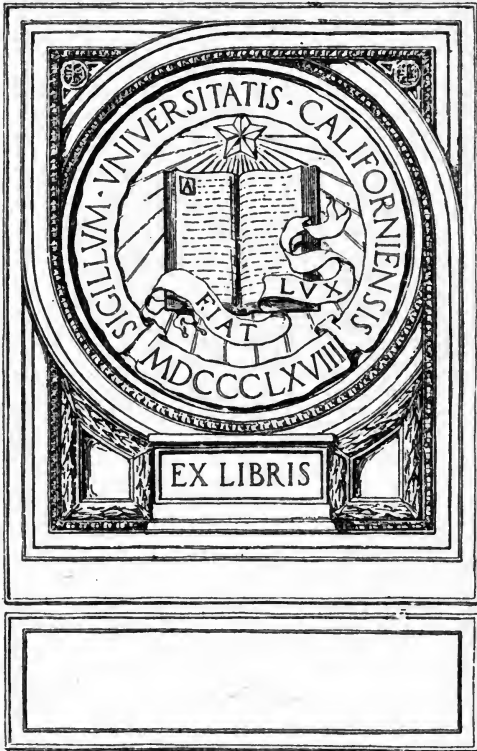


A RACE'S
REDEMPTION

JOHN LEARD DAWSON

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A RACE'S REDEMPTION

BY

JOHN LEARD DAWSON



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“Read and study as if God had spoken directly to you. And do it with as little bias from the creeds of the church as is safe. This whole theological world has not yet been circumnavigated. Push out into the sea and explore farther than anyone has . . . The Holy Ghost is to-day in the world, seeking for prophets, and grieved because he does not find as many as he wants.”

PROF. L. T. TOWNSEND,
Sacred Rhetoric Lectures,
Boston University, 1875-6.

Never say you think as other people think simply to please them, not even when those other people have acquired the right of calling themselves by such names as churches, associations, synods, conventions, conferences, assemblies or councils. It would be bad for you and not much better for them. You need your own self-respect and the approval of that God who made you a rational being that you might weigh and decide for yourself in matters of every sort. These people, too, need the thought you are able to add to theirs quite as much as you need that which they are able to add to yours; and the less they feel that need the greater it is. Therefore be true to your intellect that you may be true at once to yourself and all other men. Even though you cannot deny that there must be undetected error mixed with your truth, be not abashed, but say out your word bravely; for the case is no better with them.

The old heresies did not have salt enough in them to preserve them even to our time; and there are only a few sincere things extant with more of vanity and less of truth in them than portions of the ancient orthodoxies, they are all so mixed with the old paganism. And are they not, at the same time, all very distressingly of our own flesh and blood, too—our very own?

PREFACE

Truth wins its way slowly. It is well, however, for us to remember that it does so surely. No part of it can always remain either covered up or lost. It is now established that God's general method in creation was that of those long upward processes which we indicate by the word evolution; and if the interpretations represented by this volume are correct, it will eventually be everywhere confessed that his method in redemption is the same. The aim in creation was to bring matter to its highest possibilities by allying it with the vital, the moral and the spiritual, as these exist in man; and the goal of redemption will be attained when man reaches that summit where the spiritual in him will assimilate all else to itself, causing even his coarse clay to disappear in the process. Indeed this work might, not too unsuitably, have been entitled "*Evolution through Christ.*"

The Twentieth Century version of the New Testament has been used, not because it was regarded as absolutely correct at every point, but because it is in present day English, and because by using it in place of improved translations which he himself might have attempted, the author could give all his readers the opportunity

PREFACE

of verifying his quotations. The Old Testament passages, on the other hand, have, as a rule, been drawn from the English revision of 1885.

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I

INTRODUCTION

It is safe to assume that righteousness is everywhere the same in its character and its operations, that it never exists apart from love, and that men can and do detect its presence where it is displayed and its absence where it is not displayed; and that this is as true when we come to the consideration of theories touching God's dealings with our race as it is in matters of less scope and moment.

In the pages which follow I have used both the Old and New Testaments as books composed of writings which represent the ideas of God and his righteousness which existed in the minds of leading thinkers of the Israelitish race at various times during several centuries of the history of that remarkable people. These ideas I have regarded as partly true and partly false. I have taken the ground that the false was very largely the contribution of the priests, who were guilty of every sort of greed and oppression; while the true was set forth in a growingly worthy manner by the prophets, who scorned all that was base and sordid and unfair, preached high ideals in the name of God, and accepted ruin, torture and even

death, rather than degrade their manhood by unworthy concessions to priestly, popular, or royal power or prejudice.

