and had accumulated to its credit a measurable degree of success in establishing its claims as to the superiority of mind over matter.

In a less tolerant age the system could hardly have got a start. So that, while we cannot say such theories have the direct sanction of the popular opinion of our time, we must admit that they thrive upon a popular acquiescence which, while possibly not approving the doctrines, would resent any attempt at persecution or at throwing them out of court. The general popular will is in all such matters the determining element.

Judging by the utterances of the more acute historical observers of the processes of political government, it is permissible even to ask if every government which has ever existed—even the Oriental despotism—has not rested at last analysis upon the consent of the governed. Probably the most iron-willed autocrat ruling over the most submissive subjects has known that there has been a limit to his despotism beyond which he must not pass. As people become more enlightened that limit to oppression is more quickly reached, and even the despotism itself is sooner or later done away. This is why agitators in all ages have so often proclaimed to the masses of the people that they are responsible for their own hardships.

Such agitators always will have it that acquiescence is really a passive vote for the thing in which the public mind acquiesces—though this is hardly just in theology. If our illustrations suggest that in toleration public sentiment gives speculations of dubious worth their golden opportunity, the reply must be forthcoming that toleration means the keeping open of the fair field for the play of the survival of the fittest. Public opinion keeps open this field at least to a degree that allows what the soldiers called some "nice fighting" always to be going on.

It is the object of this essay frankly to recognize the scope of popular authority in forging religious thinking. There is no evading the influence of public opinion over our ideas of the kingdom of God. Now, the recognition of the existence of a force is the first step toward keeping that force under proper control. We have not thought it necessary to say much about the obvious but most important fact that the sentiment of our own time lays more and more stress upon the right of the people themselves to increasing self-government. Politically, the battle has been fought through—at least in Occi-

dental civilization—so that the people can politically control themselves. And a more consequential warfare than that for political freedom is being fought out before our very eyes: the people are insisting upon economic freedom. In every stage of society those who hold the keys of economic power have stupendous control over the exercise of every other kind of power. The multitudes themselves are realizing this more and more. Hence the insistence upon broadening the base of control in modern industry.

All this progressive conquest of independence means a sturdier approach to the problems of theology. There are some sound demands on the part of popular thinking to which the defenders of divine sovereignty will, if they are wise, give heed. In the advance toward larger freedom the hosts of mankind have made discoveries as to the worth of human life itself, and as to the proper attitudes toward human life in all its phases, which must indubitably have the most powerful bearing on theological thinking. We wish to indicate the value of some of these solider gains for religious theory. After having done this it will be in order

for us to indicate some of the limits which popular authority will have to observe in its attitude toward the problems of divine sovereignty. Or we may be allowed in these earlier chapters to think of those weightier moral and spiritual ideals for which popular authority can be expected to give its sanction in the long run, leaving to the later chapters a discussion of the factors which must protect these same ideals from those superficialities and excesses which sometimes mark the action of popular opinion in the short run—if the expression is permissible. Believing as we do that in the long run public opinion will settle practically everything in theology, we may, nevertheless, find that in the short run public opinion at times is to be strenuously resisted. But this is anticipating.

CHAPTER II

THE DIVINE RESPONSIBILITY

In the light of the truths discovered as men have moved toward nobler freedom what can popular authority rightly demand of a sovereign God? The theologians have from the beginning proclaimed the power of God. What limitations can we insist upon placing upon this power to make the idea of a sovereign God acceptable to present-day thought?

The inescapable requisite is that in working out our theories of God we represent him in terms of moral responsibility. If a ruler is to have power, he must exercise that power under a sense of responsibility. Now, the old doctrines of arbitrary sovereignty for God are out of the question. Social criticism is here entirely just: if God is to claim the loving self-surrender of men's wills, he can base his claims only on the ground that his mighty powers are used under a bond of responsibility.

We can well enough understand how the doctrine of an arbitrary divine sovereignty got its start. There have been times when beneficial social consequences followed the preaching of a doctrine of the most arbitrary sovereignty. In a social system falling to pieces through ruthless and lawless anarchy it might be the duty of the prophet of God to call for absolute obedience to an autocratic God just for the sake of getting things into order. But after things have come into order we quickly resent the idea of an arbitrary control over us, even if that control is exercised from the throne of the universe. Men will not be good for long because any sort of divine Being autocratically commands them to be good. The natural and fitting answer to such an edict from a ruler is the question, How good are you? Looking back over the history of the church, it is not, indeed, difficult to see how the doctrine of an arbitrary divine sovereignty got a start, but it is not easy to see how the learned doctors ever found a justification for their doctrine in the Scripture, for the Scriptures from the beginning to the end represent God as labor-

ing under a consciousness of responsibility. Even if we follow the biblical students who insist that in the earliest times Yahweh was nothing but Israel's tribal God, and chiefly a God of battles at that, we must remember that we cannot dismiss a fighting God until we know what he is fighting for. From the earliest scriptural writers comes the teaching that God was fighting for Israel, and for the moral aims toward which Israel so soon began to advance. From this beginning on through the era of the prophets who unerringly discerned the moral might of a God who was doing his utmost to discharge his moral obligations toward his people, we have very little suggestion of anything capricious or self-willed in the exercise of divine power. Even the passages which speak of Israel's God as jealous connect the jealousy with a passion for the welfare of men. We might obey an arbitrary divine sovereignty just as the best road out of a bad plight. We might conceivably make terms with an arbitrary universe, for the sake of getting on more comfortably, but we could never hope to win the approval of a moral community by any such

acquiescence. The only correct moral attitude before such despotism is the attitude of protest. If we must have a merely arbitrary divinity, then let us recognize at the outset that any man holding power and using it under a consciousness of moral responsibility is superior to an arbitrary God. The modern popular doctrine is, and this doctrine is among the soundest moral findings of the race, that the possession of power of any sort over one's fellows puts the possessor of the power under heavy bonds. These bonds must be thought of as heavier for God than for any other ruler with power.

It is interesting to glance at some of the expedients by which men have tried to evade the problem of moral responsibility presented by God's sovereignty. It is not far from the mark to assume that popular speculation conceives of God in deistic terms. God made the world and started it running. Once made, it speeds along under its own momentum. The terrible catastrophes that occur as the world rolls on hardly were foreseen by the Creator. Of course the holder of the popular deistic view never puts it just this way. He speaks of

consequences as the inevitable working out of natural law, as if law went by itself. Now, there is no relief for the Ruler of the universe in any such looseness as this. If he made the world, he made the grooves in which it rolls along, and he made all the lives that get caught and crushed. The fields of northern France are this day sown with unexploded grenades and shells and bombs. Suppose a child fifty years from now trips over a loaded shell in such fashion as to explode the shell and blow his own body to pieces, who is to blame? The nation who fifty years before caused the war that fired the shell is to blame. Merely removing the agent in time from the consequences of his deed does not touch the question of moral responsibility. There is, indeed, a rough sort of relief for the imagination in deistic thinking or half-thinking; but deism, if anything, makes the problem of God's responsibility worse, for it suggests an unwillingness on the part of the Creator to keep close to the exploding consequences of his own deed.

In more recent days there has been an obvious trend in public thinking away from

a crude deism to an emphasis on divine immanence. In commoner phrasings this doctrine has sought to meet the problems of the divine responsibility by putting God immediately into all things. Things must be at bottom good or he would not be in them. This is essentially an attitude of faith in the moral God of the New Testament, and as such is substantially Christian. When the believer, however, attempts to buttress his faith in the immanent God with argument he does not get far, for immanence brings the mysterious God very close to us. Practically, the doctrine of divine immanence is often used to help us look away from the dark facts. The holder of the view picks out the beautiful or beneficial aspects of the universe and says that God is in these. This is worse than nothing for steady thinking. The utmost that the doctrine of divine immanence can do is to deliver us from the terror of a self-running machine, and make us feel that we are immediately in contact with a God who is in all things. But the further question arises as to what he is in the things for.

The doctrine of immanence has a chronic

tendency to slide over into a doctrine of pantheism. Modern science has made us familiar with the notion of one great Energy moving in and through all. The vast doctrines of idealism of the middle of the nineteenth century made us acquainted with immense ideas of whose unfolding the universe is the manifestation. But whether the universe be the expression of Energy or the development of Idea, both the scientific and philosophic speculations are pantheistic if they leave no room for the play of the free spirit. With the free spirit ruled out the problem of responsibility is canceled altogether, for if God himself is not free, there is no reason for talking about his responsibility. If he is free and men are not, why should he have created a race of human puppets? On a pantheistic scheme what we think of as good and bad are alike products of the same force or the same idea. If we are dwellers in a pantheistic universe, the best we can do is to try to put up with it; but the impulses to put up or not to put up, the feelings of acquiescence or the feelings of protest, what seems to us to be sense, and what seems to be nonsense, all alike have the

same high or low origin. Curiously enough, the doctrine of pantheism has seemed to some to lend support to the modern emphasis on the value of men as masses or as members of an all-inclusive social organism. Here again the resort is to imagination rather than to thought. The divine spirit is conceived of as some vast nimbus or atmosphere inclosing all men alike: and this expansive spatial figure seems to be a help in thinking of the stirrings of the multitudes for whom men are hoping to find a door to worthier dignity. The doctrine that men are all alike the manifestations of an underlying force is rather a precarious support for emphasis on the worth of all mankind if the play of the free human spirit is done away with.

Some of a group of younger philosophers have recently avowed that the social heroes of the world need the type of courage which consists of willingness to face with open and steady eyes the facts of a desperate cosmic situation. They look out upon the universe and see no escape from the clutch of the awfully destructive forces which march smashing on. The universe began in star-

dust and will probably end in cinders. Man appears at one stage in the evolution to flutter through his little life and then to fade away. Philosophically, this may be outright materialism. It is materialism in the sense that the adherents of the theory declare that all talk of holding the universe responsible for anything is nonsense. It is not materialism, however, of the sort that lays stress on material motives in the human breast. Many who profess this view give themselves to the highest forms of social endeavor. They declare that the glory of man is just his power to gaze steadily at the universe in all its awfulness.

Bertrand Russell, for one, avows that there is a stark delight in looking out upon things just as they are. Mr. Russell himself is one of the most unselfish social leaders of our time: but if the universe is as bare as his speculations would have it, his delight in contemplation must be very stark indeed. In the universe itself there is no ray of help anywhere, according to these teachers, but men nevertheless must struggle on to free their creative impulses and to work under the law of un-

selfish social service. It is fairly difficult to make out just how such stalwarts combine their philosophy and their practice. They are altogether splendid in their devotion to the cause of human uplift. No trace of their theoretical despair seems to have worked out into practical result, for they perform a valued service in holding the torch of idealism on high. But they say so much about being willing to plunge forward into the dark that one cannot help suspecting that they would be bitterly disappointed if they found at the end that they were really in the light. In other words, one cannot restrain a suspicion that some of these later philosophers are bound at any cost to have a black universe. The universe is dark enough at the best without this gritty refusal to contemplate any grounds for larger hope. Moreover, we are convinced that the masses of mankind do not care to have their delight quite so stark. On the whole, if a cosmic view is to help mankind on and up, it must tend to cheerfulness.

It is curious to note too how unwilling some of these social philosophers are to judge the validity of a philosophic belief

by its social effects. Some of them seem to be very strenuous in their antipathy to anything philosophically or theologically pragmatic. Mr. Harold J. Laski, to take a single illustration, is one of the ablest of the younger group of social theorizers. He seems to be doing as much as anyone in our day to clear the ground for a new doctrine of authority in social groups which will make easier the progress toward more vital sovereignty. Yet anyone who has followed Mr. Laski's book reviews in the New Republic will recall how he combines with an open-mindedness toward theological constructions a quick hostility toward anything savoring of pragmatism in back-lying religious theory. For example, he once referred to John Henry Newman's Grammar of Assent as a charter not of faith but of skepticism. We have no reason to believe that Mr. Laski's foundation philosophy is as stark as Mr. Russell's. But these newer leaders do seem to rule out the social consequences of a philosophic theory as a test of the validity of the theory. We do not happen at present to be considering theological beliefs in the light of their formal logical

validity. We are instead considering the problem of a form of dynamics in popular thinking. And we must avow our conviction that a popular thought which tends more and more toward insistence upon responsibility in the use of power will not long acquiesce in the theory of an irresponsible universe.

Since William James came into prominence as a prophet of philosophy the tight self-sufficiency of an absolute pantheism has been somewhat broken up. There has been a fresh emphasis on pluralism especially as regards human souls—abundant stress on the value of the human life—some pluralists going so far as to teach that the individual lives have existed from all eternity. Attractive as this theory is in some of its phases, it does not aid us much in reflecting about divine responsibility. Life is hard enough as it is without brooding over ourselves as existences carrying over from some previous world and yet with the thread of self-continuous memory cut altogether. Moreover, the system sins against the popular demand for unity. It is a mistake to fancy that the demand for a universe, or a unified system,

is just the creature of the brains of absolutist philosophers. There is nothing more common in the commonest of common men than the impulse toward some basis of theoretical unity. The breaking up of the universe into practically self-existent and measurably independent selves who always have been what they are on their own account, and always will be the ultimate facts, will hardly suffice.

Somewhat akin to pluralism is the doctrine of the limited God. A group of writers like Mr. H. G. Wells solve the problem of the responsibility of God by making him not responsible. God is not infinite but finite. He is caught, like ourselves, in the meshes and tangles of things and is fighting his way out. Unity in the universe is not something given, but something to be won by conflict, and the invisible God is fighting on and up, calling upon us for the very real help which we can render him. The objections to this view come out of that passion for unity of which we have spoken above. At one stroke the universe is severed into two warring camps—the forces that are for God, and those that are against him. But what is

the plain on which they meet? Do they meet in space? Is space independent of either or both of them? What is space, the expression of a material or of personal reality? Of course it is dreadful in these days to raise any distinctly metaphysical questions, and the professional philosophers, as far as they can, keep away from metaphysics. But the common man has a childlike fondness for asking metaphysical questions, and his questions cannot be dismissed with gestures of impatience, for in some childlikeness there is much wisdom.

This doctrine of a limited God, however, is not so revolutionary as it seems. Christianity itself holds to a limited God, but the limitations are thought of as assumed by God himself. The view of Mr. Wells is significant and important as a reaction from the absolutism in theology which prevailed during the latter half of the nineteenth century. This emphasis was carried to such extremes that much theological exposition virtually proceeded on the assumption that omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience in the Deity are as important as holiness and love. Some theologians even

taught an absolutism so strict as to raise serious questions as to the possibility of the Infinite's coming into touch with the finite at all. Still, it will not do to make the obstacles against which God contends something given him from without. We must make provision for some sort of Unity if we are to have a universe.

There must be limitations for the Divine Force in the very fact of creation itself. If God is to act in one way, that means that he must not act in the ways contrary to that way. If the universe is to be consistent, God must adopt some courses to which he confines himself. If the universe is to be an expression of sanity at all, it must have some kind of coherence and consecutiveness. If a universe is to be of one sort, it cannot be of another sort—and it certainly cannot be of all the opposed sorts.

We must be careful, however, not to imagine that in holding to the limitation of God we have found an explanation of physical evil and pain. It does not require much imagination to picture a finite universe to whose workings God himself is limited that would be much less dreadful

than the present system. Take the single enigma of animal suffering, or the sufferings of men before they have come to anything like power to reflect upon their sufferings and adjust themselves to them. Granting all that the philosophers have said about the usefulness of pain, the fact seems to be that there is more pain than we have any need for. We stand here in the presence of an insoluble mystery. All that we can say is that we do not have the data for even a good guess. Our solutions are much more satisfactory when we are dealing with the pains of other people than with our own. All the philosophizing since the beginning has been futile so far as any adequate explanation of pain is concerned. Our philosophizings may help to distract our minds for the instant from the ache of pain, but at the last the attempted explanations of the physical distress of the world must be looked upon as additions to the distress itself. It is well for us to remember that we have this problem on any theory. It cannot be explained away.

Now, popular thinking does not take it as too great a hardship when we cannot explain everything. Great nations at time of crisis

will elect leaders to rulership, delegating them authority over possessions and lives without asking at the outset for explanations as to why policies are carried through by one method rather than by another. A day of reckoning must, of course, dawn for all such rulers, but the people plod forward toward that day of reckoning in confidence that trusted rulers can give satisfactory explanation of the governmental decisions when the proper moment arrives for full publicity. So it is in the relations of the mass of believers to the ruler over the universe. Only the hardiest intelligences would fancy that they are now in a position to understand the reasons for the processes of the world even if the reasons were to be put into explanatory statement before them. The attitude of the typical Christian is that of honestly recognizing the terrible features of the present order, and yet of waiting for explanation in confidence that the holder of power is using that power under a sense of responsibility. The true believer may be the first to admit that the Ruler of the universe has not told us all, or has even told us much. But he believes that we know enough

to have confidence as we wait for the fuller revealings. Meanwhile he recognizes the total inadequacy of any and all explanations of the hard features of the cosmic order in which men live.

The most serious limitation which we can imagine a responsible ruler as taking upon himself is the limitation implied in human freedom. The only ground on which to justify the creation of free human lives is a final lofty moral outcome in such lives themselves. Probably most of us would admit that a racial organism of disciplined free wills, working together in the pursuit of the good and true and beautiful, would be an end worth the utmost effort of any divine being. No amount of physical cost would be too great to pay for such an outcome. The expounders of the doctrine of the Christian God have to make clear to mankind that we must think of God as striving toward such an outcome under a heavy weight of responsibility if we are to fit the doctrine to the demands of modern times. We pass to consider some forms in which this emphasis on the responsibility of God is likely to make its demands.

CHAPTER III

RESPONSIBLE TO WHOM?

We have said that popular opinion will never be long satisfied with the idea of an irresponsible God. But to whom is God responsible? We repeat that we are searching for an ideal of the Divine which will measurably meet the long-run popular demand. It is no conclusive argument against our ideal to protest that the facts as we see them in actual experience do not bear out the conception of God which we are erecting as an ideal. We already have seen that men, even in masses, are willing to suspend judgment on the policies of a ruler if they can trust that ruler, even though the facts at a given date might not seem to lend themselves to a favorable verdict. In the preceding chapter we have tried to show that there is absolutely no understanding the hard details of the present order on the basis of any interpretative data which we now have. Men hold persistently, however, to

their trust that the present order is not all. And in the face of a cruel system they build for themselves an ideal of God which they feel will one day be justified by the light of full knowledge.

First of all, it is impossible to see how we can escape from the conclusion that God is responsible to the men whom he has created. This responsibility arises out of the fact that in the nature of the case men cannot be consulted about their being created before they are created. No one of us is asked as to whether he is willing to come into existence, or whether he is willing to live in a world like ours. Life may, in itself, be the sweetest of boons, but it is conferred upon us without our asking. Moreover, though men cling desperately to life, there is a good deal of question as to how much of a boon it actually is with the majority of men upon the face of the earth at a given moment. Probably if we were to learn the truth as to what is in the consciousness of the vast majority of men on earth at any instant, we would discover that the predominant element is physical hunger. We must repeat that the production of a race of men freely

choosing the pursuit of the good, the true and the beautiful, and making the most of themselves in that pursuit, is an aim that would justify the creation of such a race. We need have no illusions, however, as to the restrictions upon the freedom in which the actual man finds himself. None of us had any voice on some most important questions as to his own lot in life. We had no choice in choosing the place or the time of our birth or the racial or material circumstances into which we were to come. So far as the present order is concerned we are all drafted into that order. This puts upon the Drafter a responsibility which, from the human point of view, is little short of staggering. We must never lose sight of the creature's responsibility to the Creator. It would be just as mistaken to lose sight of the Creator's responsibility to the creature.

The obligations of creatorship are so enormous that we can hardly find any analogy which will give us even a hint of their weight and expense. It is a commonplace that a heavy responsibility rests upon a military leader ordering men to their death. We can well believe the conscientious gen-

eral when he declares that he would gladly exchange places with the humblest private in the ranks, to be ordered to certain destruction by the enemy's machine guns, rather than bear the heaviness of the realization that his mistake of information or judgment may cause the futile loss of hundreds and thousands of young lives. The responsibility of ordering men to die, however, is not a feather's weight compared to the responsibility of ordering men to live. The only possible justification for bringing men into existence must be the Creator's resolution and power to help them to the utmost in the exercise of their freedom without too much limiting that freedom itself. And modern society is insisting more and more that freedom shall not be construed with the old-time meaning of absence of hindrance or constraint. We used to hear that freedom means the removal of the obstacle in the path of the free man. Surely, freedom has this meaning; but we cannot rest with so small a content. The free man is he who has most fully realized the possibilities within himself. If he is to realize these possibilities freely, he must be persuaded freely

to realize them, and must find positive help at hand in this quest of the good.

Now, just to see how appallingly complex is this theme of the responsibility of the divine for the human let us look at some of the boundaries within which the divine help must confine itself. There must be no hint of compelling men to love the good, the true, and the beautiful. In the crude sense, of course, this would be out of the question. But it might be possible for the Creator so to play upon the creatures as by a process of subtle, inner determinism to make them automatically love the good without their realizing that they had lost their freedom. The modern physiological psychologist would have us believe that inner states are the accompaniment of outer physical conditions. Without subscribing at all to a materialistic creed we may well admit that improvement in one's nervous system, for example, leads to better and fuller mental and moral health. It is theoretically admissible that the force which is back of all things might so effectively play upon the human organism as to make the organism the accompaniment of better and fuller

ideas. In short, if we take seriously some modern psychologists, we may possibly fancy that by a process of physical training and evolution we may produce a race of beings so physically sound that their ideas may all be sound also. If we had such a race, the individuals might be very delightful to contemplate, but they would not be free beings in the sense that we have in mind when we speak of a free moral creature as justifying all the cost of creation. We may all well pray that we may learn more and more to make use of conditions of physical and nervous health for moral and spiritual well-being; but even so, we must insist that it requires the regal power of a free person to make the most of such soundness of health.

If we are to have a race of free individuals, we must insist upon the responsibility of the Creator so to deal with them as not to leave them less because of his dealing with them, but, rather, to make them more and better through his touch upon them. On the one hand we must have divine help for the human, and on the other hand that help must not be so lavish as to pauperize the

human. It requires but little familiarity with conventional Christian prayer to recognize how completely the direct answer to much of such prayer would do away with any free self-realization on the part of the petitioner. It is a commonplace of current social theory that men must by some real effort earn what they get. Any theory of prayer which would do away with the need of the full activity of the will of the free person would soon nullify freedom conceived of as positive and abundant life. The most serious objection to the notion of God as an amiable and well-wishing Lover of men is that such good-natured amiability probably would develop a race of human weaklings. The development of a race of free men must be a delicate task for the Creator. It implies a balance between giving and withholding before which the mind sinks back exhausted.