I have assumed that all teaching, which is genuinely Christian, must not only accept but also incorporate, everything in the way of verified science which reaches us, whether from the pen of a Darwin or a Wallace, an unbelieving Haeckel, with his 4000 radiolaria in the proof, or the Darwinian Jesuit, Father Wasman, with his 4000 species of ants. But I have not assumed that the final word of science on the question of origins has yet been spoken. I have even questioned whether either the word God or the word Nature taken by itself, is the one the use of which is calculated to throw most light upon the various phases and stages of world formation, or the whole history of our own planet.

I may cite here one of the latest words of the great Ernest Haeckel. On page 94 of his "Last Words on Evolution" he says:

"We may instance, as a peculiarly interesting fact in the psychic life of the unicellular radiolaria, the *extraordinary power of memory* in them. (The italics are mine.) The relative constancy with which the 4000 species transmit the orderly and often complex form of their protective flinty structure from generation to generation can only be explained by admitting in the builders, the invisible plasma-molecules of the pseudopodia, a fine 'plastic sense of distance,' and a tenacious recollection of the archi-

tectural power of their fathers. The fine, formless plasma-threads are always building afresh the same delicate flinty shells with an artistic trellis-work, and with protective radiating needles and supports always at the same points of their surface."

Continuing he refers to Ewald Hering's word concerning memory as "a general function of organized matter." And this word of Hering's has certainly a very wide application, if memory is involved in all repetitions of a given act, which are to be witnessed in the successive generations of given species of living organisms.

Memory of this sort is to be found in the vegetable as well as in the animal world. It stands revealed, too, every time a crystal takes shape or a chemical combination is effected. Hydrogen is never exploded in the air without remembering to take up one unit of oxygen for every two of its own, and so to form water. Water itself never forgets to expand when freezing. In short each element has a perfect memory touching its own ways and a perfect memory also for the possibilities of other elements in relation to itself. When we come to chemical marriage we find each element perfectly schooled in the allowable and the forbidden, and never witness a case of miscegenation, though perhaps we do see some instances of mismating, which are speedily followed by a loosening or a complete severance of the tie. We never find the sweet briar mistaking its peculiar fragrance for that of the hedge rose, nor the fir

putting on the garments of the spruce, nor the birch those of the maple. And the tree which lives its life altogether alone from the start has as good a memory as the one that is in the way of getting lessons from its elders. The truth is that memory, in the sense in which these great scientists have used it, is common to all matter, whether organized or otherwise—it is as truly the inheritance of the element hydrogen as of the radiolaria.

How shall we account for this? Laws are only constantly applied rules or forces steadily used in given directions. What or who applies them? Nature? Nature is everything in general and nothing in particular. Haeckel's latest word is "that the highest concept, God, lies in those laws themselves—those great eternal, iron laws, based upon the very nature of things, according to which the entire world proceeds."

We have three things here, or two things and a person. We have "the great eternal iron laws," "the very nature of things upon which they are based" and "lying in those laws themselves the highest concept, God"; and it would seem that while "God" is but "the highest concept," or idea, of some human mind, "the great eternal iron laws" manage to carry on the work of a person infinite in every highest attribute known to man, upheld, as these laws continuously are, by "the very nature of things"! Among their other achievements these "great eternal iron laws" put

memory into things animate and inanimate, in such a triumphant way that they simply never forget! This is a stupendous achievement. But while one agrees at once that the thing has been done, one pauses before the description of the doer and asks himself whether, with God and great eternal iron laws to choose between, he would not have changed God from "the highest concept" to an infinite person, and regarded him as doing everything according to the counsel of his own will in the irresistible manner suggested by "the great eternal iron laws" of our scientist. That done, God would also appear in the case as himself "the very nature of things."

This is what I have done. And, besides, I have taken the liberty of suggesting that it is as Life that God has been producing and fashioning all things from the first. Laws are dead iron things, Nature is vague and indefinite, but, as all men know, Life has in it intelligence, with both the memory and the imagination, of which so many evidences are to be found by the student of things past and present on this planet and elsewhere. Life possesses also, as every man knows, Volition and Conscience. Above all, it possesses love. Surely it is upon this Life, as the very nature of things, that the laws are based, according to which the entire world proceeds. Every evolutionist knows that the movement of things has been upward from the start and that it is upward still. The higher characteristics of Life are con-

stantly subjugating to their uses the lower; and these on their part are not crippled or crushed, but exalted and glorified in the process.