To put it all in other terms, a God truly set upon doing the most for free men must needs have profound respect for the choices of those free men. In an earlier age of theology religious freedom was presented about thus: the Almighty was represented

as saying to men: "Here is the way of life. You can walk in it or not, just as you please, but if you don't walk in it you will be damned outright." There is something refreshingly bracing in this view, but it is a meager and inadequate statement of human freedom. It usually meant that God was to have his own way anyhow and that men could either follow his plan willingly or be dragged along, even their damnation showing forth the glory of God. The essential problem of freedom, however, may begin after a man has chosen to walk in the path of life. The choices in that way are not always between higher and lower. They may be on the same plane, and yet lead to a wide difference in final outcome. Whatever the choices, they must not be compelled and they must be respected. We sometimes hear men exhorted to find God's way and follow that. It might be nearer the truth to say that in some choices God has no way. He waits for men to choose and then adjusts himself to the outcome. With all our stress on the primacy of God's will we must not so emphasize that primacy as to make the will of man of none effect. The will of man

must in some degree count as an active and effective agent in the system of things. If it be urged against all this that freedom might damage the universe, the reply is that such risk is part of the responsibility which a Creator must assume in making free men. If we are to believe in a free God who out of his own free and yet responsible freedom has created free men, we must look upon that God as respecting the free choices of men, and yet as working through the outcome of those free choices to justify his creation in the end.

If the Almighty were dealing with one single human soul, the task would be difficult enough, but the entire question of freedom becomes vastly more complicated when we remember that the Creator is the author of the lives of millions upon millions. The usual definition of freedom has turned round the idea that the individual is free as long as his liberty does not interfere with the liberty of some one else. Just as the definition of liberty as freedom from external constraint has been found inadequate, so we must also point out the inadequacy of the definition of freedom as the liberty to de-

velop oneself within the limits set by the good of others. Underneath this definition is the old implication of individuals as set in almost artificial separateness one from another, the individual being a unit on his own account who presumably could continue to exist if there were no other individuals in existence besides himself. The conception of freedom has to be so modified as to make the interrelations of men a positive power in bringing the individuals to their own largest development. Under the influence of the older idea debaters about freedom seemed to think that the individual was consciously to take his own development as an end in itself, within the limits set by the development of other individuals. There is about this idea something almost suggestive of a sort of competition in free self-realization in the exercise of freedom. A more satisfactory notion seems to be that the individual is freely to throw himself into the life of the whole body of mankind, and that the actions and reactions back and forth are to carry the progress of the individual to the highest possible pitch.

We need a new mode of saying that the

Creator is responsible to the whole organism of mankind which he has created. We are well aware that a logical fallacy lies in wait for the upholder of the doctrine that society as such is an organism in itself. The only substances in society are the individuals. The only seat of consciousness in the body of the race is the consciousness in the minds of the individuals. But, on the other hand, these individual consciousnesses come to fullest development only in the play and interplay of reciprocal impact upon one another. Again, the various minds in interaction develop states of inner consciousness to which they might never arrive as isolated units. Once more, the more distinctive a consciousness becomes in itself the more valuable it seems to be for the entire life of mankind; so that the thought of society as an organism is more than a mere figure of speech. Society is not an organism in that it, of itself, is a distinct spiritual entity with organic members to correspond, but it is an organism in that individuals come to their fullest life only as they work together so closely that each ceases to think of himself. The man who seeks his own freedom alone

loses it. And the man who freely throws himself open to the majestic currents of human life finds his freedom. Paradoxical as it may sound, the mind which is most deeply submerged in the currents of the broader human life becomes in a profound sense the most original mind.

God is responsible, then, for the good of the whole. But the responsibility must not be interpreted as satisfying itself merely in adjusting a host of individuals to one another, or in keeping them out of one another's way. Mark Twain used to satirize Christianity by a story of the prayers of a cabinful of Christians in a sailing ship crossing an ocean against the trade winds. The humorist declared that these voyaging Christians would pray for fair winds for themselves at a season when an answer to their prayer would mean head winds to ninety-nine of every hundred of the sailors on the sea. The jest was thought to hit off most happily a prevalent Christian mood; and the humorist implied at least that God, if there is a God at all, must give his attention to the ninety-nine per cent of the sailors on life's sea without regard even to the ut-

most fervency of the one per cent who might wish the trade winds reversed. The criticism does have its measure of pertinence. The obligation of a rational Creator is to the entire social organism which he has brought into existence. But the criticism rests upon the fundamental fallacy of a miscellaneous lot of separate ships going their own ways over a sea of life. The more adequate figure of speech would be of a fleet under a unified command, or of an ocean leviathan sailing indeed a terrible sea, with the fate of each of the sailors bound up in the welfare of all the others, and with the ultimate arrival at port dependent upon the thoroughness with which the sailors could act together in obedience to one captain. From this point of view the divine responsibility is more than that of a Cosmic Traffic Policeman keeping lives from bumping one another out of their courses. It is, rather, that of placing each life where it will count for the most for the good of the whole, and of so making the whole bear upon the individual that the tides of life from all can help each on to his largest and best self.

Furthermore and finally, we must avow

God's responsibilities to himself. If we may be allowed to speak in very anthropomorphic fashion, we may say that God must be true to the ideals of his own life. It is to be assumed that a Rational Being of whose purpose the world is the utterance must have determined upon one cosmic system rather than upon another among many because that system is best, everything considered. If the laws of nature, for example, are the rules according to which the divine will works, it would be absurd to expect those rules to be lightly set aside. What we could expect would be that free men, proving more and more responsible in the use of their freedom, could be granted larger and larger use of and control over the laws. Human freedom must not be so construed as to make possible easy variation from the fundamental regularities on which a universe must depend. If we are to have a universe at all—that is to say, one system turning round a central ideal or plan—the condition of the existence of such a universe must be some sort of consistency in its operations. Granting that the welfare of a single human soul is of more moral conse-

quence than all the physical forces in the universe looked at merely as physical forces, we must nevertheless insist that the problem takes on a different color when these forces are regarded as the expression of thought and plan. Whatever laws express the deepest wisdom of the Almighty must be regarded as too important to be easily waived.

The Almighty is responsible for the fulfillment of his own aims. It is permissible in the proper context to speak of the Almighty as if he had ventured on a tremendous experiment in the creation of free men. We do not pretend to any satisfactory metaphysical understanding here, but we must be careful not to yield too much to the idea of a God who would plunge into an unwarranted hazard. A physical universe itself which would at last mirror the wisdom of the Creator would be an end worth while. A race of free human beings finally serving the good, the true, and the beautiful of their own free choice would be still more worth while; in fact, such an end would of itself be beyond all others glorious. But before a responsible God can venture upon the creation of a free race he must have within him-

self enough resources, not of compulsion but of spiritual persuasion, to be sure that he can win the masses of mankind to his own ideal. We have not the slightest desire to enter into any such vexed realms of debate as that concerning the eternal loss of souls. But if the proportion of such loss in the universe is to be manifestly too great, or if there is to be any loss before the resources of divine persuasiveness have been exhausted, such loss would argue irresponsibility in the Creator.

The theologian would say that the Creator is responsible to the demands not of his own ideal but of his own nature. Without here entering into theological discussion as to the nature of Christ we may say that popular thought seems more and more to be tending to the conviction that God is like unto Christ. We may say, then, that a responsible God must be responsible to the Christ in himself. We say of a man that he must be responsible to the truest and best in himself. While it is hardly permissible to say that there is any better or best in God, we may say that we believe that the revelation of the Christ is the revelation of the

final truth of God, and that popular thought of the divine responsibility is not likely to stop short of the doctrine that our belief in God rests upon our confidence that he acts out of responsibility to the Christliness of his own nature. We shall speak of this more at length in a later chapter.

CHAPTER IV

GOD AND MAN AND THE DAILY TASK

A FURTHER note in modern popular thinking is that the God of the universe is a God of work. He is not conceived of as an idler enjoying the activities of the beings whom he has created. This requires no comment. On the other hand, he must not perform so much of the world's work himself as to leave no scope for the creative activities of free men. There must be a veritable partnership in labor between men and God, if men are to make the best use of the freedom which has been bestowed upon them.

This question as to the importance of labor for the development of the free spirit brings us at once to the relation of men to physical nature. The largest part of the effort of the human race is to win a subsistence from the earth. As long as this is true the activities of men as they work upon and

with nature should be the most consequential of any for training in freedom and for the culture of the spiritual interests. The eight or ten or twelve hours of work each day in earning a livelihood should be the chief means of grace by which the spiritual qualities are developed, and by which all religious beliefs are put to the test as to their deepest vitality and worth. If half, or more, of a man's waking hours are to be devoted to the struggle for daily bread, a first duty of Christianity is to make the conditions of that struggle such that the toiler can get at least half his opportunity for free spiritual life there.

The first problem of man in dealing with nature is just to win from nature a large enough supply of material goods for his adequate maintenance. Freedom means, at the outset, the conquest of the earth to such an extent that physical factors cease to be a crushing burden. The primary need of man is enough to eat and enough to wear and enough heat to generate energy for his comfort and for his work. It is sometimes charged against masses of men that they are too absorbingly interested in the production

of material goods. If men pursue earthly goods as an end in themselves, they are to be condemned. But there hardly can be any worthier human aim than that of increasing the supply of physical goods which can be used as instruments for releasing the higher faculties of the mind and heart. Let us say all we please about materialism, we must not forget that any social system will sooner or later be judged by its success in bringing forth larger and larger amounts of physical goods.

The present writer believes that the capitalistic system as we see it will in the next generation or two be very seriously modified, but the modification will have for its aim not the decrease of the supplies of capital in the world, but the increase of those supplies. There is only too good reason to believe that capitalism's methods of production are unnecessarily wasteful. The arguments for an increasing control of industry by the workers themselves will be based on the promise of an enlarged effectiveness of the industrial system. If the motive of service for the common good can be made so potent that that motive

will cause two blades of grass to grow where one now grows under the capitalistic system, or two steel rails to be shaped where one is now turned out, the workaday success of the nobler motive will be by no means the least argument in its justification.

Men simply must have the material things. And the ideal considerations in industry must at last come to the test of their practical efficiency. If a nation should find itself so threatened by the aggressions of warlike neighbors that only a monarchical form of government would seem to provide adequate defense, that nation would speedily set up a king in spite of all the arguments about the right of the people to rule. One argument for the rule of the people is that even a whole people fighting with a common purpose is more effective than a nation under the autocratic sway of a king. If social advance leaves the people permanently hungry the people will reinstate any industrial system that promises more wheat or corn. We may well believe that the meek will one day inherit the earth, but they will not keep the inheritance long if they do not produce more food and more clothing and better tools than

the haughty produce. If the reign of the meek means that the people are to be hungrier, the haughty will be reinstated by overwhelming popular vote.

This is not at all meant as cynicism or even as pleasantry. It is not an exaltation of greed. It is not intended as a denial of the doctrine that man should not live by bread alone, but we have heard altogether too much about the sweet uses of adversity and about the smooth sea making the poor sailor. A distinguished sociologist recently has told us that religion is not dependent upon material prosperity, that the world religions like Mohammedanism and Judaism, and even Christianity, have been born in the desert where the life is proverbially simple to the verge of asceticism. This is all well enough, but ignores the fact that a more complex type of life than desert existence calls for a more complex set of religious activities. The very fact that people in prosperous times misuse the abundance of physical goods is a call for a larger application of the gospel in the right use of the goods.

It is indeed true that if we should drop

out of religious history all the saintliness that has been developed by struggle against an adverse lot, we should have precious little left; but such putting of the argument does not express the full or ultimate truth. Let anyone who has struggled up through a season of adversity honestly ask himself whether he could not through the same effort have reached a better development under more prosperous circumstances. For illustration, recall the consolation we sometimes give the youth who is working his way through college. We tell him of the heroic scholars who have thus labored to keep soul and body together while they were improving their minds. But every one who gives such advice knows that the same amount of effort expended in direct collegiate activities that is expended by the working student in earning his living and studying his books at the same time, would lead to the better scholastic result. If it is urged that in the direct collegiate activity the same amount of effort would not be put forth, the reply is that this is just the center of the whole issue, namely, to teach a devotion which will put into richest use the

richest prosperities. Sweet indeed are the uses of adversity—when we have adversity of somebody else in mind. But sweeter still are, or can be, the uses of prosperity. The smooth sea, indeed, makes a poor sailor if he will not rouse himself to the utmost when the sea is smooth. But any sailor of ordinary sense knows that the smooth sea is the opportunity for the boiler and the turbine and the propeller.

Not only is there a demand for a production of a greater quantity of goods for the sake of the spiritual result, but also imperative necessity to find how to produce these goods without such heavy fatigue as is now laid upon the muscles and nerves of laborers. It is utter folly to exhort a tired man or woman or child to live a free life. If freedom means being oneself, we may ask how many people are themselves when they are tired. A mind is not itself until it is fully awake, or until the nervous system is so steady as to prevent irritability and merely automatic reaction. Moreover, the goods must be produced with such opportunity for leisure as will make possible the creative brooding out of which comes the most

abundant measure of material advance, to say nothing of spiritual progress. With the heavy burdens rolled off men's shoulders to the levers of machinery and with the routine duties more and more discharged by labor-saving devices the workers of the world will have a chance to think—even about the processes in which they are engaged. The most useful man in the industrial community may be the man who has apparently least to do. He may be the patient brooder out of whose apparent dreaminess new machines and new systems are created.

It all comes back to the broader conception of freedom, of freedom not merely as absence of constraint but as positive enjoyment of all one's faculties. It is to be regretted that in the economic world the struggle for freedom has been thus far mostly to get rid of unspeakable burdens. Genuine freedom in the industrial realm would be the positive enjoyment of the play of inventive and organizational talent and of the kingly consciousness of mastery over nature. It would provide more place for the exercise of that instinct of contrivance of which economic thinkers like Taussig

make so much. Can we imagine anything for the economic advancement of the race comparable to such a change in the social system as would enable even the ordinary worker to enter with zest into his task somewhat as the highest type of professional specialist or artistic genius throws himself with consuming passion into his work for the work's own sake? The Christian Church never will behold convincing setting forth of Christianity until there is economic freedom for men in this positive degree. Taken the world over, the workers at present are too benumbed to know much of positive liberty. They are too hungry or they are too cold. About as well ask an Eskimo, wrapping himself in a polar bear skin and tasting no food but whale blubber, to enter on the expansive and free creative experience, as to ask those who do the heavy work of the world to be free in the full measure.

Popular opinion has thus a divine right to insist that the social system be so transformed that the judgments on a man's spiritual attainments may lie justly in the field of his practical daily activities. To a degree the common sense of man has always in-

sisted upon judging the Christian by his daily work. We have heard from the beginning that a worshiper's profession on Sunday must be judged by what he does on week-days; and we know, of course, that week-days are almost wholly given over to labor. Even as to those personal and individual peculiarities in which a man reveals his character the standard must largely be found in how he carries on his daily work. A fundamental virtue is honesty. Honesty is not merely refraining from seizing things that do not belong to one, nor refraining from telling lies. Honesty is integrity and sincerity. It is putting oneself wholly into one's work. It is the utterance of the truth not only by one's lips but also by the honest use of one's hands.

Any social organization which makes it possible for the worker to throw himself more thoroughly into his task must be looked upon as in so far, at least, divine. Any organization which does not provide this possibility must be remade. The daily tasks of men consume the most of their time and the most of their energy. They call for the best that men have. If men

are not to show their devotion to the divine by the spirit and zest with which they work, there is not left any other field of equal consequence in which they can bring the religious impulse to play. Possibly no more decisive proof of irrationality in the universe could be adduced than that which would make it appear that the division between secular and sacred is not finally to be obliterated.

We have spoken of the freedom which goes with the realization of mastery over nature. We must say, further, that this consciousness of freedom develops even more markedly as men cooperate with one another in the performance of the bread-winning duties. We hear much in these days of social unrest concerning questions like collective bargaining. We do not say enough about the spiritual possibilities in a more closely organized body of workers. It is easy to make a showy argument for capital's dealing with laborers individually on the ground that the laborer's freedom is thus more surely secured. The argument is really farcical to the verge of the ridiculous, for such individual bargaining may reduce

the laborer to virtual slavery. In such argument it is customary to elaborate on the danger that an association of workers may coerce the individual worker and thus rob him of his liberty. All this is to miss the positive aspect of freedom—the freedom that arises out of the laborer's throwing himself into cooperation with those for whom he can cherish a feeling of partnership and brotherhood. Without any regard to what such associations of workers may do when they are badly led, or when appeals are made to them on the basis of a selfish class interest, or when their fighting blood is up, the fact remains that there must be such cooperative association if the individual laborer is to get the most of and for himself out into expression.

This is manifestly true in a society of highly subdivided and specialized tasks in which no single laborer is personally responsible for a completed product. The interest that the individual once took in turning out a creation which was from start to finish his own is no longer prevalent. The best substitute for it is devotion to a group of workers whose cause

the individual makes his own. In this thought of union in a group the ideal is clearly that the individual is to find himself reenforced and drawn out of himself by that something which we call *esprit de corps;* and being drawn out of oneself is indispensable for spiritual growth. It is easy to condemn class consciousness, but class consciousness, mistaken and distorted as it sometimes is, is better than individualistic consciousness of the isolated type. The separate individual outside of close association in work with his fellows may be free from external constraint. The channels may be blocked through which others may reach him to coerce him. But if the others cannot reach him to coerce him, they cannot reach him to help him, and he cannot in turn reach them. The channels of intercommunication must be kept open. They imply, indeed, the possibility of the submergence of the individual for a time, but such submergence by the inrushing thought and feeling of the group may in the end fertilize the individual consciousness into spiritual fertility. And to doubt whether such association will in the end produce more and better material goods

is to doubt the working of one of the most obvious laws of human behavior.

In this field of association in work we have a most significant sphere for the genuinely Christian virtues. It is here that loyalty comes to its most decisive crisis. To be loyal to one's fellows when that may mean for the moment a diminution of one's own supply of worldly goods is an acid test. So also with the virtue of generosity. Generosity seldom means anything until it reaches down into the daily work. Common sense has not gone astray in its assumption that the Christian's daily task is the realm in which his Christianity is to be judged. There is a thoroughly sound reason back of the belief that a just and responsible God must judge men indeed by the ideals which they hold in their inner life, but that the judgment must finally rest upon the degree to which these ideals find expression in the processes of bread-winning. There is equally sound reason for the demand that the bread-winning processes be so Christianized as to make them a fair field for moral and spiritual judgments.

Beyond the self-realization of the worker

in companionship with his fellows lies that ampler circle of spiritual expansion in which the motive of desire for gain for oneself and for one's class gives way to the motive of desire for service of the whole. Before such impulse to service can become compelling there will have to be very considerable reorganization of the present industrial scheme. The faults of the present system are not solely in inequalities of distribution, though such inequalities are a grave count against our established order. The deeper-going trouble is that the present system does not allow the impulse to service—which is the distinctively Christian impulse—the opportunity for free play. A coal miner busy among dangerous gases can hardly be expected to feel his energies streaming forth under the inspiration of an ideal of service when he knows that of every ton he mines so many pounds become forthwith the possession of an absentee owner who does not know the difference between a coal mine and the Milky Way, so far as any personal experience goes. We may rightly have scant sympathy with the socialistic attack upon the payment of interest for the hire of

money, especially when that money comes out of the earnings and savings of the lender. The case is widely different, however, when we count up the profits accruing oftentimes in excess to owners and speculators in treasures of the earth which the owners have never done a stroke to produce or improve. There are many natural resources like mines and forests and water-powers which we may legitimately claim should belong to mankind as a whole. There will be necessary some change in our system which will make it possible for the workman to feel that he is serving an entire community of men all doing some valuable work, rather than a limited number of private owners planning chiefly for their own profit. Any changes in the system ought to proceed under the direction of cool-headed, constructive social engineers, but one motive for such change ought to be the increase of spiritual opportunity and the wider freedom which will result as the workers know that they are indeed serving the total community.

This chapter may seem to some to have ignored the truth that men cannot live by

bread alone. It must not be forgotten that we are thinking of bread and clothes and houses and tools simply as the instruments of a high state of spiritual freedom. We admit that the utilization of material abundance for the loftiest and finest spiritual aims approaches very nearly to moral and spiritual miracle. One reason why adversity has made more saints than prosperity is because of the severer moral exactions made by prosperity. Jesus said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, but he immediately added that with God this miracle is possible. The Christian ideal, at least for the ultimate state of things, is that all earthly forces shall serve the interests of the spiritual life. We have said repeatedly that Christian common sense is willing to suspend judgment upon the Creator until the evidence is all in. But just men everywhere would condemn a universe in which even the stars in their courses did not at last fight for righteousness.

To bring about such a consummation it is incumbent on Christian prophets to proclaim the duty of utilizing increasing pros-

perity for the sake of the souls of men. It would be a handsome solution of this difficulty to preach that individuals everywhere are to get all the money possible and then give it away, but that is not quite what we mean. There is not any outstanding virtue in allowing possessing groups to oppress laboring groups that greater sums may go to philanthropy. What we must plead for is a cooperative commonwealth of God in which service shall be not an ideal to be preached about, but an ideal to be made actual in the effort for daily bread. If the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven, our daily bread will come to us in a fashion that suggests the kingdom of God: that is to say in a fashion that suggests that spiritual forces have been let loose. What the laborer himself desires is a chance at the higher freedom in the very process of procuring bread. A distinguished college professor recently declared that after attending two hundred meetings of labor groups he thought labor in America would be satisfied with a stiff inheritance tax on large fortunes, and the progressive diminution of unearned income! The impulse toward self-determination in

industry had worked all around him and he had missed it! And self-determination is of the sum and substance of spiritual freedom everywhere. Self-determination, trite as the word is likely to become, holds up one of the noblest spiritual ideals of our time.

CHAPTER V

PUBLICITY IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A FURTHER expectation which public opinion cherishes regarding any ruler or set of rulers decreeing the destinies of human subjects is that the spirit and plan of those rulers shall be revealed to men just as far as men can understand the revelation. Not only does Christianity hold that the Divine Ruler is not autocratic and arbitrary, but it asserts that he has no secrets which he withholds from men after men are able to comprehend the secrets. We may well rejoice that our age makes little of mysteries in religious truth which lie out of reach of the plain man.

In the pursuit of truth some methods have been wrought out and some principles discovered which popular opinion has a right to maintain as valid for the progress of knowledge of the kingdom of God. Even the Almighty must be under obligation to

reveal to men any knowledge which belongs to men, just as fast and as far as men can appropriate that knowledge. Knowledge, however, is not only a set of data in themselves, but is data grasped by the receiving mind. Popular thought sanctions the dictum that knowledge of any kind must be earned, or at least deserved. If a citizen of a monarchy desires to know more about the doings of his king, he must learn to read a newspaper, or to understand the language in which the news is communicated. Believing as we do that men are free and creative agents, the amount of knowledge which they will receive about anything depends upon the range and intensity of their mental energies. Modern psychology, with its stress upon the activity of the mind in knowing, has made it evident to us that there is no possibility of printing truth upon a passive intelligence. Passive intelligence is a contradiction in terms. If intelligence were passive, it would have to become active before it could read a message. There is no photographing truth upon a passive intellect. The mind would have to become active before it could see or interpret the picture.

Common sense everywhere agrees that men are entitled only to such knowledge as they can understand, provided that the revealer of truth is doing all within his power to make his message intelligible. The binomial theorem is only for those who can understand mathematics. There is no hope of making the theorem intelligible except by training the mind to the skill with which it can understand. To talk of rights to knowledge is absurd, apart from the determination to take the mental steps necessary to learn. In the kingdom of God we must hold that knowledge is for those who are willing to pay the cost of learning, and for any and all who are thus willing to pay.

The above statement, however, is not altogether just. Knowledge may be divided into two classes—that which can be mastered by the expert alone and that which deals with the broad human issues of everyday life. We have more of a claim upon this latter knowledge than upon the former. In treating with an earthly ruler we might say that we are not concerned as to the intricate and technical processes by which he rules his country. In such governmental procedure

the ruler may call in experts whose recommendations depend upon highly intricate scientific information. The common mind may not understand the technical formulas. If any citizen has the inclination and opportunity, he may inform himself as to the nature of the experts' methods, but the ordinary citizen cannot thus become a specialist. That ordinary citizen, however, has a right to know the main purpose for which the ruler sets his experts to work. So in the main on-goings of the kingdom of God there is a mass of knowledge which might well be called the peculiar province of the expert. Any student who has the chance to familiarize himself with such a field has a right to enter the field, but the common work-a-day life has no such chance. That common life, however, has a right to call for knowledge of the purposes and aims which rule in the conduct of the universe. Such knowledge the Christian Church has always maintained to be the center and heart of the revelation in Jesus Christ.

There are some considerations, however, that must be again and again urged as conditions under which even such essential

knowledge is granted to men. If it is true that the mind is an active agent in knowledge, we repeat knowledge can come only as the mind stirs itself to understand. This elementary notion in itself does away at one stroke with all claim upon the divine source of truth for a mechanically dictated revelation. Or grant that it might be possible for a very meager intelligence to receive without its own initiative an overpowering and overwhelming vision in picturesque symbolism. Such a vision could be utilized only as mental force might arise somewhere active enough to interpret the vision. It is theoretically imaginable that under contact with some higher intelligence a mind might automatically utter words of which it itself had no comprehension. The mind might become solely a transmitting mechanism speaking the words. Such revelation, however, could not be of value to the race until the arrival of the interpretative mind, and that interpretative mind necessarily would be an active mind. Just here lies the justification for the demand for education in the kingdom of God. We are not so much concerned with the religious genius who first

proclaims a high truth as with the common understanding and utilization of that truth. For such utilization on the broad scale there must be the most abundant training of the popular mind.

Common sense urges, moreover, that the most valuable knowledge is that which is born out of experience. It is altogether too true that common sense is apt somewhat narrowly to limit the conception of experience, but common sense here moves on the right track. Of course the man who reasons out an abstract system is experiencing his truth, but common sense intends by experience some more vital connection with the world of men and things. Hence it has come to pass that in religion the people listen most readily to knowledge based upon experience. The founder of the kingdom of God himself said that it was by doing the will of God that men would come to a knowledge of the truth. Evidently, Jesus referred to something other than knowledge of a theological or an abstract nature. Knowledge in common life rests upon an assurance for which formal reasons cannot always be satisfactorily given. We simply

know that some things are so, out of our experience, as we say. Convictions as to the presence of God and as to the worth and meaning of human life are a settled deposit from doing the will of God. In this sense there is spacious room for authority in the realm of religious knowledge. It is sometimes declared that utterances are true, regardless of who utters them. In recent days, especially, attempt has been made to take the edge off hostile biblical criticism which studies chiefly questions of authorship, by affirming that biblical truth is truth, no matter who is its author. This contention is correct enough for the purposes which it is intended to serve. In a deeper meaning, however, everything depends upon who utters the religious truth. The word takes its soundest effectiveness from its being the utterance of him who has given himself most heartily to the doing of what he conceives to be the divine will.

This doing of the divine will can only mean the attempt to take whatever understanding one has of the divine purpose, and to work that understanding into some vital expression in the matter-of-fact world.

Now, the common mind thoroughly appreciates the difficulty of doing this. There is no sterner task before men than that of seizing a moral ideal and of making it real on earth and among men. The process seems at times to be one of hopelessly involved compromise. If we cannot make the divine ideal stand out as a whole, we try to make it stand out in part. If we cannot do the ideally best, we do the best we can. Without suggesting at all that Jesus was ever guilty of moral compromise, we may properly say that incarnation itself implies a progressive adjustment of spirit to things as they are—living spirit acting and reacting against the earthly environment in which it finds itself. It is for such reasons that the ordinary mind has been very lenient with the Christian workers who have again and again made even very serious mistakes. In the opinion of the average mortal the highest form of intelligence is just that which comes out of experience, and the ordinary man has more patience with one who learns by his attempt to work the truth into life, than with one who sees more clearly the abstract and speculative prin-

ciple, but who somehow fails to make connection with the world as it is. We shall always hail with due acclaim those who phrase the transcendent ideals, but, after all, noble laurels are for those who make their discoveries of truth in the fearful battle to make ideals real. In a later chapter we speak of the duty of the church to lift the ideals uncompromisingly on high, but we do not mean mere talk about ideals.

Once more, the people recognize the importance of the knowledge which we may characterize as socially acquired. In the preceding paragraph we have spoken of the knowledge which issues from a contest with a system of things which is tough and intractable. Modern educational methods make much of what they call the laboratory method, by which they mean the face-to-face handling of facts themselves. Essentially, this method is of value, as we have said, in gaining knowledge of the kingdom of God, as keeping check upon religious utterance by the touch with objective facts. Advancing a step further, pedagogy recognizes that much of the best knowledge comes to light out of the atmosphere created as students

work together. It would be interesting to ask how many first-rank discoveries in the history of knowledge have been made as thinkers have worked alone. We know that the greatest findings have come as some individual explorer has proved more energetic or quicker in reaching a goal than his fellows. To recur to a previous illustration, immortal honor always belongs to Columbus for the discovery of America. There is not anywhere in the annals of exploration a story of firmer determination in the soul of an individual seeker after truth than the biography of Columbus. Nevertheless, as we said in preceding pages, many others were wrestling with the same problem, and within a few years somebody would have hit upon the true explanation. In a less intense degree the search for knowledge in times of peace is like the search for knowledge in times of war. We have all heard that the great World War closed with a half dozen nations on the edge of the uncovering of most important material secrets—how to manufacture deadlier gases or huger bombing machines or more frightful destructive monsters on land or sea. There was social

cooperation in the quest for all these things, as there usually is in the quest of imperative knowledge in any form. A social atmosphere makes a demand for definite answers to definite questions and consciously or unconsciously men cooperate in the search for the answers.

We repeatedly urge the attention upon this important social law by which men in cooperation attain to higher flights of understanding than men plodding along as separate and unrelated units. As men of a group focus their sight toward the same object something in the associated effort sharpens the eyesight of each. To take a rough physical analogy, we might say that the phenomenon is somewhat, though not quite, similar to the development of mechanical power in a complexly organized modern engine. Suppose the engine to be of one hundred horse power. Now, one hundred horses running together cannot, indeed, run much faster than one horse running alone, or longer than one horse can run; but it might be possible so to harness the horses to a power shaft that by pulling together their united energies might release a new force

like electricity propelling a vehicle at a speed many times faster than a horse could run, and many times longer than a horse could run. So in the social body organized mental and spiritual energies seem to get hold of invisible power shafts which release energies inconceivable as the exploit of any one mind studying by itself. Here, again, we need not fall into the fallacy of a social mind apart from the individual minds in a society. We need only to recognize that the minds act with finer qualities and larger quantitative efficacy when they pull together than when they pull separately. He that loses his own life in pouring that life into the common effort finds himself a sharer in a result which he could never have hoped to beget alone. There is a Scripture passage which tells us that upon one occasion Jesus was seen by more than five hundred believers at once. Without entering into the question of miracle, it is altogether possible to maintain that the intense actions and reactions back and forth in a group of hundreds looking in the same spiritual direction could carry the vision of the group farther than any one man could see alone. More

and more this social factor will become a power for discovery of religious truth.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." These words were no doubt spoken with reference to the contrast between the inner purity of the spirit and the superficial outer purity of a ceremonial cleansing. The inner purity is the purity of unselfishness. Such purity is not attained except in close social relationships. By throwing itself more and more into the pursuit of the good of the whole, the mind speeds away from the narrowly selfish viewpoint, and arrives at a New Testament purity. We shall have occasion later to speak of the authority of the individual who works alone and publishes from the housetop the revelations which have been made to him in the closet, but such revelations take on the highest power from the unselfishness of the housetop proclamation. The effect of modern social contacts on spiritual discovery has not yet been enough investigated. The commonplace that pupils learn better in a school has not been treated with due appreciation. We have advocated social organization chiefly as a means for the ampler

production of material things. We are just at the beginning of a realization of the possibilities of closer social organization for the seizure of the higher truth. Recurring to the illustration of the school, do we not all feel that in much of our learning our fellow pupils have been the educators? With all possible honor to competent instructors and profound investigators, our companionship with other students has not only steadied and corrected our individual eccentricities but has led to long strides ahead in the conquest of knowledge itself. The very humanness of the relationships in a school, the inevitability of subjecting the intellectual results to the play of other motives than the intellectual, the spirit of humor which so lavishly abounds, the more or less conscious estimate of values in terms of their social consequences—all these are potent educative factors. They can be made use of, and they will be more purposefully made use of some day in the quest of religious enlightenment.

Again, the intelligence which we are pleased to call that of the plain man knows that only those are entitled to know who can

be depended upon to make right use of what they know. Just as there must be responsibility in modern society for the use of power, so there must be responsibility likewise for the use of knowledge. God's omniscience puts as heavy a responsibility on him as his omnipotence, for knowledge is power. Even in our everyday contacts we feel under no obligation to disclose to our neighbors what is peculiarly our own. No matter how thoroughly socialized the human race may one day become, we may be confident that we never shall become socialized to such degree as to allow prying inquisition into affairs that are by nature private. This does not mean, of course, that we are to lie to neighbors who ask impertinent questions, but it does mean that we are not bound to tell them what is not their business. One of the greatest practical virtues, recognized as such by sensible men everywhere, is just the virtue of minding one's own business. Now, the reason is that knowledge belongs to those who will use it aright. The neighbor cannot make good use of knowledge that is mine alone.

The principle here leads us pretty far.

In the larger social reaches the responsibility for the right use of knowledge is even more binding, and becomes more imperative with every increase of knowledge. It would be a frightful calamity for the human race to attain to the huge powers which come with increased organization unless there grows with knowledge a consciousness of responsibility. In spite of all the wars which have sprung out of the separateness of the races through differences of language and temperament, it is doubtful if the destruction would not have been worse if the race had come to a realization of the power in enormous organization before it had come to the moral responsibility which would enable it to use such power aright. The story of the tower of Babel is not without some trace of abiding significance.

We would not have this insistence upon the right use of knowledge pushed too far. A protest was recently voiced against any possibility of a revelation of a world beyond the grave, coming through such a channel as a spiritualistic medium, because of the manifest moral unworthiness of many spiritual mediums. This is somewhat overdoing the

argument on which we are laying weight. It might be possible for a personality highly sensitive to other-world influence to catch the vibrations of such influences without being himself altogether a model of our conventional virtues. Nevertheless, if such stray quiverings from another world are to reach us, we may well hope that the full revelation will not take on body and content until there is developed among us a social conscience strong enough to employ the revelation aright.

We have not yet learned to use correctly the fateful possibilities locked up in tighter social cohesiveness. The fearful World War has put before us the spectacle of a nation which has been perhaps the most effectively organized in the history of the world, shaping its social excellence into a war club with which to beat down the other nations. In the kingdom of religious truth especially we must expect that the truth will be earned not solely by the genuine strivings of one's own will, or by an unselfish devotion to one's fellows, but by grim determination to use the truth under a heavy bond of obligation. The moral quality is

always present in the fuller wisdom. Here, again, we detect the true emphasis if we watch the long run of the public sentiment. To a less degree than we think is the public mind misled by the utterances of the brilliant or spectacular orator. Granted all that can be urged about the proneness of the crowd to run after the leader who is brilliant and nothing more, yet such propensity has to be very seriously qualified when we reflect that interest and applause are not always obedient surrender. Even the crowd looks for the man whom it can trust.

Perhaps a word may be permissible about the just impatience of ordinary people with the revealer of truth who does not make himself understood. The moral responsibility for being intelligible is more and more recognized by the community at large. Of course, if a leader is uttering truth which only remotely touches life, and fails to make himself understood, the majority of the hearers quietly pass by on the other side. But if the leader has caught a glimpse of something of eternal value, his responsibility does not cease until the truth is really uttered; and the truth is not uttered until it

is understood. Hence the element of justice in the popular demand that men be held responsible for what they are understood to say. With every regard for those conscientious and sincere prophets who blurt out their revelations with their eyes closed to the effect on their audience, the popular sense more and more will have it that it is the duty of the professed teacher of truth to make himself understood.

This is not to contradict what we have previously said about the impossibility of revealing truth except to an active intelligence. Some misunderstanding is bound to come; even if the truth is intelligible, it may be intelligible for only a little distance, and may lead off to the unmeasured depths. Or some truth may be overstated for the sake of arousing attention: we are not thinking of this, but of careless and shoddy and impatient speech which does social harm through the lack of that fundamental honesty and human kindliness which show themselves in a determination to cut away all the needless obstacles to understanding. We say that it is dishonest for a man to ignore facts as he speaks. It is almost as

dishonest to ignore the human hearers to whom the facts are spoken.

In discussing a theme like this it is not possible to avoid a word about mysticism. Has not the popular intelligence always followed the mystic? Has not the very other-worldliness of the mystic made deep appeal to the dwellers in this world? The reply must be somewhat in the affirmative, but the appeal at the present time, in the glare of the full day, hardly will be successful if made just to a craving for the unusual and unearthly. There is nevertheless a mysticism which more and more compels popular respect—the mysticism of him whose knowledge arises apparently spontaneously from inner springs. There are mystics—men who speak out of swift intuition—in many walks of life besides the specifically religious. Such mystics sometimes merely announce conclusions, and leave to others the search for the reasons.

There is nothing more amusing than the discrepancy between the rules to account for their success given by successful leaders in any sphere who have risen above rules and the actual skill which these lead-

ers reveal in their different spheres of action. Out of long nights of brooding and days of practice, the successful worker arrives at an unerring sureness in the matters over which he is master. He reaches the stage where he cannot tell why he does thus and so. He simply does. By faithful observance of law he has climbed to what seems a freedom from laws. And so in the valid mysticism of religious life. Out of practice in doing the will of God there results similar correct sureness as to what is the will of God in an individual or social crisis. Out of meditation and study and prayer and walk in the way of the Lord there is born that mysterious sense of direction which is altogether natural to the mature saint and seer, but which is so mysterious to the uninitiated onlooker and bystander. The reason the word of the seer attains wide acceptance is not because it is strange, but because something in the human heart catches in it the rush and freshness of the springs of life. Did Joan of Arc lead the hosts of France to victory solely because her reports of ghostly visions and voices cast a spell upon the multitude? The reason

was that the patriotism of France felt in the absorbed devotion of Joan of Arc some firm hold on the forces that were most elementary and fundamental. There is an unerring discernment which sooner or later becomes the possession of the plain people, to the effect that the exact logical processes and the heavy rules by which men study are just so many tools to help on to a worthy understanding. There is always a shade of distrust of these as artificial, and always respect for the type of mind and soul which at last arrives at the ability to know truth by its "feel" and to catch the finer stirrings of spirit by quick intuition.

Let us not forget that freedom of which we made so much in the earlier pages. The only channel for the revelation of religious truth which men will long respect is the free person. Men would resent any revelation which robbed them of their freedom, or which bluntly told them to obey, whether there was any reason for obeying or not. It is from this point of view that the whole problem of what we call inspiration must be approached. If inspiration is from God, we must insist that one sign of the inspiration is

the positive and not merely negative freedom of the inspired agent. Only from the free who are free not merely in liberty from constraint, but free in positive realization within themselves of the truth which they proclaim, can we grasp the truth which is the liberty of the sons of God.

CHAPTER VI

THE DIVINE FRIENDSHIP

POPULAR opinion demands as a matter of course that a ruler of men be friendly to men. While we know that under the actual circumstances of human society personal intercourse on the part of a ruler with any considerable number of individuals is out of the question, the people nevertheless expect that whoever is in governmental control over them shall be entirely friendly to them. They will not to-day tolerate in a ruler any of that kingly bearing which implies that the ruler regards himself above those over whom he holds sway. When masses of the people complain of a leader as "aristocratic" they do not ordinarily intend a complaint against the social stratum in which he was born. They mean that they resent an overbearing or condescending manner. They look for friendliness on the basis of mutual respect between ruler and people.

From a somewhat similar angle men look

for friendliness in the Divine Ruler, though naturally any thought of equality between God and man is out of the question except in this one essential of meeting on the basis of mutual respect. The doctrine of the love of God has been carelessly handled in much Christian teaching. We have had occasion elsewhere to remark upon the altogether normal and human nature of the demand that the love of God toward men shall arrive at the mutual regard of complete friendship. It is possible for us to love those whom we do not think of as our friends. It is conceivable that in the family husband and wife might experience mutual affection without even being friends. They might be devoted to one another without ever entering into partnership of ideals or of tasks. A father might be deeply in love with his children and yet his affection might be that doting fondness which never would respect the growing independence of the young wills. The father might desire the children to remain children forever just that he might be fond of them. In any ideal family, on the other hand, the children become more interesting as they grow older, and more of a joy as

they enter into companionship with their parents—the companionship being founded on mutual regard and respect. So in thinking of the heavenly Father who rules us, the majority of us desire not so much a love which is to forever regard us as children as a friendship which is to respect us as men. There is no more splendid ideal for God in the Scriptures and no loftier teaching concerning man than that God and man can walk together in friendship and companionship. Certainly no scriptural ideal commends itself more fully to the common understanding.

It may be interesting to push this ideal of friendship between God and man out into something of its implications. There is implied, to begin with, a willingness on God's part to accommodate himself to men. In the Scriptures the relationship between men and God is spoken of as a walk together. We most often think of walking with God as a lengthening of the human stride to keep pace with the Divine. The half truth here should not blind us to the other half, namely, that the walk with God requires that God accommodate his step to the pace of men.

"Accommodation" carries with it a suggestion of moral compromise which often obscures the inner nobility of the idea. Two men who are friends show their friendship in nothing more than in their attempt to adjust themselves each to the understanding of the other. It is not friendship to blurt out one's thought to one's companion without regard to the intellectual or temperamental limitations of that friend. When the argument was first advanced that the Christian Scriptures show the accommodations of the divine intelligence to the human intelligence, some sticklers for the absolute perfection of God seemed to think that any accommodation to men's limitations would be altogether unworthy as derogatory to the divine dignity. A surer insight discerns that there is no better indication of the friendliness of God toward men than just the signs of the accommodation of the divine to the human. To be friends with God we must indeed lengthen our step. To be friends of men God must shorten his step.

On the side of man friendship must take on that form of faith which trusts God when the appearances are against him. The com-

mon man will not hear of any other sort of friendship. A passage in the book of the Hebrews tells us that the Old Testament heroes all died in the faith, not having received the promise. That "not" might seem to some to have slipped into the Scriptures by mistake. We often speak of the men of faith as if they were chiefly those who were always seeing their promises fulfilled. Just a moment's reflection, however, ought to show that it requires no surpassing trust to believe in a promise that is openly being satisfied. We trust when we still believe in promises that are not fulfilled. The lack of fulfillment does not mean that the Divine Ruler is not to be trusted. If rule over the universe means anything it means that the divine plan must run out beyond the reach of the mind of man. If man's trust in God means anything, it must mean the willingness to trust God when his plan cannot be understood. If earthly statesmen sometimes work for the future with a sweep of the imagination which is altogether beyond the mental compass of their fellows, how absurd for men who claim to be friends of God to complain because they cannot see the outwork-

ing of the divine plan. The common sense of the street is wiser than this.

We would not, however, dismiss this problem quite so summarily. Firmly believing in the friendliness of God toward men, we also believe in the complete willingness of masses of mankind to trust God as their friend. Men will not believe that the universe is unfriendly. A very noteworthy criticism recently appeared on the work of Henri Barbusse, the French literary master who came to prominence through his descriptions of the terrible aspects of the Great War. Probably no writer of our day has succeeded more graphically in portraying the horrors of war than has Barbusse. The utter inhumanity and horror of the titanic struggle stand out with ghastly sharpness in his pages. But when Barbusse went on in later literary efforts to picture the entire universe as likewise hopeless and helpless the interest in his work seemed to fall off. The reason was that men will not continue to believe that the universe is at bottom unfriendly. We may say if we will that this mood of mankind is a narcotic and self-protective adjustment to a terribly grim system

of things. But this does not fully explain. The hard facts bite deeply into every life; but not every life, or any great number of lives, give up in abject despair. We may say, if we please, that this hopefulness is but a constitutional good-humor which by the law of psychological periodicity comes bubbling up after the deepest distress. But even so, in that hopefulness lies much of the charm that makes men worth having as friends. The buoyancy of mankind under most circumstances is a substantial item to be set down to humanity's credit. When the cheerfulness is definite trust in the Divine it is in turn worthy of the divine confidence and cooperation.