The blind man's concept of the central body of our planetary system is not the only sun there is. But for the existence from of old of that vast center of attraction and source of light and heat, neither he nor his concept would ever have found a place on this planet. "God, the highest concept," is but a testimony to the existence of God, the foundation and, at the same time, the builder of all that is. To do as Haeckel does and make "great eternal iron laws" the vast Creator of all things, is to ask men to believe that nature places law above personality. But this is an achievement contrary to all human experience and, therefore, miraculous. If one must have miracles, he need not be blamed if he prefers to trace them back to the will of an infinite person, for this does not contradict experience. Moreover the infinite person simply must do surpassing things, if he acts at all, and a worthy personality can neither be inactive nor fail to do deeds worthy of himself. These latter conclusions also are based upon experience. It was the self-manifestation of the all embracing Personality that produced "the highest concept." This statement, if I understand Haeckel's latest positions, is one which he himself might not dispute.

No one need entertain any misgivings touching inspiration and revelation. That matter is sim-

ply a question of demand and supply in a world which science has uncovered before our eyes in such a way that we see in it strength forever revealing itself in all loving helpfulness, and so making weakness more and more savingly acquainted with it. The parent birds with their eggs and then their fledgelings, the whole story of family life and home-training, in our own race, and the delight men take in making themselves known, in every uplifting way possible, to their animal servants and pets, till these actually acquire the power of intelligently and gladly co-operating with them in carrying out their desires, all exist as so much standing testimony to this fact. That which appears upon the surface of things testifies concerning that which lives at their center. Life is the same from the gyrating electron onward. The center of the atom reveals itself to every electron of the group by holding it safely in leash. So God reveals himself wherever conscience is allied with thought and volition by holding men hard to himself as the Right and the Good. Personal themselves they cannot but see him as also personal, and the source of personality in themselves, nor fail to realize that he is pouring his own thought and purpose into them more and more. If this is not true of absolutely every man, it is certainly true of the race taken as a whole.

I have passed by the question of the authorship of the various portions of the New Testa-

ment as one of literary and historical, rather than theological or practical importance; and I have shown my confidence in the general soundness of Harnack's most recent position as to their dates. The most important of them historically seem to me to have been written, eschatological sections and all, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D.

My exegesis of some of the eschatological sections themselves will reveal a departure from the teachings of both the Pre-millennarian and Post-millennarian schools. The New Testament writers believed in the immanent Christ as they believed in the immanent God. It will be found, too, that the resurrection of the dead is viewed as only an incident in connection with the triumph of Life in its highest manifestations. These changes in New Testament interpretation have for years seemed to me inevitable, if we are ever really to know what it was these writers indicated by the terms which they employed in this connection.

And, finally, as to the matter of the redemption of the race itself, the thought of the past has seemed to me wholly inadequate. The question is not one of slight importance. The Fall, however interpreted, is a racial fact. Through it men became, or become, self-centered, selfish, God-renouncing, with their careers sadly soiled by sins and crimes, and their consciences uneasy.

The Son of God came to buy men back from all

this. To buy back whom? The race as a race, or only a limited number of individual men and women? To buy back how? Completely, or only in part? To buy back where? Here, while the race still lives its earthly life? Or will that full redemption be experienced only through the conversion of our flesh to spirit, and our removal as a race to some better world than this? Would this be a genuine redemption at all? Or are we to abandon the doctrine that the Divine ideal for our race, which the Fall interfered with, or at least postponed, was that it should be introduced to a long and unbrokenly holy career of upward progress here upon the earth?

Present day thought rejects the Calvinian doctrines of predestination and a limited atonement. We declare that it was never the purpose of God to save only a fraction of mankind, that Christ died for all, that the gospel message is for all alike, and that the Holy Spirit moves in equal love upon all hearts. We affirm that the reason why one man is won to righteousness while his brother perseveres in sin, finds its true answer in the freedom of the human will. We are sure, that is to say, that God's purpose to save touches our race as a whole. But we are equally sure, too, that to this day that purpose is far from being uniformly victorious. Men still love darkness rather than light, and live and die impenitent. Human depravity is still a fact which cannot be ignored, for it constantly reveals

itself in many detestable, as well as ordinary sins and crimes. What then? Is God's redeeming purpose and plan never to achieve more than a partial victory on this planet? Is the race to remain substantially what it is now to the very end? Is the question of the seeker of salvation always to be, How may I learn so to live in this world as to get safely out of it? Is this world never to become a universal school for the cultivation of universal holiness? Is it always to be just a hospital, in which some men, and some men only, will recover from the malady of sin, and go forth to the unending enjoyment elsewhere of moral and spiritual health?