Recurring to our thought of companionship, we must remember that the best companionship is a companionship of work. We can hardly see how men are to be friends of God unless in some integral way the efforts of the wills of men count as facts in the universe. Some philosophers to-day, notably the pluralists, claim for man a share of positive creative power. The pluralism of William James, for example, suggests that man is a positive agent laboring side by side with

a God who is a positive agent, both men and God being finite. In such philosophy the will of man creates situations which are absolutely original and which can hardly have been foreseen even by the intelligence of God. It is not necessary to go as far as this to make man a force in the universe. If we once concede that God has made men free and has put in them an impulse toward positive self-realization, we shall have to admit that freedom for men cannot stop far short of a really creative potency—though we are not subscribing to a doctrine of the finitude of God.

We may believe that God need not have made man, but once having made him and having dowered him with a stirring toward progressive spiritual power, he must recognize that impulse as more and more creative in shaping the universe to forms that would not have been likely if man had not been created. We can see this readily on the negative side. It would be possible for a race of free men in the exercise of their freedom to run through, or burn up, the treasures of the physical earth in a short space of time. The presence of man on the

earth has already made stupendous changes, in the earth itself, in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and in the relations of men one to another. We cannot believe that all of these changes have had the approval of the Almighty. They have come about through the misuse of freedom. These ugly scars, however, give by contrast a hint of the glorious possibilities before men striving to make themselves free in positive self-realization, molding the world over into a better dwelling place and a better vehicle for the communication of the good, the true, and the beautiful.

Here we have to watch ourselves lest we put men off too much by themselves—as the pluralists almost always do. We are concerned with the companionship of men with God. Just as we found that men become free as they attain a firmer control over nature, and as they throw themselves more deeply into the stream of human life, so we must say here that men find themselves most truly when they enter into cooperation with the Divine, as they seek to discover the divine will and to align themselves more closely with that will. It would be foolish

for men to think that they could win life and freedom by a Robinson Crusoe existence. The story of Robinson Crusoe has a lasting charm for men as well as boys, as suggesting what the human wit can do when it is thrown practically upon its own resources with the minimum of help from nature and no direct aid from man. It must not be forgotten, however, that Crusoe carried to his island with him a fund of knowledge which he had appropriated from the general stock of human information. To get at what Crusoe could really do alone we would have to picture him abandoned as a foundling on the island—in which state there would have been no story of Crusoe.

Lotze has pointed out to us that in a sense every tool mastered by man is a continuation of and expansion of the personal force of man. Many a writer has given us to understand that the invention of the lens of the telescope or microscope is an extension of the power of the human eye, bestowing upon it more sweep and firmness. The fact that the human voice can carry through a telephone for three thousand miles adds as much to a man's

enlarging life as if he could stand on a mountain top and shout his word across a continent. So in the social relationships, contact with one's fellows draws out of the individual some new phase of power with each contact. This process comes to its highest and best as the soul expands through deliberately trying to find the will of God and to work with that will. There are three aspects of the companionship of God with men: God's accommodation of himself to men, men's deliberately stretching of themselves to meet the divine requirement, and, best of all, the absorption of God and men in one common task.

This leads naturally to a word about prayer. In complete companionship the human life loses itself in absorption in the divine task. There is a seerlike quality in the modern popular emphasis that believers are not to concern themselves too much with thought about their own salvation. Of course there is the gravest danger of misunderstanding here. Will the reader please remember, however, that we are not speaking now of sinners or transgressors. We are thinking of men and women aiming at

doing the divine will. One mark of the presence of God in such lives is that they are so concerned about the salvation of the world in the fullest sense that they do not spend much time inquiring about their own spiritual states. To be sure, this deliberate lack of introspection can soon and easily make the advice to begin the salvation of the world by setting one's own house in order directly pertinent. After all, though, a sign of companionship with God is the outward gaze upon the task to be accomplished. If this be true, intercession becomes the prime aspect of prayer conceived of as petition. We find a meaningful hint here from the character of so many of the biblical prayers as social and intercessory. The Lord's prayer itself is fundamentally the expression of the needs of a group.

And here some man will ask: "If God is a friend of man, how can my prayer make him any more friendly? Prayer, then, must be for my own sake, that I may feel my friendliness toward other men intensified." If this were the whole truth about intercessory prayer, it would be enough to make intercession abundantly worth while. If by carry-

ing to God the wants of my fellows I come to ampler and better understanding of those needs myself, surely the spiritual effort has been worth while. We do not pray to make God feel more kindly toward men. After we have prayed our utmost we do not care for our fellows as he cares for them.

This whole problem, however, takes on a different look when we contemplate the nature of a society of free men, bound together more or less organically. In creating such an organism the Almighty binds himself thereafter to work through the law of the group. It may be that the relation of member to member in the organism is such that God himself cannot work upon one life until other lives are touched and aroused, just as in modern medicine the health of the whole body must be built up in order to cure one diseased member. The object of prayer is not to bring God of himself to work upon the single isolated soul, but to induce a spiritual atmosphere in which the will of the one praying and the will of God himself can work together, or an electric surcharging of the social mass which gives God his chance. Our mistakes at this point sometimes come

out of not taking freedom seriously enough. If freedom is the fullest self-realization for the lives of men, the growing freedom of one life must develop a spiritual surplus which overflows upon the lives of others.

Intercessory prayer, then, does not mean that the one who is praying wins at last, after a period of agony in entreaty, the consent of God to bless other men. It would be nearer the truth, possibly, to say that because of the social knitting of men to men it becomes possible for God, through the release of forces produced by the prayer of the intercessor, to work with the praying soul to bless the other soul; or, because of the social interlacings, the uplift of the praying soul may be the precondition of the blessing of the heart for whom the prayer goes forth. Of course any attempted explanation here has the appearance of presumption. We do not know why things are as they are, but since things are as they are we can see some conditions through which the divine power must work and which it must respect. And yet such a term as "conditions" may be far from hinting at a reality which is altogether good and glorious. It might, indeed, be well for

the Divine Force to press directly upon each life as an isolated unit. It may be altogether more glorious for the Divine to work upon men through their companionship with other men.

It may be objected that intercession does not of itself touch the center of prayer as communion with God. For ourselves, however, it seems that there is no worthier communion than fellowship in work. Still there is a most important aspect of prayer conceived of as the outreaching of the human life toward the Divine Friend. There must be something in such outreaching which cheers the heart of God himself, inasmuch as outreaching must in a true friendship take on the form of appreciation of God. When all is said, quite likely the greatest gift which the human can give the Divine is the gift of appreciation. It may well be that no thoughts of men are of large value to God. It may even be that in our words about cooperation with the Divine we have overemphasized the human element, and that God is not so dependent upon human cooperation after all. There hardly can be any question, however, that the Cre-

ator of men must long for the appreciation of men. We might think of the Creator as producing the universe in the spirit of a divine artist pouring himself out lavishly upon a masterpiece. As the source of all artistic wisdom such an Artist might, indeed, know that his own judgment upon his work was final. In the majestic picture in the first chapter of Genesis, for example, the Creator passes judgment upon his own work as good, and at last as very good. It would be a strange artistic heart, however, that would not find itself warmed by the approval of any intelligence which showed signs of discerning insight. The appreciative intelligence itself might not have any ability beyond that of recognizing the fine touches in the artist's masterpiece. But such appreciation would be a surpassing delight to the creative artist. If only the appreciating mind knows when and where to applaud, that knowledge is of reenforcing efficiency to the skill of the artist. Think of the characterizations of God by means of which we seek to make his nature real to us! In each of these we can legitimately believe that the appreciation of men must be a joy to God.

If we conceive of God as Ruler or as Father, we can well imagine the significance of human appreciation for him. Much more must this be true when we think of God as the bearer of the burdens of the race and the leader of all in self-sacrifice. The burden-bearer craves appreciation above all others; and if the New Testament account of the nature of God is true, the consolation and satisfaction to God must be in the appreciation of those who have entered into the fellowship of his sufferings. When we conceive of friendship of man and God in terms of such appreciation we can see new meaning in the promise of the high destiny of man as made to enjoy God forever.

This leads in turn to a word about immortality. The only important argument for immortality is confidence in the nature of God. There is no scientific demonstration of life beyond the grave which as yet commands any respectable measure of assent. Members of societies for psychical research have, indeed, reported to us strange and interesting experiences which seem to imply continued existence after this life. The hints, however, are at best only tantalizing. They do not

carry conviction except to those who are bound to hold them as convincing. The arguments for immortality based on such analogies as that of the conservation of energy do not get us far. There is no weighty argument except our conviction as to the character of God. It is possible that the life of each one of us will cease at the grave. But we refuse to believe this, not so much because of our regard for ourselves, as because of our regard for God. Many wise philosophers have pronounced man's belief in his own immortality a mark of his overwhelming egotism. But that is not fair, especially when we see the most humble of men holding fast to the belief in their own immortality. The reason is instead an unwillingness to believe in an irresponsible God or an irresponsible universe. To call souls into an existence limited by the span of the human life would be the grimmest of mockeries and ironies, assuming that the world is ruled by an Intelligence. To call souls into existence to begin and carry through with them a never-ending friendship which would lead to ever-increasing life would be altogether worth while.

If we are to think of immortality at all, we must put side by side with communion with God communion with the lives for whom we work together with God. There seems to be with many people a shying off from immortality as carrying with it a consciousness of personal identity or as implying a possibility of continuance of friendships begun on earth. If there is no consciousness of personal identity, immortality is worthless; and if there is no possibility of the continuance of friendships begun in this life, immortality ceases to be altogether desirable. It seems meaningless to say that the lives for whom we have wrought here in companionship with God are not to be bound to us by some social ties forever. The modern popular sentiment makes more and more of social fellowships. There is no reason why these social bonds may not be valued, next to communion with the Divine, as the most important feature of eternal existence.

Beyond our belief in the inherent virtue of communion with God and communion with our friends it is not well for us to go in our theories of another life. Of course there is

a legitimate sphere here for the exercise of the imagination, but the picturings of imagination are meager in their content. We believe that we shall be with God and with men: this is enough. We would much better pull our thought away from the attempt to imagine heaven hereafter and fasten it upon the task of creating heaven on earth. There is not much justice in the claim that popular sentiment is in protest against the spirit of other-worldliness, but it is in protest against an overemphasis on other-worldliness —an overemphasis which dreams about heaven to the neglect of earth. But, on the other hand, we shall quite likely make the most of the affairs of earth only as we hold fast to a belief in communion with God and men strong enough to endure the shock of physical death.

CHAPTER VII

PROVISION FOR RESCUE

In any scheme for the training and enlargement of free lives place must be found for the correction of mistakes. The power to choose the good implies the power to choose the evil, and the choice of evil by a human life makes demand at once upon the corrective resources of the divine life. We have all along said that we cannot be satisfied with anything but a responsible God. If the human will makes mistakes, heavy responsibility presses upon the Creator for the correction of the mistakes and the direction of the will back to the choice of the good. Any Creator who would put into a world like ours a race of free beings would be under obligation to help them gain their feet after stumbling. We recur here to our oft-stated contention that while we are free none of us asked for freedom. We are responsible for the moral use of freedom, but ours is not the only responsibility. He who made us free

bears a heavier load than we. Christian consciousness has in all ages recognized this responsibility on the part of the Creator. Every age of theological thinking has said in its own phrases that God has done and is doing everything in his power to help men out of their mistakes.

It is true that the Christian leaders usually state this truth as if God were performing this restorative work out of an affection for men which has not concerned itself much with the divine responsibilities for restoration. God is indeed love, but the quality of love always depends upon the quality of the loving life, and the life of God must be fundamentally moral in his devotion to the full discharge of responsibility incurred in the creation of men. Oftentimes, in our hymnology especially, we glorify God as if his rescue of men were a work which he could have undertaken or not, just as he pleased. We sing, if we do not say, that God could have left us to perish if it had not been for his great love for us. God might indeed have left us to perish, but if he had done so, he would not have been the God of our Christian Scriptures. Not

a soul in the universe must be lost until every ounce of the divine recuperative power has been exhausted. In the presence of the fateful weight of human freedom we must not say that every soul will ultimately be saved, because this might imply that some souls would have to lose their freedom. We cannot think of the kingdom of God as made up of lives who are compelled to be righteous. Righteousness in the true moral meaning is not possible on such a basis. What would any sort of heaven be like if it had in it any persons who were there because they were compelled to be there and who were always secretly hankering for a chance to slip out through the pearly gates? To mean anything heaven must be an association of lives exulting in the freest play of faculties. On the other hand, however, we repeat that the responsibility of the Creator is not discharged as long as there is a lost soul anywhere in the universe who can by any means be persuaded to turn to the light of freedom. A responsible God has not done enough until he has done all.

The first remedy which occurs to the ordinary mind with which to meet the mistakes

of freedom is punishment. In studying God's punishment of men we may well take account of some of the advances of modern humanitarianism which are rapidly modifying our whole method of treating offenders. There is a sound moral instinct back of the current demand that even hardened criminals shall not be given "cruel and unusual" punishment. No matter how much of a transgressor an individual may be, regard is due what may be called his essential humanity. That is to say, the very fact that he is a man makes it impossible for us to deal with him as anything other than a man. In our criminal courts we feel that it is necessary now and again to pass sentence of death upon an offender. But even in such extremity public opinion in any rational or humane community would be horrified at the recommendation of torture or of dishonor to the body after life had departed. In earlier days men imported into their expositions of God's dealing with the world their own punitive barbarism in dealing with one another. An age which could believe that a peasant should be killed for stealing a rich man's rabbit could also believe that a

sinner could be sent to an eternal hell for a minor offense against the dignity of the Creator.

We have broken away from this, however, and are advocating the humanization of punishment. That is to say, we are ordering that in punishment men must be treated as men, and if possible be brought to the state where they are more human after the punishment than before. A society which would inflict inhuman punishment would become more and more inhuman itself. Macaulay made an oft-quoted remark to the effect that the Puritans forbade bear-baiting not because it gave pain to the bear but because it gave pleasure to the spectators. As has been often said, if this was the motive of the Puritan, he was possessed of sound moral sense. Nothing but harm can come to a community which can take delight in or passively acquiesce in the suffering even of dumb animals. Much more is this true when the distress of human beings is involved. Whatever the form of punishment that God metes out to men the punishment must aim at their enlargement and improvement. A Methodist theologian once

arguing thus was rebuked by a sturdy ecclesiastic who noisily informed him that such doctrine would loosen the moral foundations by making hell tolerable. The theologian's appropriate reply was that he was not especially concerned about a tolerable hell, but he was very much concerned about a tolerable God.

Of course all this will be met by the familiar outcry about justice for justice's own sake—the divine justice must be vindicated on its own account. To which we most heartily subscribe; but we do maintain that the public opinion of a sanctified universe will not tolerate a vindication of justice without regard for the effect of that vindication upon the truest human interests. Every healthy moral intelligence must feel that if a free will deliberately chooses the lower courses, it should be allowed to pass into an environment and state appropriate to itself. But the same moral intelligence must stalwartly decree that the primary aim of punishment is to be remedial and corrective. Which is the better vindication of divine justice, the spectacle of all the furies let loose upon a soul, or the spectacle of a soul

brought back to free companionship with the Divine? Some man will, no doubt, say that the punishment of sin should be the ringing of a loud alarm bell of warning to an imperiled community. We submit that bells are not edifying if they give forth just a promiscuous clamor. Alarm bells do not get at the cause of fires. All talk about punishments inherently fitting misses the point unless it shows us how to prevent and cure. There is no desire here to make law-breaking easy, nor to coddle sinners, nor to allow transgressors to fancy that sin is a trifling incident which can be easily overlooked. If we are to live in a universe of law at all, an evil seed, unless rooted out, must grow to an evil harvest. There is a question whether one who has misused his freedom can ever be the same as if he had not misused that freedom. The universe must have moral principles woven into its inmost constitution. But we are asking the question simply as to how best to get a free man who has started on the wrong track back upon the right track, and all this with a minimum of loss to everybody concerned. It has been wisely observed that Christianity is the one

religion which does not believe in throwing anything away. It cleanses and transforms and lifts out of the crooked path and puts upon the straight path. Its aim is the salvation which Jesus had in mind in the promise of more abundant life. It would be a travesty upon the purpose of the author of all freedom if the saved soul were less in its powers of free life after salvation than before.

The problem is to find how to treat a free life which has made a bungling use of freedom. The difficulty is increased by the tendency of every misuse of freedom to involve a measure of loss of freedom itself. The formation of an evil habit, for example, means that the free life is passing down from selfhood into a state somewhat resembling thinghood. The extent of the demands upon the divine grace appears in that with every sin of a free agent less is left upon which the divine power can work. We must always keep in mind too the kind of power which that divine force must use. It must be the power of persuasion and appeal. Among such appeals would be the revelation of the cost of a wrong choice to the man him-

self, and to others, and to the universe, and to God, and the revelation of the worth of spiritual values in themselves. If men will not yield to the persuasiveness of the appeal to them as rational and self-determining to lay hold on the higher life for the worth of that life in itself, it is hard to see what call will stir them; that is to say—a call worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven. There is a forceful pertinence here in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. As the grim picture draws to its close the rich man cries out asking that Lazarus be sent back to the rich man's brothers. The terrible reply is that the brothers have Moses and the prophets; if they will not hear them, they will not listen though one should rise from the dead—the meaning obviously being that if the way of life set forth by Moses and the prophets does not of itself appeal, no spectacular marvel will be at all relevant. Of course, if the brothers of the rich man had seen Lazarus coming back to tell them that their brother was in the place of torment, they might have been scared lest they too come to torment. But the spiritual acceptance of Moses and the prophets would

hardly follow an attempt to make a selfish insurance against pain.

The world to-day has more than Moses and the prophets. It has the revelation of the life in Christ Jesus which bears witness to itself as the life of God. The aim of all religious teaching should be to make that life winsome and attractive on its own account, so attractive that men will of their own free choice accept it and follow it gladly. In the light of such life real sorrow for sin should take on a positive loathing for all evil ways. Forgiveness sought for in the name of Christ can mean only that the seeker is making a passionate attempt to turn from the evil way and walk in the way of life.

In what form must the sincere change to the new life show itself? Here, again, we do well to listen to the modern demands made upon Christian teaching. Current thought has no objections to a church's maintaining that the salvation of a life reveals itself in devotion to the Word, but insists that such devotion must in turn reveal itself in the life of service. Again, popular sentiment will sanction the preaching of salvation as the attainment of a vivid and satisfying inner

experience, but will insist that the warm emotional glow must shine forth into the doing of good. If still another churchman maintains that the saved life is the life upon whom the church pours her cleansing powers in the sacraments, the plain people are right in their insistence that such sacramental efficacy must prove itself in the determination to help and uplift mankind.

Restoration and salvation must be preached in terms of the largest welfare. The tendency of present-day social philosophy is to judge all manner of institutions by their results on human life. If an industrial system produces enormous quantities of material goods, but does so at a waste of human goods, the industrial system stands condemned. The economic theory which justifies such a result may be orthodox enough, but the orthodoxy must fall before the insistent human demands. We apply the same human tests to educational systems. There are those in every period of the world's life who maintain that an educational system is a thing by itself to which the intellects of successive generations of pupils must be fitted. For long it required some

courage to ask what we meant by education. And the doctrine that education consists in drawing out of a mind whatever may be within of possibility has again and again been frowned upon as a heresy. More and more, however, we are testing our educational organizations by the question as to what happens to the pupils who attend school. By that question the system stands or falls. An intelligent public opinion insists that the educational machinery be so readjusted or reformed as to produce the best human result in those upon whom the machinery is brought to bear. If modern society is to command that the years between closing infancy and opening maturity are to be spent in the process of education, that society has a duty to command also that the human outcome be worth the expenditure of money and effort.

It may seem like a long cry from such discussion to the Christian salvation. The same tests, however, surely will be brought to bear upon the methods of salvation. If the saving process does not draw out of human life the latent moral and spiritual possibilities, it has failed. If it can be

truthfully said that a man is less of a man after becoming a Christian than before, the Christianity which has been at work upon him has failed. We repeat that Christianity is the religion which will not throw anything away. Its true aim is to lift everything that is good up to its highest power. Christianity never must be identified with any repression, except that repression which would close the life current off from the lower channel for the sake of its flowing at the higher level. There is room in the kingdom of God for the utmost variety and diversity. All purpose of leveling persons to one standard or idea or method of expression is abhorrent to any Christianity that understands itself. We guard ourselves against false emphasis here by reminding ourselves that this variety is not to be sought by making our own souls ends in themselves. The varieties and diversities are to come to light in the service of the common good, or in the pursuit of the ideals of the good and the true and the beautiful, which are to be made as far as possible the common property of all.

It is unfortunately possible so to phrase the above doctrine as to justify all manner

of selfishness under the claim of the search for the fullest life. The seeker for pleasure as such might claim to be in pursuit of larger life. Common sense, however, banishes all this and at least sketches out the central ideals which the saved life must cherish. It always identifies goodness with service, or, as the trite proverb has it, goodness must be good for something. The purity which results from moral asepsis or sterilization against every possible contamination does not commend itself to the mass of mankind. The people who must withdraw from the ordinary round and the common task in order to be good are most often those whom we are perfectly willing to have thus withdraw. But for any large number of persons to do this strikes the plain man as an aberration. The Middle Ages spectacle of thousands of persons swarming out into the deserts and living in trees and dens in the earth in order to be saved raises the pertinent question as to whether such persons would not better have remained lost, for in the lost estate they were at least living measurably normal human lives; and in their desert retreats they became soon so abnormal as to

make their type of Christianity a parody and travesty. Many of them speedily became too dirty to suggest saintliness; and those who lived as hermits got so far out of touch with ordinary human duties as to make whatever spiritual revelations they received of value only to themselves. We have no desire to be cynical in our characterization of such repressive Christianity. All we wish to say is that such experience cannot be fitted in with the Christian definition of religion as the quest of abundant life.

If we are to hit upon a description of salvation which meets the demands of enlightened social thinking, we shall have to find something between wild and riotous self-assertion on the one hand and a blocking or damming up of the forces of the spirit on the other hand. The modern interpretation of *control* gives us a good hint as to noble content in Christian salvation. The mastery of material nature has come not as man has unloosed the terrific powers of the universe to let them run wild, nor as he has sought to pen them in to a tightly inclosed impotence. The superiority of man over nature is shown in the control of the forces of nature. To

take a commonplace illustration, almost everything that we use in life has upon it the touch of fire. The instruments which we use were shaped in fire. The food upon our tables has been cooked by fire. An artificial temperate zone has been carried far into the snows of the north by the use of fire. If we could imagine fire as first revealed to the human race in the sweep of some fearful conflagration started by a stroke of lightning, let us say, we might imagine that the first human observers would conclude that their sole duty toward fire was to strive to quench it with the last ounce of their strength. Some forces need to be quenched of course. But the proper and effective control of fire makes possible almost everything that is worth while in our modern material civilization.

So also in the spiritual realm. What a mockery to speak of self-control as if it merely meant the keeping of one's self from doing something! Here is a man of fiery temper. He has the impulse to break forth into violent speech at intense provocation; he keeps silent, and we praise him for his strength of self-control. If that is all, very

possibly this fiery individual will go on through life burning himself out on the inside. Between wrathful speech and dead silence there must be some middle ground. Our ordinary speech suffers from the lack of fire. The self-controlled man, after all, is the one who lets the fire play out into controlled utterance for a worthy purpose. So with other phases of mental strength. Perhaps the advance of civilization depends as much upon the dynamic imagination as upon any other single mental faculty. Between the imagination which runs riot in fantastic and crazy nonsense and the dry-as-dust intellectual plodding which has made gray every coloring of imagination there should be some middle course. We find that middle course in that union of imagination with fact by which the peering mind starts with fact, leaps from fact to a world as yet uncreated, and then compels that imagined world to stand fast among facts in concrete realization. It is in such quarters that we must seek for the substance of the highest freedom. If our religion is anything to us, it is the liberty of the sons of God, and the liberty of the sons of God is not wholly an existence

within fenced inclosures. There is a touch of life-giving significance in the Scripture that speaks of Jesus as a door. "By me," Jesus said, "men shall go in and out and find pasture." The notion of Christian life which makes it consist in going into something is but half of the truth. The other half consists in the going out into ampler and greener pastures for the sake of larger life.

A traveler from a country of fences once asked a sheep raiser in a fenceless land if it was not bad to have sheep running over an unfenced plain. The reply was quite worth heeding even for tasks beyond sheep-raising: "There is no need of a fence if the sheep have a shepherd." Saint Paul once thanked God that neither death nor life could separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus. It is indeed a satisfaction that death cannot separate us from God, but it is even more of a satisfaction that life cannot thus separate us. We shall not arrive unto Christian Christianity until we think of it as ever opening out into fresher fields. Forms of statement and of ritual and of organization may be left behind, but Christianity in its inner

genius is the religion of advancing freedom —only, the freedom must be the control of spiritual forces for a human and divine result.

We know there will be some who will shrink from the word "control" in describing freedom. But such protest is verbal and silly. It is through the control of individual and social forces that there arise those blessings which mean the progressive liberation of mankind. Some criticism here is about as reasonable as if one should say, "If I am to use fire, I shall have to observe the laws of fire; I shall have to submit to bondage in my observance of those laws; I shall be hemmed about by precautions to which I shall be a slave." It is possible for a man to talk thus; but which leads to the more blessed freedom, to give oneself to the use of laws which supply one with a warm house and cooked food, or to sit out in the cold and gnaw raw meat? Much objection to the doctrine of control in the spiritual Kingdom shows the marks of rather serious mental handicap in the objector.

And now arises once more the objector who repeats that by its very nature salvation

has to do more with sin than with life. We yield to no one in our insistence upon the disturbing nature of sin and its awful destructiveness in a world like ours. We demand that penitence be thoroughgoing to the last inch; especially if the bad deeds of a transgressor have wrought bad results in the lives of others is the penitent under obligation to travel to the utmost to right the wrongs of which he himself has been the cause. We cannot tolerate easy-going penitence. If a sinner forgiven upon his deathbed should wake and find himself in paradise, and then should realize that his sins had sent others to perdition, we would expect him not to rest in paradise until he had tried every door to get into perdition for the relief of those whom he had wronged. Penitence must be taken seriously; but having said this, we must still avow that after every effort to make amends for a wrong life the genuine penitence shows itself by its forward-looking positive devotion to the right life, in a desire to work with God and men to bring all souls everywhere out to spiritual freedom.

There are goods which all can share to-

gether without making anyone poor. Food and clothes and houses can be shared only within limits, but right deeds and deep insights and fine feeling can be communicated to others without making the giver poor. Perhaps as satisfactory a picture of the kingdom of heaven as any is this hint of a state where the righteous man's loyalty to a lofty ideal and the seer's thrill at profound truth and the response of the lover of beauty to the stirring source of all beauty, are communicated to a great society of saved and transformed lives without impoverishing the givers, but with the enrichment of all in a common rejoicing.

May we pause to say that the salvation of the stumbling can never again be thought of as just as an individual adjustment between the erring and the Creator. At the center there must be such adjustment, but the responsibility for stumbling is not altogether individual but also social. A man may stumble because he is heedless or slovenly in his walk. He may stumble also because the path is full of pitfalls. Keeping roads in good repair is altogether a social responsibility. Some travelers will fall on the best

road, but the surest preventive against stumbling is a good road. The social responsibility for sin must find place in any message of rescue.

PART II

SOME STEADYING FACTORS

CHAPTER VIII

THE INDIVIDUAL

In the first part of this book we have considered the influence of public opinion on some fundamental theological conceptions. While we have used the term "public opinion" somewhat loosely, we have meant the opinion of an important social group at a given time, as, for example, the opinion of the United States in the year 1920, as that has reached a settled deposit of conviction after the action of the longer period forces —or after the fruit of the social mind has matured and ripened. But it would be a mistake always to identify the call of a social group at any one moment with the vital and essential demands of mankind. Even if we define mankind as an organism, we must not judge the sentiment of that organism just at any one day, or even through any brief period, as necessarily comprehending all or much that is valuable. In this part of our essay we wish to discuss

the limitations placed upon opinion at any one crisis by fundamental factors which any single day may be inclined to overlook or to override. There are elements in human society—especially when the problem of the divine is up for discussion—which have a peculiar claim to be heard. Through some of these factors we are accustomed to say that the divine makes signally convincing revelations. It will be clear, of course, that we hold that a sentiment of a given instant may be the voice of God—an instantaneous, irresistible outburst of popular wrath at a great evil is most suggestive of the divine presence—but there are other voices which may correct and supplement the voice of any one day.

First, we look at the qualification which must be brought to the popular utterance of a moment by the word of the man who sees facts exactly as they are, without any regard to whether those facts may be agreeable to public sentiment or disagreeable. Matters of fact cannot always be determined by popular vote—or be ruled out by popular vote. If a fact is a fact, it is what it is, and no overwhelming majority against it can

make it other than a fact. Of course we must not forget that even as we look upon facts much depends upon the seeing eye, or the atmosphere through which that eye looks. Expectations often determine our vision to quite an unsuspected degree. The man who sees is the man who is looking for something, not the man who is just staring about. The very tension of looking for something definite may lead us to think we see that something when we do not. It is entirely true that the force of expectancy in discovery has not been scientifically thought through, and that the significance of expectancy for error has not been given due weight. Moreover, an expert may become so overspecialized as to see facts out of all perspective, so that his report is just as erroneous as if he announced something that he did not see. Making allowance, however, for possibility of error, we must all stand by the plain common sense that the man who has the fact has the right to rise up against the opinion of any multitude, no matter how great—if that multitude does not have the fact.

All of this has been profusely illustrated

in the final victories of the scientists who have proclaimed truths which have at first run counter to popular notions. The proposition that the world is round was at one time very unpopular. All the teaching of past generations had accustomed men to an entirely opposite view. Now, it was possible to shout down the man who held a theory of the rotundity of the earth, but it was not possible to make the shouting very effective after men began to circumnavigate the globe. So with all scientific announcements that have had basis in fact. In some countries where typhus prevails it would be hard to get public opinion to sanction the scientific verdict that the body louse carries the disease germ. But popular feeling cannot set aside the revelation of the culture tube—even if we smash the tube.

All public opinion has to stay within the limits set by fact. In this connection it may be well to recall the words of Abraham Lincoln, whose devotion to the people no one will doubt. Mr. Lincoln was once feeling after the facts in a situation where public opinion seemed to have prejudged the circumstances. Mr. Lincoln

said that he must have the facts, that if he did not have the facts, ten thousand angels swearing that he was right when he was wrong would not save him from the calamity of having decided against the facts. However it may be with angels, we must all remind ourselves, especially in theology, that popular majorities do not avail against facts, so that we must not expect the scientists who tell us how God works in nature, or the historians who tell us how he has worked through the church, or the biblical students who reveal to us the process by which the Scriptures have been given us, to submit their findings to the vote of the people. The people can, indeed, accept or reject, but the facts are what they are.

It may be well for us to hold all this before us as we listen to those who testify as to matter of fact in religious experience. Most of our theology must build upon religious experience. And the religious experience must be the experience of some person or persons. In this domain we must not make too speedy appeal to what we are pleased to call the "common-to-all." There are explorers and discoverers in the sphere

of religious experience as well as in the sphere of the physical and material. Nothing could be more fatal to the progress of religion than to rule out the testimony of those who have extraordinary spiritual experiences. All such experiences must indeed be subjected to most exacting scrutiny to determine whether they are supernormal or merely abnormal. But the scrutiny is not necessarily the scrutiny of a crowd. It is difficult indeed in inner experiences to get at the psychological data apart from the experiencer's interpretation. But if an individual has in a spiritual crisis passed out of despair into triumph, or if he has by spiritual struggle risen from selfishness to unselfishness, or if he has through his faith torn loose from the clutches of an evil habit—all this belongs to the domain of fact and bestows upon him who has passed through the crisis authority to speak in the name of the experience itself.

Even the most naturalistic psychologists of our day concede the basis of spiritual fact in the phenomena of conversion, and of uplift through prayer, and of the cleansing and purifying power of faith. Men

who speak and act out of such experiences are not to be pushed to one side by a transient popular current. Suppose, for illustration, we had a group of men of thousands, or scores of thousands, all pursuing their own selfish purposes. Suppose one of these men by that turning about which we call conversion should break away from selfishness to unselfishness, the majority would be overwhelmingly against him. But who would be in possession of the more consequential fact, the man who had found the path to unselfishness or the thousands who were still in selfishness? To be sure, we have various devices by which we meet questions like this when we are uncomfortably confronted by them. We say that in the long run public opinion will right itself and vote for the man who has the facts. It is just the tendency, however, of public opinion so often to act after a short run, or no run at all, to which we are calling attention.

We must warn again against the fallacy in the dictum that truth is truth no matter who says it. Truth in some utterance is just a lucky guess. Religious truths mean noth-

ing on the lips of some men and everything on the lips of others. Truth about religion, uttered by a saint after years of saintly living, is more authoritative than the utterance of multitudes which care not for religion. The fact in this case is the life and character of the saint himself. The votes of the sinners cannot outweigh the revelations of the saints.

Another man is to be reckoned with in our estimate of the factors which must supplement and correct a popular opinion. We refer to the genuine conservative. Or, if you please, the man who holds fast to the values of the past. We must recognize the proneness of public opinion to rise and fall in rhythm. The opinions of an individual are subject to an ebb and flow dependent upon scores of modifying agencies, such as states of bodily health, or the variations of temperament or mood, or the changes of environment. Man does not live on a straight line, but on a curve which ascends to a peak, then descends, and after a little ascends again. Even the rhythm is not at all regular and the curve cannot be plotted with any exactness. Who of us can tell just when he

is to be grave and when gay? Who of us can tell when the mood of faith is to yield to the mood of despair? As it is with the individual so it is with groups. The tides rise and fall, or the gusts blow upon society and for a while raise waves which seem to be tidal in their sweep and size. It is easy in such circumstances even for a professed leader to feel that the group has been borne away from its past and even to rejoice in such progress. If, now, we define the conservative as the man who is not thus caught in the flow, but who holds fast to the good which has been tried out, we must see in him a divine correcting influence sent to an unsteady world. The conservative who holds to the past just because it is past is not entitled to any great honor. He may be chronically unable to let go, and his conservatism may be pathological. The conservative, on the other hand, who holds to the past because he thoroughly understands that past, and knows the value of the lessons of a former day for the present, is not to be despised. Here we must be on our guard against the illusion that the majority can decide. How many votes would it have taken in the later

and more empty days of Greek philosophy to have decided that Plato and Aristotle were to be dethroned from intellectual kingship?

We have spoken of a law of rhythm which seems to govern the spirit of the masses. It is significant that the leaders who have been most eager for the final welfare of mankind have, most of them, been distrustful of the opinion of huge groups at any one instant, where the opinion has not seemed to rest upon solid processes of reasoning. Karl Marx, for example, whose loyalty to the common welfare we cannot doubt, whether we accept his theories or not, had a dread of popularity amounting almost to an obsession. What he feared, of course, was that by heeding the voice of the people at any one moment he might be carried away from the moorings to which his thought was anchored. He had before him this likelihood of popular opinion to the up-and-downness of a wavelike rhythm. This does not mean that popular thought does not in the main and through a long period substantially advance. The advance, however, is somewhat like the rising of a sea in which the highest wave means the

deepest hollow between the waves, or like the march of the seasons, which does not prevent a planet which is moving toward summer from lapsing back for an occasional day toward the winter. And at times the plight of public opinion is much worse than these analogies suggest. It is as if the whole tide went astray or the planet got out of its orbit. The tragedy is that at times this abnormality is made appalling by propaganda carried on by powerful agents in society.

We must discriminate, then, between the different classes of conservatives. There is, as we have said, the conservative who holds fast to everything because he has been holding fast to it, or because of the sheer power of constitutional inertia. With all such conservatism we must justly be impatient. The other conservatism, however—the conservatism of long familiarity with what is best in the past, the conservatism which, slightly altering our figure, has yielded itself to the main currents in human history—resolutely refuses to be pulled out of those main channels into any eddy, no matter how apparently irresistible. Or we may think

of a worthy conservatism as somewhat like that slowness of the tiller of the soil which to the impatient social radical is sheer dull-wittedness—the slowness which really comes out of dealing with an earth which works according to fixed laws and which steadily refuses to bring forth sound harvests from unsound seed.

It is interesting to note in the study of social progress the frequency with which innovators and reformers protest that they are not announcing any new doctrine. They proclaim a return to something that has been lost sight of. The Old Testament is the record of the prolonged struggle to keep the gaze of the chosen people fastened on the elementary justice which had prevailed among the Hebrews in primitive days. These were days when the Canaanite worship was the new and popular thing—or the Phœnician or Babylonian. Against all this the true leaders put the elements of justice learned before the Jews ever reached the Promised Land. Even against Jesus the charge has been sometimes brought that he did not announce anything altogether new. Critics of Jesus have main-

tained that everything which he said could in substance, if not in form, be found in the Old Testament. There is thus occasional debate as to the originality of the Founder of Christianity. So far as the mere saying of things is concerned, the Old Testament prophets and seers had said the things which Jesus proclaimed. All this, however, is more a tribute to Jesus than a reflection upon him. Jesus did not claim to be a publisher of new things. From his point of view the church of his day had passed far away from the majesty of the prophetic eras of the Jewish nation. In steeping himself in the messages of his predecessors so deeply that their phrases came often to his lips Jesus prepared himself for the attempt to draw his people back to the landmarks which they had forgotten. Of course the originality of Jesus must be, in a comprehensive treatment, approached from another viewpoint altogether than that of the extent of his dependence on the prophets. But we are insisting now that the mere fact that one aspect of the teaching of Jesus looks to the past does not take from the value of that teaching.

Many a reformer is at bottom a preacher of repentance. Repent ye, for the kingdom is at hand. Turn out of the path to one side or the other, or turn squarely around for the sake of looking again upon a forgotten truth. This is quite often the message of him who seems to be the proclaimer of a new day. Such a man cannot be outvoted by the expression of the feeling of the masses to whom he speaks. The man who sees the important continuities of human existence cannot be shouted down forever. He recognizes within himself the push of the currents which flow out of the long ages of the past. Sooner or later these currents will get into their true channel. A conservative of this type must be heeded above all the clamor of his day.

We must never forget that men are not just so many separate, independent units. They are parts and organs of the social body. By some men more than by others the social body is bound to a past which cannot be ignored. No amount of voting by a social body can make that body's past other than it is. As well might an individual announce that by his own vote he would decree

who his ancestors were—making a choice by his own wishes. The decree might be acquiesced in by the ancestor-chooser's neighbors, but would not affect the working of the laws of heredity.

Just as there are men who gather up within themselves the streams from the past, so there are others who sense beforehand the idea or the sentiment for which the future is to call. Now, there is no supreme virtue in just being ahead of one's time. One may be so far ahead of one's time as to be utterly useless to one's companions. If it had been possible, for example, to give a seer of one thousand years ago a glimpse of the marvels of our steam and electricity without showing him the intervening steps leading up to such discovery, the seer might not have been of much value to his contemporaries. His attention might have been so distracted by pictures of the far-off future as to render him impatient with horse power and water power. There is an altogether different manner, however, in which men can be ahead of their time. We have spoken of a life through which the currents of the past run strongly. It is possible for such a man,

whom we may think of as conservative, to catch glimpses of the course of the stream in the future, or to see where various streams are drawing together or where they are to find a pass through a mountain of difficulties. Such men are not to be silenced by the multitude. They are not to be shouted down. As popular thinking comes to sound understanding it will discern that such spirits are the fine instruments by which the future reveals itself.

Recurring again to the figure of the social body, the man with a sense for the future is like those finer, more subtle powers of the body which enable it to detect good or ill afar off—something like the keenness of an eagle's eye, for example. We sometimes think such prophets are seeing visions or hearing unearthly voices. But the visions of their to-day may be facts with which we may have to deal to-morrow. And the voices which they hear in the upper air may be the speech of the street day after to-morrow.

In addition to the men of the past and the men of the future, there are also others whom the popular movements must not cast aside. There are the men who, as we say,

stand for the eternal in the midst of time. We must be careful indeed to guard ourselves against the temptation to set up a scheme of absolutes utterly changeless through all times. Except in the formal sense there is no such system of absolutes. In the moral realm the absolute is the absolute determination to do right under all circumstances. What the right is, however, at a given instant, must be determined by considerations relative to time and place and all attendant circumstances. Conscience tells us that we must do right, but the concrete content of the right is not presented to us in any abstract table of values.

With this word of precaution, though, we are in a position to say that some truths are more nearly absolute than others, and that some values are more nearly eternal than others. The idea of a moral God and of the dignity of a human life are such values; while, of course, the idea of God and the idea of man are constantly changing in the direction of better meanings—we trust. Now, there are some men who rise above time in that they see the eternal value and dignity of human life, let us say. Hilaire

Belloc has written of the effect produced upon him by gazing upon the Bayeux Tapestry. The Bayeux Tapestry is, we know, valued chiefly as an incomparable piece of historical evidence. Something, however, in the lifelikeness of the figures and in the vividness with which abiding human qualities are set forth made upon Belloc the impression that he was gazing upon a picture out of relation to the temporal flow and was beholding truth in a degree eternal. Probably this same feeling is produced upon a sensitive mind by gazing upon any transcendent work of art. We forget the mere circumstance of time and place as we seem to be peering beyond time and place. Who can stand before the Sistine Madonna and think only of its setting as an artistic creation in a given complex of historic circumstance? The eternal in motherhood and the eternal in childhood stand out too unmistakably for that. Likewise there are men who appear to us indeed to disregard accidents of time and space and look upon life as inherently valuable and eternal.

We may be permitted here to use an

illustration which has a current aptness as the theme of bitter controversy. Just for the sake of illustration let us think of the conscientious objector to war. The present writer is neither a pacifist nor a non-resistant. He has no objection to the final resort to physical force for the coercion of the evil of will of individuals or of nations, for the sake of restraining those wills from wrecking society. A distinguished English observer who has had wide experience with the conscientious objector in war time has said that the trouble with most conscientious objectors is "pure cussedness"; but he has also said that among the conscientious objectors every now and again you come upon one who is a "veritable angel of light." Suppose we do find, then, these angels of light among the conscientious objectors. What is the explanation? What can the explanation be except this, that the objector has brooded so long upon the worth of human life as such that life appears to him to be so sacred that no destructive or violent hand should be laid upon it?

It is true that the objector is likely so to idealize human life as to leave out of account

the requisite conditions under which that life would get any chance to show its idealism. It is true also that such brooding may lead to a lack of perspective like that of the poet so deeply distressed by the accidental killing of a bird that he insisted upon a funeral service for life that had ceased to be. All such considerations to one side, however, the fact remains that the worst conceivable way for masses of mankind to deal with the angel-of-light type of conscientious objector against war is to howl him down, or throw him in jail, or scourge him with lashes. For the conscientious objector may see more accurately than his fellows the worth of human life as such, and the inalienable sacredness and dignity of life which must be the foundation stone on which any final society worthy of the name is to be built. We are not discussing the question, understand, from the point of view of political expediency. There ought to be some method of distinguishing the creature of "pure cussedness" from the "angel of light." It will never do for society to agree to an intolerance, in the name of respect for the opinion of the masses, which will scream down or

shut away those who are angels of light. In all such situations the practical rule is hard to find, especially at crises of dreadful national stress. It is to be hoped, however, that mankind will soon become self-controlled enough to listen to the prophets who prophesy in the name of the Eternal at the instant when the voices of the temporal are shouting in deafening uproar. In various constitutional enactments society has taken good care that the popular impulse of any one day shall not override the values of all past days. A like wisdom will insist that a merely transient feeling shall not drown out the words of those who speak for the values of eternity.