These questions are not of slight importance. They really mean this. Is there to be a redemption of the race at all, or only a redemption out of the race of a limited number, from generation to generation, including the last? Up to the present this is what has really taken place. Only some out of each generation attain to a life that is worthy, while vast numbers never learn to even nobly aspire. How are things to be in the future? Practically as they are now in every respect? Or are they slowly and steadily to improve, till a day dawns in which sin shall have given place to holiness in every individual of the generation then alive upon our planet? In short, is sin to live on here as long as our race does, or will our Lord Jesus Christ persevere in his victories over it, till he has utterly exterminated it

and introduced our race to its spiritual Eden of holy joyous consecration to God?

By our manner of answering these questions we say whether we believe in the actual redemption of our race, as an earthly one, or not. Believing that the Redeemer came, poured out his soul in death for the race, was raised from the dead, exalted to God's right hand and gifted with all power on behalf of the race, is one thing; and believing that he will accomplish his task in any complete way is quite another. The complete salvation of the race from the standpoint of Glory in heaven could be accomplished only through the final recovery from sin and suffering to holiness and blessedness of every member of it, from the first man down to the last of his descendants—the recovery from sin and suffering of every Cain as well as every Abel, of every Jezebel as well as every Elijah. We think we have no sure ground in either scripture or experience for such a doctrine as this. But the question before us now is whether there is any scriptural basis for the conclusion that a time is coming when our race, as it will then be found upon the earth, will stand before God separated from all its outward sins and inward depravities, together with all the disastrous consequences now associated with these, and fulfilling in every respect its high destiny, having been raised at last through the toil of the redeeming ages to the very image and likeness of God.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray in the interests of the Kingdom of God—"Thy will be done on earth, as in heaven." Is that prayer ever to receive its full answer? Is there one in heaven who does not do God's will completely and gladly? And will the prayer be fully answered as long as there is one left upon the earth who does not do that will in the same manner?

Such a redemption of our race as that indicated above would include three things in particular. The first of these would be the entire removal from the earth of all willful opposers of that righteousness which the Son of God came to make universal. This entire removal of the wicked whether accomplished through converting grace or the slow operations of the law of the survival of the fit, or of both together working along parallel lines, would eventually place our earth in the sole possession of the righteously disposed. I have used the words "righteously disposed" instead of the word righteous, because all round righteousness of life always means so much more than right dispositions, implying, as it does, right knowledge and the necessary moral strength at the various points of human activity—two things in which the Christian of to-day, like his brother of other times, displays an all too evident lack.

The second thing, therefore, which the redemption of our race must include is its full development in all that pertains to intellectual and volitional activity along the lines of right conduct.

The race must be brought to the point where each member of it will always know the very thing he ought to do, and will always be prompt in his response to the voice of each duty he meets. And since the body, and particularly the brain, is the instrument both of the intellect and the will, the redemption of the race must include such thorough expansion or repair of that instrument as will fully fit it for the highest service it can be called upon to render. It must be brought up to perfection for the acquisition and retention of knowledge, on the one hand, and for carrying out the behests of the will, on the other. Disease must disappear and physical readiness, zest and courage must become universal and triumphant among men. There can be no perfect moral or spiritual health in a physically diseased race. Physical disease, as long as it continues, must impair that health by weakening the understanding or the will or both.

All power in heaven and in earth has been given to Jesus in the interests of his kingdom. He reigns and must "reign as king until God has put all his enemies under his feet." As king he is also Judge of all men, with full authority to gather from his kingdom all that hinders and those who live in sin (Matt. 13:41). On the other hand there are no heights of holiness to which he is unable to show the feet of his people the way. And while he was here in the flesh, when did he ever meet disease and death without delivering

their victims if these victims themselves, or their friends, were willing to accept his aid?