But what of all these wild fellows who in the name of Christianity rail against everything we hold sacred? Are we to give heed to their incoherent nonsense? Suppose we think of them as effects, for the moment—effects of a present system rather than as possible causes of revolution. It may be that through their freakish incoherency some disease of the social constitution is reporting itself. Now some diseases can indeed be cured by surgery, but others yield

only to the toning up of the whole constitution. We should treat some agitation as the authoritative pain which reports an inflammation, and should quiet the agitation by striving for better social health.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

In the past five years the events of the great World War have lent new force to the question as to the relation between the church and society, or, perhaps more accurately speaking, between the church and society in the organized governmental aspect which we call the state. Has the church the right to set its truth in any sense above the decrees of the state, especially when the state prescribes for citizens courses of conduct according to the state's and not the church's moral code? What power has the church to influence the vast life of society due just to the fact that it is a church? Questions like these have been raised with increasing frequency in recent months and will be raised more frequently as the days and years go by.

We must not confuse this issue with the older issue of which our fathers thought when they spoke of the problem of the

church and state. The older problem took its first meaning from the time when the church under the popes claimed to be even in a temporal sense supreme. The doctrine of the divine right of kings, which we so violently condemn to-day as utter absurdity, was in a former age a perfectly legitimate and effective weapon against the pretensions of the heads of the church. In early times secular governments had no very clearly defined ideas of sovereignty. Kings did not base their claims to rule on any abstract considerations. The kingship was to a large extent a product of circumstances. Groups of men simply had to have leaders, and monarchies grew up to meet that pressing practical need. The same practical urgency, of course, worked in the growth of the authority of the head of the Roman Church; but the Roman Church, skilled as it was in creedal definitions, and in emphasis upon formal pronouncements, came soon to a theoretical justification of the authority of the church, argumentatively and philosophically founding that authority upon a divine command. The pope ruled because he was the "vicegerent" of God on earth.

He claimed to trace his authority back to the great word uttered by Peter. So that over against the kings, big and little, who did not trouble themselves much about formal arguments for their sovereignty, the pope put his own claim of rule by divine right. To meet that papal claim the kings fashioned for themselves, or found men who could fashion for them, the doctrine that a king had as divine a right to rule as a pope. Utterly out-of-date as the doctrine of the divine right of kings is to-day, it was in its time a logical instrument for whose invention and use we may all be thankful.

The conflict in this older form as to temporal supremacy has been pretty well fought through. The Protestant churches would not think of laying claim to such supremacy, and the Roman Catholic Church has to face conditions as they are in a world in which the church is not temporally supreme. There is, of course, one path along which the church to-day might pass into temporal control in the actual government of society. It is conceivable that by the holding of immense material possessions the church might become very closely linked with that present

industrial and economic order which has an admittedly undue influence in the conduct of all modern government. We would all concede, however, that such a connection would not be inherent in the idea of a church. For the purposes of the present argument we are thinking of the church as a distinctively spiritual group of believers with only so much material connection with governmental and economic systems as to give it a foothold on the actual earth. Suppose we think of the church from this more exclusively spiritual point of view, and ask what its relation must be to the public opinion which comes out of that large general mass which we call society, and what its relation must be also to that definite organization which we call the state.

Let us ask again: What is the church? It has been at times popular to make the church a substantial existence above and beyond the individuals composing it. We have personified the church to such an extent that we have made it an entity on its own account. We have even gone so far as to say that what matters to the individual or to a group of individuals is of slight conse-

quence so long as the church is advanced. Over against this personification of the church to such lengths that the church becomes substantial beyond the persons who compose it there has come a reaction which insists that the only realities in the church are the individuals who belong to the church. All the rest is figure of speech, more or less useful for rhetorical purposes.

As is so often true, the essential reality lies somewhere between these two extremes. There is, indeed, no church apart from the believers composing the church. But, on the other hand, when individuals join the church they cease to be the same as before, assuming that their union with the church means anything. They enter into a new set of group relationships, and in those relationships they unfold powers different from anything to which they would have attained as unrelated individuals. In their connections with one another they develop forms of activity which through the years become norms and standards, molding the life of successive generations to such distinctiveness of united thought and deed and arousing such *esprit de corps* as to afford the

justification for our speaking of the church as a personality.

Before we attempt to elaborate this thought it may be well to point out that we are dealing here with the phenomenon of group psychology which manifests itself in many other relationships besides the ecclesiastical: and which in an earlier chapter took so much of our attention. May we be permitted to repeat that there are industrial and scientific and artistic groups which as groups attain to distinctive life. They are all built upon the primary base that when we add men to men in any relationship in which they are vitally interested we are not adding mere things together in the sense that 2+2=4. The problem is personal and dynamic, and 2+2 becomes not merely 4, but 10 or 100 or 1,000. Moreover, the result is not solely quantitative. In these group connections men working together find within themselves powers which they might never have known outside of the group contact.

This truth is becoming so clearly recognized to-day as to lead in some quarters to a demand for change in the basis of

representation in the governing bodies of states. It will be, of course, understood that we are not expressing opinions on the worth of the suggestions as to governmental schemes which we use merely for purposes of illustration. We may say, then, that in England there seems to be a circle of rather brilliant political theorists, like Mr. G. D. H. Cole, for example, who call for such reorganization of governmental procedure in England that delegates may sit in the supreme councils of the state representing not territorial units, but units based upon occupations. A trade-unionist sitting in Parliament representing not a geographical section of his country, but, rather, a group of workers bound together by a common set of daily bread-winning tasks, could, according to these theorists, be expected to know more about such a group than he would ever know about a territorial district. In addition there would be, it is claimed, a frankness and openness in the delegate's relation to the industry that he stood for that might do away with some corruptions in politics. The chief claim, however, is that the representative would be speaking out of an intimate knowl-

edge of a vital process and out of loyalty to others like himself involved in that process. This same idea has been worked out into philosophic statement by Harold J. Laski, of Harvard University. It is the basis also of much that Miss M. P. Follett says in her work on The New State; and the conception of corporate personality here implied is not widely different from that of the late Dr. John N. Figgis, of the Church of England, whose work has done so much to clarify the whole question as to the relation of the church to the community.

Are we not all agreed that an expert is entitled to hold fast to his opinion over against the clamor of any number of persons who are not experts? If this is true, what about the authority of a group of persons whose organic relationship to one another makes them more expert in their particular fields than they ever could have become as separate individuals? To go back to the illustration of a moment ago, let us assume the existence of a trade-union in possession of a large body of technical information which has been handed down from the past, in possession also of methods of training those who

enlist in a particular industry. Let us assume that the union is familiar with the effects of its industry on the lives of the workers, and that it has some conviction as to the best way of fitting the industry to the general social demands of a given period. Above all, let us assume the play of that force of mutual reenforcement of spirit which defies ordinary arithmetic. This group of workers, then, has a voice which is more authoritative in its own sphere than any voices outside that sphere. It is true that the industry would represent only a body of producers, and that the general public might be looked upon as a body of consumers. The consumers surely would know more about the effects on their own purses of the prices charged by the producers than would the producers themselves. The consumer, indeed, has opportunity of an abundant and painful sort to become expert in adapting his own means to the charges of producers, and out of this experience the consumer has his rights about which he in turn can speak with an authoritative voice. We are considering, however, the union just from the point of view of its own rightful realm, and

we say that in that realm the union can conceivably in its group capacity so speak as to carry the weight of authority from which there is no appeal to any other organization whatever. The members of the industry bound together in corporate unity can know more about their industry than any other group of persons whatsoever. The problem, then, of society is just to determine whether so authoritative a voice as this is to be heeded or not.

Recent industrial disturbances the world over may create in some minds a prejudice against an illustration of this sort. Suppose, then, we lift our thought to the region of more distinctively scientific inquiry. Here is a group of scientists set on the advancement of knowledge. By the very body and spirit of their organization, by the pooling of their sources of information, by cooperation and mutual aid and by the creation of an atmosphere of scientific temper, which of itself sharpens the eyes of the investigator, the group as such may be the highest authority in its sphere. To be a member of the group means to have access to facts and powers not within reach outside

of the group, and the organization in its corporate and organic capacity speaks with a tone that society and the state will disregard at their own peril. Or, to carry the thought one step further, suppose the organization were one dependent upon the possession of some form of artistic skill. Here the members might be so helpful one to another as to create an artistic psychological climate which would make the organization as such authoritative as to standards of art. It is significant that the highest feat of industry, knowledge and artistic power in the Middle Ages—the Gothic cathedral—was made possible by a guild form of social life in which the guild was as vital as a living organism.

It does not subtract from the force of the above statements to point out that there are inherent and original sins in any form of organization. It is charged at once that organizations tend to become conservative—that they give the wire-puller and manipulator his opportunity, that they slow down the speed of the fastest member to that of the slowest. The measure of justice in all this may be allowed. It may be conceded also

that there are some types of mind of rare ability which have to work alone. But concession at all these points does not seriously qualify the largest claim as to the multiplication and transformation of human energies through group organization. As for slowing down the fastest mind to the speed of the slowest, it must be remembered here that we are dealing not with steamships or ox-carts but with minds. It is true that a fleet of battleships, to keep together at all, must accommodate the pace of the fleet to the pace of the slowest boat. In a spiritual organization, however, the great speed of the faster mind stimulates and quickens the speed of the slower to a pace altogether impossible if that slow mind works alone. The faster the fast mind goes, the faster the slow mind goes also. It may be necessary, when a vote of some sort is to be taken, to settle by compromise upon a measure more satisfactory to the slow mind than to the fast one, but group activities are not exhausted in taking votes.

We have drawn this matter out at considerable length because we look upon the church as a group in some measure giving

itself to all forms of activity suggested above. The Divine Spirit works through group psychology as surely as through individual psychology. The church is an organic union of workers, set upon bringing in the kingdom of God on earth. Within her folds the energies of individuals are multiplied and transformed by the very fitting of each individual to his comrades. The church is a fellowship for the pursuit of truth, and finds in the fellowship itself the conditions which make for discovery of truth. In the highest sense, also, there is an artistic quality about righteous living. There is such quickening of the spiritual faculties that the craving for the fine reaches out toward the Source of all fineness. We all agree at once that if a prophet comes to men full of the fire of a new moral vision, the society of the time disregards that prophet at its own exceeding great peril, for the prophet is an authority. But if the prophet becomes more prophetic in a union with his fellows, is not that union also prophetic?

By this time our question as to the relation of church and society begins to answer

itself. If we have in the community a vitally organized body of believers, doing the will of God, and out of obedience to the will of God arriving at the discovery of truth and attaining to fineness of life, all other organizations of society, and society itself, must yield to that church the respect due to spiritual authority, though the authority works through the exertion of influence rather than through any material force. Even if it be urged that we are painting an ideal, the very possibility that such an ideal can be painted is significant for society. Assume the church to have proclaimed a Christian ideal of God, and a Christian ideal of man, and a Christian ideal of man's relationship to God and to his fellow man, and to the world in which he lives, society will disregard those ideals at its peril—to say nothing of the peril of opposing the ideals. It will not be a just charge against such an organization to say that the ideal is well enough, but that what we need is practical guidance. It will be the business of the church to stand for its ideal, even if it cannot always suggest concrete methods of attaining that ideal. The church might hold

before the scientific world the ideal of making science serve an enlarging human life by every conceivable path, while at the same time leaving the scientist free to pass upon the efficacy of this or that scientific method. The church might stand before society and say that cooperative ideals should obtain in industry, even if she herself could form no adequate plan as to how the ideals could be worked out. So in the realm even of the enactment of positive law. To take a single illustration, the church might rightly stand for an ideal of the marriage relationship which would contemplate divorce only in the rarest instances. The state might not attain to the ideal of the church in the enactment of statute, but the state's impotence in this respect would not be in any sense a reflection upon the ideal of the church.

We said at the beginning that the question as to the relation of church and state had taken on new pertinency since the outbreak of the World War. We had in mind the relationship between the ideals of the church and the war aims of the various fighting nations. It is interesting to note in this connection with what sensitiveness

some of the nations have tried to avoid any conflict between the universal ideals of peace for which the church is supposed to stand and national ideals to be won by war. Some nations have, indeed, claimed that citizenship in the state makes the citizen so liable to fight for any cause that the nation may determine upon that all concession to the church is out of the question. Most churches have held that there is no objection to the use of force by the state for a righteous cause. Some nations have of their own initiative sought even in direct war to maintain respect for the church as a prophet of the higher ideals when the church takes a position against war. We may think of the military exemption laws in the United States, for example, as they apply to members of religious bodies protesting on religious principle against any kind of armed conflict. Very likely the average political thinker in the United States would maintain that the state has right of way over and above all religious organizations whatsoever. Practically, however, the exemption of Quakers, and other nonwarring sects, from the duty of military service is a recog-

nition of the distinctive place of the church in society as an upholder of ideals, and as an authority in the realm of spirit. The exemption shows the unconscious or subconscious recognition by the state of the danger of impairing the social value of an institution which stands for spiritual ideals, by compelling it to fight against those ideals. The problem has been one of making an expedient and practical shift to help church and state to get along together, but it has been more than that: the state has, after a fashion, sought to show regard to the church as a witness to an ideal in an unideal world.

We are not concerned with the abstract ethical question as to what an individual should do when a conflict conceivably arises between the ideals of his church and the demands of the state. That will have to be a matter for the individual conscience. We are perfectly clear, however, that in the realm of ideals the church as an organization makes a mistake when it compromises out of regard either for the momentary movement of public opinion, or for state procedure which is to the church manifestly un-Christian. There is no taint of anarchy in

this. The essential justice here has been recognized from the beginning. We have the firmest conviction that the general social ideals of a community will, in the long-run, affect for good the life of the church; but we must insist that those social ideals, on the other hand, are most likely to take shape in a community where a spiritual organization stands uncompromisingly for the things of the spirit. Freedom in the positive aspect is a realization of the largest possibilities in one's life. The church is an instrument for making possible the largest freedom. And when the free spirits are produced they have a right to stand uncompromisingly for the things that made them free.

In speaking of an instrument for making possible the largest freedom it is manifest that we have in mind an ideal church rather than any organization to which we can now point among the various denominations and sects at work in the world Before the real can give place to the ideal, or rather, before the ideal can become more fully real, there must be progress toward a larger and fuller church life than we now know. First of all, the church must cleanse herself of all the ele-

ments which in herself contradict the ideal which she proclaims. It may seem like drawing a fine thread of distinction to insist that an organized church should not give herself to some courses of conduct which she may justly leave to the guidance of the conscience of an individual when that individual, as an individual, is confronted by the questionable course. She must not, in the name of an attainment of a desirable immediate result, surrender an ideal. The most important thing for the world is for the Christian Church to keep the Christian ideal unflinchingly before the mind of mankind.

It is from this angle that the question of some form of church unity is becoming increasingly important. No one desires that dead uniformity in a Christian community which might result if any one type of religious belief or practice were to prevail to the exclusion of every other. On the other hand, the unrelatedly separate existence of organizations so nearly alike as the chief denominations are is fast becoming intolerable. We ordinarily hold our discussion of church unity down to the need of mere economy of effort in practical affairs. We say that

some organic form of church union would make for the saving of money. All this may be true enough, but it is a mere beginning. We should be concerned with the presentation of the Christian ideal, and with authoritative presentation, and with a presentation which has size. There should be some kind of union which will put back of the Christian message the weighty authority of singleness of fundamental aim and plan. There is no quarrel between the churches to-day; but each church is like a musician in possession of a distinctive instrument. The instrument may be excellent, and the musician may be playing it well, but the effect is not orchestral. At best it suggests just the tuning up. Church union does not mean that one church is to give way to another for the sake of its own annihilation or obliteration, any more than an orchestral symphony means that the flute is to give way to the violin, or that both are to yield to the cornet. A flute does not cease to be a flute when it is played in an orchestra. There may be moments in the movement of the musical rendition when the flute is the only instrument heard, just as there will certainly be

other moments when the tones of flute and violin and cornet and all other instruments will blend in one unified whole. It is only in such wholeness that the Christianity of the church will attain unto the arresting and compelling forcefulness of final religious authority.

Christian knowledge and Christian feeling rise out of Christian doing. We must judge the Christian doing of the will of God by the degree to which it issues in knowledge and insight. There are still revelations of God to come through the church to mankind—revelations awaiting the creation of an organ great enough to seize them. Those revelations simply cannot come to large authoritativeness except as a great Body of Christ supplies the sheer vitality out of which the greater truths are inevitably discerned. The good, the true, and the beautiful in the kingdom of God will stand fast before the judgment of all mankind when they are incarnated anew in one Body of Christ which will do for all the world what the incarnation of the Son of God did for the dwellers in Galilee and Jerusalem in the olden days. We need a massive and splendid

spiritual organism—full of grace and truth —that the common people will hear, gladly yielding to a vital authority which is above all artificial and transient and fragmentary authorities whatsoever.

CHAPTER X

THE BOOK OF REBELLION AND FREEDOM

We are searching for the comparatively fixed points within which public opinion has its highest validity as it molds religious conceptions. It requires only the slightest familiarity with the events in our own country since 1914 to realize what an overpowering might is lodged in the will of millions of people when that will becomes unified by a great aim. Bishop Gore, of England, traveling in the United States during the closing months of the World War, spoke with alarm of the terrible unity of the popular forces in this country. To be sure, the unity was an element in the fighting equipment of a nation entering upon the decisive phases of a struggle in which freedom itself seemed to be at stake. But such a united public opinion raises the terrifying question as to what would happen if the sympathy of

the people became violently enlisted for a bad cause instead of a good one. Even fighting, as we believe our country was, for a righteous cause, the opinion of the country went to extremes, or at least sanctioned extremes, out of harmony with the spirit of freedom which is supposed to pervade our institutions. In the progress of the combat most or perhaps all of this could be justified as war measure, but there have lingered into the days of peace some of the furies and violences of the popular sentiment of the war days. When popular opinion is lashed to a frenzy we need help from every quarter to restrain it from breaking through the bounds on which the welfare of the people themselves depends.

Even in quiet times there is something about the massiveness of the force of public opinion which makes it easy for the ordinary individual to believe that when that public opinion has once spoken the decision is final. James Bryce has called attention to the danger that lurks in what he calls the fatalism of the majority. Many of us feel that when once a majority utterance of the purpose of a mighty social

group is recorded the point at issue is settled forever. The feeling is somewhat akin to that with which we regard the outcome of a decisive war. We speak of an appeal to force and a question settled once for all. This is, of course, to forget that force may settle justly, or it may settle unjustly, a debated question. When the Spaniards first came to America they dealt so severely with the Indian population of the islands that we now call the West Indies as literally to wipe them out of existence—all of this with the sanction of sixteenth-century Spain. There can be no question as to the decisiveness of the result. And yet the result itself is a fearful blot on the history of a so-called Christian empire. After the last shot has been fired in every war it is possible to ask who was right, the victor or the vanquished? We use this illustration suggesting physical force because so often the decisiveness of public opinion is suggestive of nothing so much as physical masses, or the weight of numbers. Throughout this book we are trying to establish the contention that the demand of the people is one of the determining factors

in the forging of religious beliefs, but we must face the facts in the world in which we live. The will of the people may be sheer mass force—almost brute force. The voice of the people at any one time may be simply the overwhelming shout of a multitude beside itself. After the people have expressed their will, the question remains as to whether they were right.

We have in the Christian Scriptures the story of the struggle of a people against massive forces, in the name of religious ideals which have meant everything for humanity. The Bible is the record of centuries of rebellion against massive tyrannies in the name of an opportunity for the free human spirit. It does not detract from the cogency of our argument to say that the tyrannies against which the free spirit must fight to-day are not the sort of tyranny against which the Hebrew prophet fought. The spirit of tyranny is ever the same. The one tyranny against which the race will probably have to fight for centuries to come is just the tyranny of the people themselves. A multitude can be as autocratic and arbitrary as a king. The majority can oppress

minorities with as deadly effectiveness as can an Oriental despotism. The mob can revel in the sheer excess of its own might just as truly as can a leader of barbarians or savages. As long as this tyranny is possible in public opinion the Bible will remain the classic volume for the defiance of the free spirit toward tyranny.

This will be all the more true as scientific biblical research increasingly shows how the men of the Scriptures were primarily men of their own times, struggling for freedom in their own day. While it may be that the statements of religious freedom which come to us in scriptural language will be repeatedly charged with a fresh content as the generations go by, the elements of religious liberty, as set on high in the Scripture, will be determinative of the struggles of men for religious life during the days to come. And this will be only in harmony with that law of continuity which binds the generations together. We are coming to see, perhaps more clearly than formerly, how thoroughly the ideals of scriptural liberty have influenced those who have laid the foundations of the free systems

under which we now live. It has been customary for historians to tell us that perhaps the larger part of our modern civil liberty is a heritage from Teutonic beginnings—that in those far-off days in northern Europe our ancestors met together for free discussion in a free assembly, and that out of such meetings came assemblies like the New England town meeting, and the habit of self-determination in the Anglo-Saxon group. This is measurably true, we are told, but the advance from Teutonic origins toward freedom has been unconscious response to the promptings of an ancestral instinct. Granting the strength of such influence, all the more strong because unconscious, we must still remember that from the years of their Christianization our ancestors kept before themselves the ideals of liberty set forth in the Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament. More than once they definitely sought to base their government on the foundations of the Jewish governmental systems. Teutonic influences have moved powerfully in the field of the subconscious, but above the threshold of consciousness was the determination to imitate the scriptural

scheme and to appropriate the scriptural spirit. All this is probably an overstatement, but it has a degree of reasonableness.

Hebrew history itself begins with a revolt against a massive despotism. We are quite agreed that the Scriptures as we now have them do not give a scientifically historic account of the breaking away of Israel from Egypt. The narrative as we have it is laid down in successive strata, the upper strata being the deposit of increasingly religious reflection. The ancient historians were not aiming so much at exact report as at the revelation of the presence of God in their national career; but allowing every concession to the most extreme school of biblical critics in their handling of Israel's experiences in Egypt, and Israel's revolt against Egypt, it is obvious that the Egyptian experience colored all Jewish thought through the entire national existence of the Jews. And a more astonishing proof of the vitality of religious ideals hardly could be found for the contemplation of the Jews than the survival of the Hebrew ideals in Egypt. According to the narrative, the Hebrews were compelled to labor to the point of utter

physical exhaustion; they were required to meet the animosity of the other dwellers in the land of Egypt; they were loaded down with the tyrannies of an apparently irresistible despotism. In the glorious story the Hebrews would not yield. They maintained their own vigorous demand for a religion of their own, and finally succeeded in breaking away for an independent group existence. What the Jews rejoiced in as characteristic at the beginning remained true to the end. The Jewish conceptions were not overwhelmed by the massiveness of Egyptian, or Assyrian, or Babylonian, or Greek, or Roman power. To be sure, the Jews never beheld their national hopes fulfilled, but they did nevertheless stand for moral and spiritual conceptions on which they put their mark forever. Their heroism sunk these ideals deep into the world's consciousness; and if the ideals are never washed out of human consciousness by the tides of our own later ages, this enduring persistence will be due primarily to the Hebrew pioneers of religious liberty.

We do not pretend to give an exhaustive list of the Hebrew ideals which we may in

substance think of as always valid, but we must mention some. First, all Hebrew morality turns round the demand that a human being be treated humanly. The passionate fury with which the Old Testament prophets rage against the inhumanity of men toward one another does much to enforce everlastingly in our mind indispensable human values. It will be remembered that when the pioneer prophet Amos burst into invective against the nations round about Israel, much of his wrath broke upon the inhumanities with which the nations waged war and treated captives in war. These human accents are the glory of the prophetic literature. Even when prophecy became hardened into statute, and much of its glory was smothered under the heaps of priestly ritual, the gem of a fine human insight would every now and again gleam forth in the midst of much that was rubbish. Amid all the detail as to the wave offering and the heave offering in Leviticus, lies embedded that commandment which Jesus picked out as half of his compendious statement of man's total obligation: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Perhaps it is

the fashion to-day too much to decry the old Hebraic legislation. Much of that legislation, indeed, is to us trivial and inconsequential, but the law in which the psalmist meditated day and night dealt with enduring human ideals—enduring even though they were enforced in statutes which concretely have little or no meaning for us now. The aim of the law was to help men to be men, to lift them above the animal and brutal, to free them from everything unnatural, to put them on the path of making the most of themselves. Perhaps the contrast between the humaneness of the standards of the Hebrews and the standards of the nations round about has been overdrawn. The code of Hammurabi, for example, is a piece of kindly and noble legislation. Nevertheless, there were a primacy and an effectiveness and an urgency about the Hebrew ideal which have made it a permanent spiritual possession of the race. A man must be treated as a man, not as a thing of inanimate creation or as a member of the brute world. It may seem altogether gratuitous to call attention to anything so rudimentary, but if the Hebrew notions now seem obvious and

commonplace, we must reflect that the ideal has been made obvious and commonplace by the vigor of the old Hebrew law. Moreover, if we seem to stand firmly upon this fundamental, let us take heed lest we fall. For the course of the past four years has shown that a whole nation can be so swept on by a false ideal as to forget the elementary considerations due to human beings as such. We would not be ungracious in referring to atrocities in war. We admit the possibility of exaggeration of such atrocities. But we must urge that if there were atrocities anywhere and a prophet like Amos could have beheld them, he would have shouted out against them with dreadful anger, proclaiming that no dreams of empire and no ingenious contrivances of statecraft could atone for the violation of an ideal everlastingly noble. If such atrocity had been sanctioned by the vote of millions, Amos would have found in that sanction only further reason for invective. If it had been replied to him that all such atrocities were incident to war, he would have hurled back the word that such incidents were in themselves a condemnation of war.

We have said that the Hebrew law and prophecy always called for the treatment of a man as a man. We may go a step further and say that the Hebrew ideal aimed at a man's making the most of himself. The Hebrews always fought against any tyrannies that prevented men making the most of themselves. We have insisted with wearisome frequency that freedom means more than deliverance from constraint. It involves the positive realization of the possibilities in oneself. We cannot help feeling that in the struggle for liberty the Hebrew kept before himself this opportunity for the enjoyment of freedom in a positive form. It is instructive to note the attitude of the old Jews toward their kings. It is difficult for us to imagine that anyone in biblical days could have dreamed of the possibility of doing away with autocratic leadership in the state. But there was in Israel a respectable party which questioned whether it was safe to have a king at all or not, and the issue always turned round the right of a man to do as he pleased within the limits set by the general institutions of Israel.

Suppose we glance at one or two in-

stances. Naboth and his vineyard have been the theme of the preachers against tyranny for thousands of years. The request of the king for Naboth's vineyard was not inherently unreasonable. Ahab went much further in considering Naboth's interests than a ruler of Egypt or of Babylon would have gone, or even than a modern government with its principle of eminent domain might have gone. A municipality like ours might have run a street through the vineyard without asking Naboth whether he liked it or not. Ahab offered another vineyard, and he offered a fair price in money for Naboth's land. But Naboth refused for an inner and spiritual reason. The land had been the land of his fathers, and to Naboth a sale of the land meant treason to an inner loyalty. We note too, as others have often done, that when Jezebel secured the land by the death of Naboth, she brought about the death by a show of formal legal evidence that Naboth had sinned against one of Israel's spiritual ideals. The very necessity upon Jezebel to resort to trumped-up charges shows the serious limitation put upon rulers in ancient Israel by the funda-

mental principles of Israel. By the way, it is interesting to note that with all this care to protect Israel's ideals, Jezebel was the one person in Israel who most despised those ideals.

Or recall the revolt of the Ten Tribes against Rehoboam. Quite possibly the course of Jewish history as narrated in the books of the Kings is more complex than appears in the account itself. The tribes of Israel may have been a more loosely joined confederation than we have been accustomed to suppose, and tribal separativeness may have played a part in the revolt against Rehoboam. Taking the narrative as it reads, however, Oriental notions had made inroads into the centers of power at Jerusalem. George Adam Smith has pointed out that there is a haziness about the history of Solomon in contrast with the sharpness and clearness of the atmosphere through which we look at David. We cannot doubt, though, that the features of Oriental despotism had begun to reproduce themselves in the court of Solomon, and that Solomon intentionally or unintentionally had fallen away from the regard for men as men which

had always been fundamental in Hebrew sentiment. However it may have been with Solomon, the position of Rehoboam is manifest. Rehoboam listened to the leaders of the Oriental party and with deliberate purpose announced to the northern tribes that, whereas his father had scourged them with whips, he himself would scourge them with scorpions, and that the weight of his little finger upon them would be more oppressive than the weight of his father's thigh. A sharper statement of the policy of Oriental despotism, as over against the old Hebrew policy that the king must be a servant of the people, could not be imagined. When we reflect that the northern tribes finally were lost through evil ambitions in themselves, we must not forget that in the beginning they chose to sacrifice all hope of national union rather than yield to an Oriental inhumanity.

Going back to a little earlier day, the popularity of David, with all his faults, lay in his regard for the ideals of his people. And it is to be observed that when Absalom sought to lead a revolt against his father he began by seeking to persuade the people that his father had departed from Hebrew stan-

dards of regard for the rights which were the essence of Hebrew life. Absalom employed the method of the demagogue, to be sure, but the secret of all demagogic success is that the demagogue makes pretense of appeal to right. Absalom said to complainants, "Thy matters are good and right, but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee." He expressed an earnest desire that suits and causes might be brought before himself that he might do them justice. The very possibility of Absalom's speaking thus against a king is significant. When the old Hebrews undertook to criticize a king, they criticized him. They were not held back by fears of *lèse majesté*. The strictures upon kings in old Hebrew times, if reproduced with anything like similar directness in criticism of public authorities in war time now, would likely lead to imprisonment, if they ever got by the censorship of the press.

The prophets were not without discernment too of the dangerous forces which aligned themselves behind the policies of kings. It would be absurd to represent that there was in the days of the Hebrew monarchy anything like our modern capi-

talistic organization, but there were rich men and public officials who desired to be rich. Hence the outbreak of Amos upon the extravagance of the rich, and upon the public officials who would take money for laying false or unjust penalty upon the needy. Noteworthy in this connection is the condemnation of Amos upon the corrupt public systems of Israel for turning the humble out of their way. Amos seems to mean that the ordinary man in Israel had a right to walk in a humble man's way, or to live in his own fashion. The corruption of the time made it impossible for the humble man to lead his normal life. Perhaps no juster condemnation of tyrannies of all varieties can be found than this, that they turn the plain people out of the path which they would otherwise tread with their own gait and according to their own desire.

Glancing at the other side of the Hebrew ideal, namely, the expanding idea of God, we can see at least three aspects of this expansion, and we can detect how the massive insensate powers can militate against such an enlargement. At the Babylonian exile the Hebrew took a long stride forward in

understanding his God as the universal Ruler. Through the terrific expedient of the annihilation of the Jewish national independence the Hebrews were taught to see the God who is the Lord of all the nations of the earth. They had to think of him thus or abandon him. If he is thus the Lord of all the earth, he has regard for other nations besides those who boast for themselves a unique manifest destiny. This is even now a hard saying for the nations—this that makes God the God of all the nations. Particularist national aims at any instant may call forth a surge of popular feeling which may sweep much universalism out of theology. The various "pan" movements of recent date, Pan-German, Pan-Anglo-Saxon, Pan-French, Pan-Italian, have, of course, been checked by the war, but back of every such movement lies the assumption of a superior type of cultural life, including the religious element. When such particularism is in full swing in any nation it is practically impossible to get a decent hearing for the teaching that God is the Father of all, and that the rights of smaller groups are to be respected from a Christian viewpoint. It

is possibly not too much to say that the modern Christian nations in their financial and political contacts with the so-called backward nations are not yet within hailing distance of the Hebrew conception which came out of the exile. Are they within reach of the lofty lessons of the book of Jonah? A wave of public opinion may sweep any so-called Christian nation into war with a so-called backward nation at almost any day, and do so with an implied claim that God is the God of the covetous nation in a degree or manner other than that in which he is the God of the nation whose territory is coveted. Can such wars of conquest ever have a beneficial effect upon the development of the idea of God?

A second element in the expansion of the Hebrew idea of God was the progressive moralization of that idea. Granted that in the beginning God was worshiped as the tribal God of the Hebrews, yet it must be conceded that the Hebrews taught that he fought for the moral aims for which the Hebrews fought. With sublime daring the biblical authors no sooner discovered a moral obligation which they conceived to be bind-

ing on themselves than they taught it as binding on God also, until in the end they worshiped a self-sacrificing ruler of the universe taking the burdens of mankind upon himself. As an illustration of this moralizing process we have only to look at the protests of the prophets against the adoration of idols. After all allowance for distortion and exaggeration in the account of the heathen ceremonies in the high places, we cannot doubt that these rites partook of an immorality altogether incompatible with the Hebrew's ideal of worship. And yet these downward tendencies could make an easy and plausible popular appeal. Our modern speech abounds with smooth and seductive phrases which would justify immorality in the name of religion. It is conceivable that a craze for low gratification might run wild in modern nations as such crazes ran wild in Israel—making appeal in the name of the Highest. Only the steadying influences of the Hebrew and Christian ideals could then save us.

Once more, Hebrew religion, especially after the exile, advanced to fresh emphasis on the sacredness of the individual. As

Davidson said, the nation perished that the individual might survive, though, as we have said, this primacy of the individual was characteristic of Hebrew teaching from the outset. It will be understood that the Hebrew never conceived of the individual as apart from social ties. The fresh task after the return from exile was to build anew the congregation of Israel, and a congregation is not a mass of unrelated units. The individual is the only entity in religious life: but the individual comes to his largest self in the congregation and with the neighbors. Here again, as we have so repeatedly said, we must keep alive the old Hebrew honor for the individual, and that in defiance of any and all tyrannies whatsoever, whether those tyrannies be governmental or institutional, or those of the sheer weight of popular opinion.

CHAPTER XI

JESUS

We are considering the forces which in the long run may be depended on to check the play of sudden gusts of popular feeling and to bring men back to those solider human values which mankind will in the end give the first place. Foremost among such steadying factors the Christian puts the teachings and life of Jesus.

It is no part of our purpose to linger long on the critical questions raised by modern students concerning Jesus. We are not concerned with the relation of the fourth Gospel to the other three, or with the dependence of Matthew and Luke on Mark, or with the possibility of rebuilding "Q" from the synoptics. It may be that our actual knowledge of the historical Jesus is much less than we have been accustomed to suppose. All our purpose requires is the existence in Christian consciousness of a fairly consistent picture of Jesus which is strong

enough to influence the thought and deed of men. It has been said of Jesus that even though we know little about him we know that he was such a life as to attract to himself the best in the thought of every age. If this is true, the more we reduce the minimum of certain knowledge about him the more we increase the miracle of that spiritual magnetism which through the years marshals so much of the best in the world's thought and deed around himself as a center. The power of Jesus to pull so much around himself is no small marvel.

Taking the picture of Jesus, then, as we find it in the Gospels, and as it has more or less thoroughly mirrored itself in the consciousness of the believers, we see first of all a Mind which looked upon man as he is. One element of the knowledge of Jesus is seldom questioned, namely, his knowledge of human nature. And that knowledge combined two main features—a recognition of the actual sinfulness and weakness of human nature and an unfaltering confidence in the perfectibility of human nature. This is not to fasten upon Jesus a belief in the total depravity of man on the one hand, or in

the possibility of character-transformation by magic on the other. He simply saw the facts of human life as they are—that men are weak, but that they can be made strong; that they are sinful, but that they can be made righteous; that they are selfish, but that they can be made unselfish.

Now, it is at these two points that superficial movements of popular thought are apt to run to excess. Every little while some prophet arises who tells us that the difficulties of modern society are in no sense due to human nature, that they are the faults of the system in the midst of which we live. Such philosophers call themselves optimists in their view of human nature. And their optimism is clearly intelligible as a reaction from the stupid and deadly theory of human depravity which once prevailed. But no optimism is sound which does not take account of facts as they are—the facts of human nature as well as of institutions around us. The view which we are considering may have some justification for rousing men to take a hopeful attitude toward themselves. A first step toward making a sinner into a saint may be to call him a saint, but the

sounder method is always to take account of the facts.

There is nothing in human history to warrant the doctrine that mere change in institutions will necessarily change the inner purpose of men. We give abundant space to the significance of institutions for human development, but the popular thought which now and again sweeps toward some institutional reform with the assumption that with that reform achieved the millennium will be at hand is apt to fall back, after the cause is won, to tragic disappointment. We cannot wonder that masses of men get impatient with the slowness of human progress and clamor for wholesale change of institutions. Present-day institutions do sadly stand in need of change approximating almost to wholesale, but the transformation of the inner purpose of man is that other side of the shield which the true follower of Jesus will always keep in mind when public opinion moves so mightily toward a promised goal of institutional reform.

On the other hand is the tendency of public opinion in dealing with situations in

which human nature shows itself as peculiarly obstinate to give up the problem as hopeless. Then we have cynicism and brutality as the final outcome. When the white men first came to America they found the Indians unwilling to dig gold for them. Out of the urgency of the white man on the one hand and the unwillingness of the Indian on the other came a belief of the conqueror that the Indian was hopelessly depraved—fit only for extermination. Perhaps the greatest single stain on the history of the white race was the resulting brutality of whites. If it be urged that the real difficulty here was the system under which the whites worked which gave them such a thirst for gold, and the system which they put upon the Indians, the reply is that a mere change of system would not have made the whites any less avaricious or the Indians more Christian. The problem here is one of fundamental human nature. The system was, indeed, wholly and inexcusably bad, but the evil of the system came out of the human passions of the whites and the human weakness of the Indians. All this has point to-day from

the doctrine popular among many exploiters that the peoples in the so-called backward lands are so hopeless as to justify the use of sternest measures.

Another element in the teaching of Jesus which is at the same time unpopular for the short run and adapted to the deepest needs of mankind in the long run is the exaltation before men of an apparently unattainable human ideal. It would be indeed a hard critical problem to cut out of the New Testament the ideal of moral perfection which Jesus set before men. "Be ye perfect, even as the Father in heaven is perfect." If the Christian consciousness did not hold firmly to the belief that Jesus said this, it would have been rejected long ago as a tantalizing mockery of human hopes. This is the kind of ideal that men at first cast aside with impatience and afterward embrace as the sum of wisdom. Nothing so disheartens men at first glance as an apparently impossible ideal; and nothing so surely holds them fast at the end.

The ideal of Jesus for whole-hearted service of God with perfection as the moral goal carried with it by implication what

Jesus openly avowed, namely, the unselfish service of one's neighbor. It is here that the emphasis of Jesus on the distinctly human values becomes so marked and it is from the point of view of this emphasis that we have to consider the worth of social institutions. We said a moment ago that the mere change in the institutions cannot transform the inner purposes of man. We meant that the expectation of a speedy cure-all through change of institutions is doomed to disappointment, but that does not detract from the seriousness and earnestness of the essentially Christian belief that Christianity has not done its work until social institutions are Christianized. And that does not mean that we can expect speedily to reach a state where the social institutions stand finally Christianized. We can expect, however, to see the institutions move toward a more and more Christian goal. The test is formally an absolute one, though in actual content the ideal constantly expands. The essential question for a social institution is: what is its effect upon men stated in the largest conceivable human terms? Does it make for the largest liberty not merely in the sense of freedom

from constraint, but also in the sense of helping men to make the most of themselves in the highest and best terms?

May we say at the outset that the attitude of Jesus toward the institutions of his time was at the beginning kindly? He did not move out into life looking for something to smash. He seemed willing to put the best construction on the facts that the facts would allow; and his criticisms aimed not at destruction but at upbuilding. His test, however, was always to ask what would be the result of the institution in its effect on the people with whom it worked.

We look first at the attitude of Jesus toward the church. We are thinking of the church now in its more institutional features, as an organization working under a system of rules, with a set of formal beliefs in mind. The real fact about any church is the people that compose it, but we are thinking now more particularly of a "system." Even in dealing with the purely institutional features Jesus did not speak in unqualified invective. It was the sight of the altar fires and the sound of the chanting of the priests which helped awaken the consciousness of

the youthful Jesus to a realization of his own high destiny—and Jesus never to the tragic end took himself out of the church of his time.

But his criticisms went deep. From the parable of the good Samaritan it became apparent that a man might be a better man and neighbor outside the church than in it. That simple parable is a fearful warning to all organizational religious systems. What do they amount to in terms of neighborliness and simple manhood? It is significant here that at first glance the judgment of Jesus seems to run counter to popular thought. We often hear that a real religious system makes an appeal to the eye through ecclesiastical insignia—that the leaders of religion should take advantage of all those aids which give them standing before the people. The priest and Levite did all this. It might have made the ordinary passer-by on the street smile to hear the Samaritan put ahead of the priest; but this is one of the judgments that the people in the long run will sanction.

So with the criticism of Jesus implied in the word that the Sabbath was made for

man and not man for the Sabbath. To a thoughtful and conscientious worshiper fitting man to the Sabbath rather than the Sabbath to man was indeed an unspeakable hardship; but it hardly could have been so to the ordinary man. These Pharisaic absurdities had back of them not merely the mechanicalizing and externalizing tendency of Pharisaism itself, but also the pressure of superficial demand. Roman Catholicism in our own time draws out its legal requirements to an extent which seems to suggest ancient Pharisaism, but these minutely detailed laws meet the superficial demand of that large element in any body of worshipers who want things settled so that they may know just what to do and what not to do. So also with tithing mint, anise, and cummin. The Master's suggestion of the garden owner counting out every tenth leaf of mint for the temple while neglecting judgment and mercy and truth is perhaps as close as the Gospels come to humor, especially of the caustic kind. But the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin is at first glance and for the short run the popular doctrine. It is easier to step out into the garden and

count the leaves than it is to weigh judgment and mercy and truth. A just feeling for perspective is one of the latest Christian virtues in the order of its dawning in the heart and mind. "Blessed are the pure in heart," said Jesus, "for they shall see God." The Pharisees taught that those should see God whose lives were ceremonially clean. That doctrine was more popular than the doctrine of Jesus, but the doctrine of Jesus looked ahead to the great spiritual discipline out of which the seer's purity would come. This doctrine of discipline was no more immediately popular than doctrines of discipline are now. Jesus judged all these mechanical laws and found them lacking in genuine human result, though meeting the immediate desires of multitudes of worshipers.

How Jesus himself treated the doctrines of the church can be seen by a glance at his treatment of Jewish apocalyptic. That Jesus thought in terms of apocalyptic there can be no manner of doubt. He was a Jew, and apocalyptic was in the air he breathed. Now, apocalyptic was popular. It meant the triumph of the Jew in a national sense,

and the exaction of the last ounce of tribute from the enemies of the Jews. It is a complete misreading of apocalyptic to make it the queer and curious puzzle-making of schools of rabbis out of touch with real life. The rabbis are indeed out of touch with our life when they deal with apocalyptic, but the rabbis of two thousand years ago were not out of touch with the life of their own time. Apocalyptic kept burning an almost fanatical fire of patriotism in the hearts of the Jews. Professor F. C. Burkitt has shown how Jesus modified an element in the apocalyptic of the gospel day. The splendid judgment scene in Matthew 25 is based on the Book of Enoch, but while the Book of Enoch deals only with the spectacular and nationalistic triumphs of the Jews, Jesus introduced into the apocalyptic framework those distinguishing human touches—the reward for giving the bread and water and the coat—which have made the picture one of the great classics in the human values for all time. And yet the transformation at the hands of Jesus hardly could have been popular at their first utterance. The ardent patriots would have objected that Jesus had

toned down or taken the edge off the Book of Enoch.

The entire subject of the relation of Jesus to the Messianic thought of his time is still clouded with uncertainties. Enough is clear, however, to warrant us in saying that the changes which Jesus made in Messianic doctrine were not in the direction of making the doctrine more immediately popular. Jesus introduced hard sayings into the doctrine in the name of the larger human outcome. Go back to the threadbare theme of the temptations of Jesus in connection with his efforts to lead his people. Possibly the force of each of the temptations lay in the certainty with which the tempting plan would please the people. Each promised a shortcut and a quick result, as immediately seizing and holding the aroused spirit of the people.

It is in the realm of methods that the temptation most often comes to yield to that clamor of the multitude which is transient and fleeting as over against those weightier human demands of generation after generation. No great difficulty is likely to be experienced in leading a social group to adopt

a definitely Christian final goal as compared with the difficulty in persuading the group to proceed at once by a definitely Christian method. To meet the impulse to feed the people with bread by saying that man shall not live by bread alone is maddening to a crowd wild for quick results. But distinctly spiritual results are not satisfactorily reached by any but spiritual methods. While bread means more to the average man than almost any other fact of his existence—since bread-winning requires the best part of all his waking hours—the grant of larger amounts of bread will not necessarily bring the higher bread. And this is not to forget the fact that, taken the world over, the most urgent need of mankind to-day is more bread. It is a matter of getting at things in the right order. More bread is likely to follow the search for the things of the spirit than more of the spirit to follow from the granting of more bread. This all looks very clear when we gaze back to gospel days, but perhaps not so clear when the temptation comes to us to-day to let down from the glory of a spiritual ideal for the sake of immediate material result.