It will be ours now to discover, if we can, how far and by what means the apostolic church believed our Lord Jesus Christ would work out the redemption of our race here upon the earth. But a word on the genuine interpretation of scripture ought to precede this search.

When we approach the Bible asking what its teachings on any matter are, there are some things which we ought particularly to remember. Its books and letters are not detached literature, which might have been produced anywhere and at any time in the world's history. Each was written with the definite end in view of instructing and helping some particular people or class, which existed at the time its writer did his work. Every phrase and sentence and paragraph had a definite meaning for the writer, which he was seeking to convey to the minds of those who were to be his first readers. Our first question, therefore, to-day must be—What did John or Peter or James try to teach the men of his generation by means of this or that paragraph or sentence or phrase? And until we have made this discovery we have nothing on which to rely for present use.

There are no second meanings. The first sense is the true sense and the only one. The language used to describe one event may chance to describe quite accurately more than one event of a like sort which may occur later; and it may be quoted

for the purpose centuries or millenniums after it was first penned. But no sober-minded man would assert that the earlier writer must therefore have foreseen every incident which his language was fitted to portray. There may be second or third or even many applications of given descriptive statements, but, let me repeat it, there are no second meanings. The statements of scripture are not things to juggle with. Each was penned for the one purpose of conveying to other minds than that of the writer, some truth or fact which he wished the men of his own time to know.

“Our Salvation is nearer now than when we accepted the Faith. The night is almost gone; the day is near.” (Rom. 13:11.) What “Salvation” and what “day” did Paul have in his mind when he wrote these words? That is the first question for me to answer, and if I cannot answer it as he and the Roman Christians would have done, I must confess that I know nothing about the meaning of the passage. I may use the language of it to describe some situation, past, present, or future, which I may have in my mind, but I get at its meaning only as I come to know what the situation was which Paul had in his mind when he penned it.

The New Testament writers themselves knew how to harness the words of earlier authors to the service of their own pens. Examples are easily found. The last nine verses of the second chapter of Matthew present three of them—

“Out of Egypt I called my Son;”

“A voice was heard in Ramah,
Weeping and much lamentation;
Rachel, weeping for her children,
Refused all comfort because they were not;”

and

“He will be called a Nazarene.”

The first of these passages was taken from Hosea 11:1. That prophet, however, had no thought of the coming of the child Jesus up from Egypt when he wrote it. On the contrary his look was backward. His attention was fixed upon a most important event in the early history of his people, when Jehovah called them as his “Son” out of Egypt. Still the words were suited to describe precisely the event in the life of Jesus which Matthew was recording, and because they came up in his mind as he wrote, he used them for that purpose. Similarly the language which he quoted in connection with his description of Herod’s slaughter of the innocents, and which shows us Rachel, the dearly beloved wife of Israel, who had been buried at Bethlehem, weeping for her children there ruthlessly put to death, and refusing all comfort, was applied by him in a very telling way. At the same time we would make a very great mistake if we should assume that Jeremiah wrote them foreseeing Herod’s act. The one thing the prophet had in his mind was the

snatching away of Rachel's children into the expatriation of the Babylonish captivity.

Finally, "He shall be called a Nazarene" is not a quotation at all, but an ingenious adaptation. The thing Matthew did here was this. He put an historic statement in the future tense that he might read into it a wealth of past prophecy. None of Israel's seers had foretold that Jesus would become a resident or citizen of Nazareth. But they had declared that Jehovah's anointed one would be despised. They had also said that he would be called Netzer, a branch, or germ, or sprout; and the root portion of the name Nazareth was Netzer or Natzer. With this fact and one or both of these prophecies in his mind Matthew read their sense into the word, and declared that the prophets had said "He shall be called a Nazarene," a despised one and, at the same time, the one germ or sprout of our race's coming greatness. But, as I have stated, no prophet had ever predicted that Jesus would reside in the town of Nazareth, which is the fact Matthew was recording.

In getting at the meaning of the scriptures, as of all other writings, the one question which must never be lost sight of is—What did the writer have in mind when he penned his words? and not—What application can I make of them?—or—What sense can I read into them? In the pages which follow I shall strive to keep this fact always in view, and when dealing with such phrases as

“the coming of the Son of Man,” “the close of the age” and “the last days,” shall seek first of all to discover what the great teachers who used them tried to convey to the minds of their hearers and readers by their means.

I shall also keep in view another fact, namely, that a progress in revelation is as evident on the pages of the books of the Bible, as the corresponding progress in knowledge and ideas is in the general literature of the world. Men's thoughts of God were kept widening. In some cases this was as true of the individual teacher as it was of the generations that succeeded each other. Paul on the subject of the resurrection of the dead, and the corresponding change which he believed would take place in the living, until it finally transformed nature itself, is a striking example of this. To properly interpret the Bible therefore, on any theme, it is necessary not only to collate the passages which deal with that point, but also to arrange them in the order in which they were written, beginning with the earliest.

“He has made an end of Death, and has brought Life and Immortality to light by that Good News, of which I was myself appointed a Herald and Apostle” (2nd Tim. 1:10, 11) is a word Paul wrote of his Lord in the last letter that ever came from his pen probably. But who can hope to say what lengths and breadths and depths and heights these words had for Paul himself unless he will study every earlier word of his upon the subject,

beginning with the first, which is contained in 1 Thess. 4:13-5:3, and was written perhaps fourteen years or more previously. It is all too easy to twist the scriptures to one's own undoing as a reasonable being. Indeed it would be well for us if every time we take the Bible into our hands, we would very devoutly say to ourselves—"Here there is need for discernment" (Rev. 13:10).

II

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND MAN'S SIN

It is too late a year of our Lord in which to entertain the suggestion that there may be some defect in the divine righteousness. No one, however, need shrink from the idea that there may be something defective in his own notions concerning that righteousness. It may even be desirable that most of us should assume that there is.

More than thirty years ago a preacher so young that he was still looking forward to his ordination dealt with a phase of our subject in these words:—

“Some scientists have taken the ground that man can originate living organisms. They have said, Get the right kinds of matter together in the right proportions, then subject them to the necessary conditions and operations, and living creatures will result. More than once the experiment has been tried. More than once, too, men have claimed success—only to own to failure afterwards, however. We are not yet able to turn dead matter into living. We cannot manipulate life, any more than we can weigh it with our scales or comprehend it.

“But imagine, now, that it *is* possible for men versed in science to make living creatures out of dead

matter. Suppose Mr. Huxley able to do this. Suppose him able to create beings of many sorts, and that it is in his power to produce two creatures, a male and a female, from whom would spring a numerous race. Suppose also that Mr. Huxley has the power of seeing all down the future, and of knowing all this race would do and all that would happen to it from the beginning to the end of its existence. Suppose, too, that he sees that if he should create this first pair, it would remain happy for only a brief time, and then fall into the deepest suffering and degradation, carrying with it all the generations of its offspring from the first to the last.

“Suppose, now, that with all this in his knowledge, and without devising any means of alleviating the suffering, or of counteracting the evil he foresees, Mr. Huxley should create that first pair, making them so that they might possibly avoid the wrong-doing and wretchedness, but knowing absolutely that they would not avoid it; what would we think of Mr. Huxley for doing it? We would say that it might have been allowable for him to have created the first pair, but that foreseeing the consequences, as he did, it was both unfair and cruel for him to create them so that they would give birth to an offspring like their fallen selves. Every theologian would condemn him, and Arminian and Calvinist alike would brand him wretch.

“But does not this supposed creation of Mr. Huxley bear an exact analogy to what God's creation of man would have been apart from redemption? . . .

“Let us look more closely into this matter. We say God created Adam and Eve able to stand, yet free to

fall. Personally they were, therefore, justly held guilty for their transgression. God foresaw their fall but did not cause it. But turn your eyes to their descendants. God fixed two laws upon Adam and Eve. The first was, Be parents; the second, Beget and bear children like yourselves. After the fall this second law became, Beget and bring forth a sinful race.

“Birth into the world would be an unmitigated curse apart from redemption. Each child born under the circumstances would have had to lay the blame somewhere. It could not have laid it upon itself. No child has anything to do with its own birth, much less with being born sinful and wretched. Neither could it have laid the responsibility upon its parents, for they would have been as parents are now, under law to God himself in the matter, and each birth that took place would have occurred, as each birth does now, in obedience to His law, written in the very nature of both the father and the mother. The increasing race of men (if the race could have survived) would, if they could have known God at all, have had to look upon him as a monster, who took delight in confusion, anguish and death. If God had created men for such a fate, what sense of justice there could have been in his universe under such conditions would have risen on all sides to curse him to his face. That sense of justice would, in hate and loathing, have said—“God foreknew that the race he thought of creating would be supremely and forever wretched, and yet he created it!”