So, again, with the temptation to use political means for the sake of advancing a spiritual ideal. It is, of course, possible to use political means without bowing down and worshiping the devil; but there is inevitably so much keeping company with the devil that the fineness of saintly manner is lost. War, for example, promises such quick result for righteousness that a war for righteousness becomes popular—especially with the saints above the draft age; but except in those cases where war is resorted to in order to resist the brutal use of force itself and make appeal to force less likely in the future, the after years pronounce war a failure as a means of spreading righteousness. On the whole and in the main, war is the devil's own instrument, and the devil knows better how to use it than the saint does.

Finally, there is the temptation to hurry it all along by leaping down from the pinnacle of the temple—capturing the imagination of men at a single dash. This is the method of sensationalism—of blazing lights and overwhelming thrills. But it has slight human value in the end. The only way to get into the lower levels of popular under-

standing—if they are lower—is to go down the stairway step by step. For the only reason for going down is to get the people up.

By this time more than one reader will have lost all patience. This is nothing but the same old stuff that rich men and reactionaries and upholders of the established order always talk: Let the work be inner and spiritual! It will take a long time, and while it is going on we will keep tight hold of the present order! The order may not be ideal, but it will last during our time. It breeds nothing but disturbance to inveigh against it.

We should reflect long and carefully on the fact that the only man that Jesus ever called a fool was a rich man, and the only men he ever blazed out upon with invectives were the holders of special privilege in his own day. There is nothing more exasperating in the range of modern experience than the complacency with which upholders of an admittedly unjust industrial or political system will prate about reliance on a pure gospel and the use of distinctly spiritual methods. What all

such system-upholders need is to realize that the obligation is as truly upon themselves as upon anyone to give themselves to things of the spirit. It would be folly to attempt to prove that Jesus inveighed against wealth in itself. He does not seem to have been in the least degree an ascetic, but he did not fail to call attention to some moral perils involved in the use of wealth. In all the contacts between man and man which the possession of any sort of privilege made possible Jesus was careful to bring the use of the privilege to the test of the human result. If money is force, it is the prolongation of the power of the man who holds the money. He is as much responsible for making his money-contacts with his neighbors spiritual as for making his handclasps and his words and his immediate personal deeds spiritual. Dives in the parable is a picture of a man who is rich in this world's goods and in nothing else. All he wanted in this life was sumptuous food and fine linen. All he wanted in the place of torment was not forgiveness based on a changed attitude to Lazarus, but water for his burning tongue.

To get back to the theme immediately in

hand, we must recognize that the inevitable slowness of movement in the kingdom of God will put the Christian system at disadvantage in popularity as compared with some others which promise a speedier result, but the ages, rather than the age, will approve the ripened work. And here again there will be opportunity for inner disloyalty which will try the souls of the righteous. For just as some will misuse the fact that the Kingdom comes by a spiritual process to decry every effort to deal with an unjust material system, so many of the same type will protest against any hastening of the ripening process in the name of the slow growth of the Kingdom. But with all his reliance upon the slow changes of the months and the years Jesus was not a passive waiter on events. The closer we get back to the first gospel representations of him the more we discern a certain imperious urgency. After the long wait of the years it appears to him that only the last words of strong call are necessary to precipitate the crisis which will usher in the new day. Jesus not merely waited for the ripening of events; he sought to ripen them. He would hurry

the harvest, like all the prophets before him. Readers of the Old Testament will recall the suggestiveness of the expression that Amos was a presser of the fruit of his trees. The fruit would not ripen except after pressure. And Amos did the same for Israel: he hastened the ripening of events, though, like Jesus after him, his pressure was always spiritual.

It remains to say that Jesus introduced into the life of the world the ideal of human life which men everywhere are coming to realize as final. This does not mean that the ideal is final in the sense of standing in static stillness, but final in the sense that life is final, showing forth the abundance and fineness and energy and steadiness of a personality which we take as our aim. Our understanding of Jesus constantly expands, or, rather, without looking to him to see what he would do in a particular moral crisis, we seek to test our spirit by his, which leaves us with the resolve to use our own freedom to find the last ray of light upon the problem and the last ounce of moral strength for its proper handling. There can be nothing final about the Christian's moral

life except the unshakable devotion to Christ at its center. The concrete duties themselves are relative, absolute as the abstract law of good will may be. The Christian life is one continuous effort to carry the Christ spirit into all human relationships. This is not as popular as a system of duties fixed and unchangeable, but only with an expanding ideal of this kind can we hope for a real kingdom of God.

He came that we might have life, and might have it abundantly, but life meant to him the direction of all the energies into the highest channels. He might have met larger response if he had preached the gratification of the lower impulses in the name of abundant life. Other leaders have done that and have at last gone down before the judgment of mankind. The Christ idea is to bring every impulse under subjection to love of God and love of one's fellow men. And greater than any body of teaching to set this ideal forever in the consciousness of men has been the life of Jesus himself. Little as the critics may think that we know about him, what we do know makes us certain that he accomplished the twofold

miracle of utter love of God and complete service of man, or, rather, that he made his love for God known in a service of man, which for moral fullness and depth of wisdom and vastness of energy is the chief fact in the realm of human ideals. Greater than anything he said and did is what he was. And he who seeks to be like him will have to pass below the popular cries of a particular day to find those everlasting human values upon which he sought always to build.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHRISTLIKE GOD

WHAT gives Christianity its permanent power, however, is not merely the ideal human life as revealed in Jesus. If that were all, the world might indeed be forever grateful for Christianity, but Christianity would be more a set of ethical maxims than a religion. The peculiarity and the strength of Christianity is the belief that in Christ we see not only what man may become, but what God is; and in this latter phase of the Christian revelation the heart of mankind is more deeply satisfied than in the former.

As in the problem of Christ as man we were not concerned especially with New Testament criticism, so in the problem of Christ as of God we are not overmuch busied with so-called apologetics. We shall, indeed, have something to say of skepticism in a moment, but we are not about to launch upon so futile an endeavor as to try to prove formally that God is like Christ. The idea

has not been lodged in the minds of the race by formal argument. We are moving in the sphere of belief and faith. Enough for our present purpose that the positive disproof of the Christlikeness of God is impossible. On the whole and in the main, an essential characteristic of human nature is the proneness to put upon everything the best construction possible. It is not human to begin to doubt everything at the start. We doubt, indeed, but only after we have been deceived. We assume that our neighbors tell us the truth until we detect them lying. Some cynics have said that this is nothing but that constitutional good-humor which comes welling up from subconscious depths, deceiving mankind; but even so, the cheerfulness is part of human nature and must be reckoned with even in theistic argument. This is not flying against reason nor in the face of facts.

In spite of all the hard features of the universe common sense asks if it is nevertheless possible to believe in the God of Christ, and, finding that it is possible, continues to believe. Granting all the difficulties of abstract argument in the thought

of incarnation, humanity still asks, "What kind of life would God live if he became man?"—and, finding that question abundantly answered in Christ, turns the formal arguments over to the theologians. If the theologians could prove such a thought of God absolutely impossible or directly contrary to historic fact, that would be another question; but abstract thought can do nothing of the sort. Since the time of Kant it has not been formally within the reach of argument to prove that the God of Christ—or any kind of God, for that matter—exists; but it has been equally impossible to prove that he does not exist. In a realm so wholly one of belief we take sides; and we may well believe that in the question as to the Christ-likeness of God humanity will take the best side.

We pass to consider some ideas about God which now and then take on great actual force in the mind of the people, amounting at times almost to popular craze. In this way we shall find some of the deeper demands of the human heart on which the belief in God ultimately rests. And first of all we notice those occasional gusts of athe-

ism that break on the human mind. Some such storms arise when large sections of the public are confronted for the first time in a terrible or overwhelming fashion with the hard features of the present order: was it not Voltaire who used to say that the Lisbon earthquake made atheists by the scores of thousands? It will be remembered also that after the French Revolution had advanced into shameful excess popular representatives abolished God by vote. But such cases are not true to the steady and normal process of human thinking. When men see their fellows go down into death by droves and swarms they think of a cheap humanity and a cheap God—or no God at all—until they think a little further. We are not seeking to dodge anything, certainly not the hard aspects of the order in which we live; but these hard aspects have been here since the first man. In an age-long contemplation of them the race has nevertheless come to belief in a good God—to too strong a belief to let go of God because of some striking or spectacular manifestation of the power of forces which work every day. Men have been familiar with death too long to allow

the fact of an unusual incident of death to shake them completely from belief in God. So far as the death of the individual is concerned—and the individuals are the only ones who die—instant death by a natural catastrophe may be more merciful than long-drawn agony in one's own bed. Death which wipes out whole families spares the members the distress of separation; and death which touches great numbers broadens the area of sympathy, which makes for a co-operative bearing of the sorrow. These are not wholly satisfactory reflections, but they are such as fill the consciousness of the greater groups of men on second thought. What men think in time of storm is seldom final.

A second type of popular thinking would insist that the only really popular religious attitude is a species of indifferentism. We are to do the best we can in this life and let any other life take care of itself. Why worry? If we do the best we can, we shall be prepared for another life if there is one; and if there is not, it makes no difference. Such would-be guides tell us that the ordinary man thinks very little about God or

freedom or immortality. He is too busy, or too tired, or not interested. The only religion necessary is one of mutual good will. If affliction comes, time will heal the wound and the longest night will seem short after it is over.

This conception can be so put as to seem the very height of common sense. Probably most of us have at moments felt just this way; but not many of us feel this way always or for long. William James used to say that he personally felt very little interest in the problem of immortality, but he wrote a most attractive book about it, and in the end came to brood much over immortality and kindred themes. There is much similar inconsistency in men. In the long run the question about God and his thought for men comes irresistibly and inevitably into the consciousness of mankind, in defiance of what seem to be the peremptory voices of practical and work-a-day philosophy.

Another type of popular thought would, indeed, accede to the Christlikeness of God, but would not really face the hard toughnesses of the universe. It would boast of gazing upon good rather than upon evil. In

the last war we learned that the most harmful sort of propaganda was that which told the truth—and never anything but the truth—but which picked the facts to be told. In the end the peoples would rage at being deceived. So will it be with any type of religion which will not face all the facts. Jesus faced the facts. If we are to believe in a Christlike God, we shall not win universal dominion for that God by any sort of fooling ourselves, or by calling things by any other name than that which belongs to them. It does not make any difference how restless the multitudes become over the insistence that we look at the facts; we must look at them if we are to secure the final support of that final multitude that no man can number. Popular puttings of religious truth sometimes urge us to fashion for ourselves the world in which we live. The raw material is all around us; we are to pick out only the good. The good man looking out upon life sees only the good: the bad man sees the bad. Now, the aim in all this is clear, but the God of Christ must be the God of things as they are, as well as the God of the things to come. We may put it down

that the human mind will not long be satisfied with any type of easy religion—no matter how large and loud the applause which may at first greet such religions. The doctrine of the Christlike God means nothing without the cross; and whatever else we may say about the way of the cross, we hardly can say that that way is easy.

If the acceptance of the Christlike God means willingness to accept facts, it also means willingness to accept severe duties and disciplines. How anyone can see in Jesus an amiable well-wisher is something of a mystery; but some cry out for the amiability of a well-wishing God, an indulgent Father laying no heavy burdens upon the consciences of his children, especially no heavy burdens of responsibility for the welfare of the less favored children. Yet if there is one thing sure about the temper of the human mind, it is that that mind will not long be satisfied with a merely well-wishing God. President Eliot once said that the best type of father is the one whom the children respect more than they love. As we said in an earlier section, the love of God is naught, or worse than naught, if it is

not based on a foundation of sturdiest righteousness.

In the parable of the different kinds of soil the Master told of the shallow soil overlying the solid rock. In such soil the seed takes hold quickly and springs up at once, to the great joy of the inexperienced farmer, delighting his heart with the prospect of an early harvest. But the experienced farmer knows better. He knows that this ready response means early withering. Jesus seems to have clearly in mind the hard-heartedness of a quickly responsive emotionalism. The hardest-hearted, most disappointing people on earth are the amiable, well-wishing emotionalists who love with an outgoing gush of affection which soon dries up. Better have the taskmaster God of the Pharisees, provided only he be fair, than to have the God of Christianity if the love of the Christian God be just easy-going likeableness. In the long run the people would rebel against such a God. If God is a hero, himself bearing a cross heroically, men will at last crown him Lord of All; but if the cross is merely a sign of Fatherly good-humor which will put up with everything, and forgive and forget

everything provided only that the children think well of the Father, the children will in the end rebel.

Another characteristic of a so-called popular religion is its insistence upon positiveness of a certain definite stamp, the firmly fixed standard. We spoke of the movement in the preceding chapter. We speak of it again in this broader relationship. It is characteristic of certain moods of the popular mind to insist upon a yes-or-no answer, upon a word that closes the case, upon an infallible standard. The emphasis upon the relativity of some divine standards that we once thought were hard and fast has created widespread discontent among believers who want all problems settled once for all. We all know that the popular leader must make unqualified statements. Positiveness is a prime requisite for one who would lead the masses; and positiveness must be an outstanding mark of any religious system which really commands men. It is possible to put this aspect of the truth very convincingly, but in the long run the larger life is not with the closed system. Some critics hostile to Christianity have

taken advantage of this human craving for finality to attack the Christian system, avowing that the historical student has undermined the foundation of the faith by showing that every phase of Christian teaching has been relative to a definite set of historical circumstances—that Christianity is not absolute but altogether relative, etc. But there has not been any school of criticism hardy enough to claim that Christianity is not a historical fact. Christianity is here as an actual positive force, accomplishing definite results in history. The absolute phase will not concern us much if Christianity proves adequate to any historical crisis which arises.

The real problem is not as to whether Christianity is absolute or not, but as to whether it is adequate or not. And we submit that a living spirit at work in the world moving freely toward a lofty spiritual ideal is more likely permanently to satisfy the heart of man than any set standard, no matter how fixed and final that standard may seem. Infallibility of statement in the Scriptures is not so important as inexhaustibility of meaning and of life. Infallibility

of church decrees is not in the long run so mighty with men as the current of quickening inspiration which abounds in any church worthy of the name.

We must admit that modern criticism has made many good people believe that Christianity is in a bad way through the doing away with standards absolute in the old sense. The plain man of the street feels that something is wrong. But the fact is that we never had any of the old infallibilities. We said we had them, but we were forced to admit that with our differences of interpretation of infallible books and infallible dogmas we were practically in the same plight as if we had admitted their relativity to start with: even the utterances of infallible popes are capable of quite smug adjustment to varying situations. We have always treated sacred institutions in this living way. Why not admit the fact and continue to do so with our eyes open? On the whole it is best to trust in any community to the men who are most alive; and freedom makes for life.

It is quite the fashion to charge Christianity, again, with having yielded to the

popular philosophy of the day, namely, pragmatism. In trying to avoid the easy method of reliance upon appeal to an artificial, almost a mechanical standard, we may ourselves have seemed to fall into this opposite extreme of yielding to a superficial pragmatism. Just what pragmatism is we confess ourselves unable to say, after twenty-five years of study. Perhaps Mr. Dooley hit off the popular understanding of pragmatism fairly accurately when he said that truth is whatever you can cash it in for and get for it on Saturday night. The critic says that Christian pragmatism is believing whatever will make us feel happy, or whatever we think will be good for us without any regard for historic or scientific fact whatever. There may be a popular religious pragmatism of this sort, but such a system is far from what we have in mind.

Making all allowance for the commonplace truth that both in history and science the student sees very largely what he wishes to see, we nevertheless insist that no religious system can be ultimately accepted by men which blinks or dodges any fact whatsoever. We must hold our

understanding of the origins of Christianity open to all the corrections which scientific research may establish as necessary. We must face the situation in the realm of nature exactly as telescope and microscope and spectroscope and test-tube reveal it to us. A fact must be treated as a fact and as nothing else, though the upholder of Christianity, like everyone else, has a right to protest against having every sort of guess thrust upon him as a fact. Treating facts as facts, however, the interpretation of facts is another matter; and in that process of interpretation quite another factor may enter besides the merely factual. One man may make a longer leap into the realm of faith from a fact basis than another may, but the length of his leap may indicate more spiritual energy than has he who prides himself in keeping nearer the facts. Popular judgment is not finally on the side of the intellect that is too matter of fact.

And when we are speaking of facts we must always remember that there are inner facts as well as outer. In the realm of faith the inner feeling of security and satisfaction is a fact, a fact that shines forth from the life

and makes its impression on the world of facts. Popular decision sooner or later judges beliefs by the effects on the lives of those who profess them. It sooner or later brings into the field of view the question as to what spiritual meat this or that life feeds which makes it what it is. The authority of a belief is not so much the formal ground for it in strict logic as the result which it can produce in the realm of the personal. In speaking of one of his friends William James said that this friend gave himself more and more to a belief in personal immortality and became handsomer every year. Allowing for the picturesqueness of the James rhetoric, we have here an appeal to the consequences of belief as an argument for the validity of the belief. When we say of Jesus that he is an authority upon the character of God we may not have any appeal to strict logic in mind. We may mean that his belief in God made Jesus the man that he was. In this sense it may well be that the belief in the Christlikeness of God is pragmatic, but not pragmatic in the sense of closing the eyes to facts in the world of events or things.

Does the belief in a Christlike God make the believer Christlike? This is the argument which will make the final appeal to the judgment of the larger masses of mankind. The proof of Christianity is the Christian.

But public opinion must be heeded when it declares that the existence of Christians in the individual sense is not enough to prove the worth of the doctrine of a Christlike God. There is the threefold challenge of an evil industrial, international, and racial situation. If the doctrine of the Christlike God can Christianize these relationships, the triumph of Christianity will rest on the basis not of theoretical soundness merely but of historic importance. We repeat that the essential question as to the historical validity of Christianity is not so much a matter of the past or of the present as of the future. Can Christianity be made in the larger sense a historic force? It is admitted that the Christian doctrine of God has produced high types of individual character moving within the limits of conventional and accepted morality; but too often the tragedy has been that the most devout of such individuals has not been able to see that the Christian doctrine

of God has a significance for the wider relationships.

There hardly can be any doubt that Christianity has as yet barely touched the industrial and international and racial relationships. Within certain spheres competition is well and good, but how Christian is it in the struggle for daily bread? Cooperation must replace competition in industrial, international, and racial contacts. In the field of missionary endeavor the chief obstacle to the spread of the gospel is not the nature of the native or the character of the missionary, but the glaring contrast and contradiction between the preaching of the missionary idea and the actual practice of the national group out of which the missionary comes. Christianity has yet to meet this final test before the vast masses of the race will vote for Christianity. Can Christianity make cooperation and mutual aid take the place of competition in industry? Can Christianity make international good will take the place of armaments and threats of war? Can Christian missions really work out a practice of brotherhood for all races together? If this cannot be done, thinkers

here and there may hold to the belief in the Christian character of God, but the mass of men will pass the belief by as unimportant. The most essential question about God is as to whether God is Christian or not. That can be made clear to the masses only by the way the Christians act in these larger relationships. Industry involves that struggle for daily bread which engrosses the most of the waking hours of the vast majority. International and racial relationships mean the possibility of war to death for ourselves and our sons. The general good sense of mankind is right when it insists that if the Christian doctrine of God cannot be made to bear fruit in Christianizing such realms, it is not of large consequence as to what else it can do.

We wish to say as we draw to a conclusion that common sense always asks not merely as to the kind of instrument we have for the accomplishment of certain ends, but also as to the power at hand, or within reach, for the desired purpose. We believe that in the doctrine that God is like Christ we have an adequate dynamic for individual and social redemption. A materialistic socialist won

much applause a little while ago by saying that his only interest in Jesus of Nazareth was in his being a carpenter. "Only in so far as he was a carpenter is he of interest to the laborer," said he, which shows that even the socialists do not always know the secret of social dynamic. Assuming for the sake of the argument that it is possible to believe in the God of Christ, could there be anywhere found a mightier spiritual force to put back of social reforms and transformation?

At this point we are again directly challenged by the statement that as a matter of fact scores of effective social leaders to-day are not beleivers in God at all and yet they work with a passionate devotion to human welfare which would go even to martyrdom. They stand out in forceful contrast to many professed believers in the Christian God who choose the way of smug adjustment. All of which we openly concede. The old extreme putting of the dependence of individual character on belief we cannot subscribe to. It is not true that if we pull up every doubt we find a sin at its root. There does indeed abound more faith in some

doubts than in some of the creeds. It is unquestionable that many social leaders do fight valiantly for the cause of mankind. It is an abominable slander to say that all doubts come out of evil hearts. Much doubt comes out of rage against a total system which seems set against man. Much comes of the manifest inadequacies of organized Christianity in the face of the social evils. Much comes also from the fact that many of the doubters have never heard Christ preached in any other than a dogmatic institutional sense. It is possible for a man whose own heart is filled with a spirit of Christ not to recognize the formal, doctrinal Christ of some dogmatic preaching.

But conceding all honor to the men who without formal belief in the God of Christ nevertheless act in the spirit of Christ, we must cling to what seems to us clearly manifest—the belief that only by trusting in the God of Christ can we get force enough to carry through the great social transformations. If the whole universe is set against us, the requisite faith will be worn down and frittered away. The social enthusiasms of men are not so much likely to be upset by

terrible shock as to be eaten into or dissolved by the heaviness and prosaicness of the task itself. Very often the most socially minded men are most individualistic and self-reliant in their work. They go ahead without much sign of response. But in the end the people must carry the task through; and they need the dynamic of spiritual reenforcement. We believe that there is such dynamic in the thought of the Christian God. All the world loves a hero. The God of the Christ of the cross is heroic. If God is not what Christ reveals him to be, he falls below the heroic level. If he is not what Christ reveals him to be, there are men on earth who are better than he is. But in the absence of direct proof to the contrary we may believe that earthly heroism is but a faint glimmering of the heroism of God. As men catch the significance of the heroism of the Christ of the cross as revealing the thought and purpose of God himself, the springs of energy will be opened up which will make it possible for the peoples themselves to fashion a new social heaven and earth.

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