These are plain words and they make it clear that man's sin and God's righteousness can never

be considered apart from each other. So this young preacher continued:—

“I want to say further on this head that while it is true, in one sense, that creation was the foundation for redemption, it is equally true in another sense, that redemption was the foundation for creation. We have seen that God could not have withheld redemption from our race, as a whole, without treating it unjustly. His wish and purpose were plainly that there should be a numerous race, and not simply two individuals. His wish for a numerous race, and his justice and love, together with his foresight of the fall, forced upon Him, as it were, the necessity of a redeeming plan. Had his wisdom been unable to devise such a plan, his love and his justice would have held him back from creating man at all. ‘That he might be just’ is one of Paul’s own words.”

Continuing, this same young man asked:—

“Does some one say, You would make redemption the vindication of creation? I reply—Yes; I believe that to God himself it was and is that. And, as for us, it is the only vindication that has reached us. I go further still and say, that we cannot yet see how even it is a sufficient vindication. Cannot yet *see*, I say. We can *believe* it now and expect to see it by and by. Only that. We walk by faith here, as long at least as we continue to believe the scriptural doctrine of endless sin and endless suffering as a possibility, if not a certainty, for some.”

These positions are impregnable. Even divine

might does not make right. The essential demands of justice are not difficult to discern, and the Judge of all the earth must surely be at least as good as our Huxleys.

As definite a choice as was ever made by the divine mind was that of continuing a sinful race upon this planet, and that choice would have been as sinful as the race itself, had not his righteousness made sinful men only that it might redeem them. Redemption, therefore, is neither a divine afterthought, nor a divine work of supererogation, but a work demanded, and entered into, by infinite justice.

The New Testament writers most definitely recognize this. The author of The Revelation saw Jesus as "the Lamb that has been sacrificed from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8.) Peter writes of him as at once a sacrifice and a ransom for those to whom his letter was addressed, and declared that he was "destined for this *before* the beginning of the world." (I Pet. 1:19, 20.) Paul adds: "This God did to prove his righteousness . . . as a proof, I repeat, at the present time, of his own righteousness, that he might be righteous in our eyes, and might pronounce righteous the man who takes his stand on faith in Jesus." (Rom. 3:25, 26.) Elsewhere Paul makes it very clear that when God pronounces a man righteous, "who takes his stand on faith in Jesus," that man's faith has already seen in Jesus the deliverance from sin itself, which he

could by no means work out on his own behalf. God pronounces righteous only the man whom he, at the same time, makes righteous. So in giving Jesus to the world, and calling upon all men to take their stand on faith in him as their Savior from sin itself, He was proving to men that it was only "in his forbearance he had passed over the sins that men had previously committed" (Rom. 3:25); and that he might, in view of his purpose regarding both that past, and the holy and universal new order of things he was establishing through Jesus; satisfy all men that he had continued to maintain a sinning and suffering race, only that he might redeem it from all iniquity and exalt it to a glory of righteousness, far beyond all its present powers of comprehension.

From one of Paul's viewpoints, therefore, the atoning work of Christ was God's most potent *apologia pro vita sua*—his most powerful apologetic. It is easy to see how much such an apologetic was needed, and how far men still are from perceiving its full force. Even as things have been under redemption, more than one woman has said to her husband, when conditions had been rendered all but unendurable, and through no guilty act of their own, "Renounce God and die"; and few indeed of the men who have listened to such counsel have been Jobs. But the appeal has not been made in vain, and gradually it will smooth the wrinkles out of all foreheads, and steal the bitterness from even life's chief woes.

Through the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed himself as the Trinity—as the Father who loves all his afflicted and straying children, and sent the Son in whom he could always delight to enlighten and bless them; the Son himself as undertaking the task with a perfect devotion towards both his Father and his needy brothers, and as suffering and dying for them without a murmur, though it was their own hatred towards his perfect goodness that nailed him to his cross; and the Holy Spirit as the invisible omnipresent and almighty friend, instructor and uplifter of all. It was in view of this infinite apologetic that Paul exulted when he wrote: “God puts his love for us beyond all doubt by the fact that Christ died on our behalf while we were still sinners.” (Rom. 5:8.) And the first generation of Christians caught but the vision which was held in reserve for our whole race before even the world we inhabit was launched upon its varied career.

It will be well for us to notice next that the necessity for that divine forbearance towards sin which impressed Paul, was one which God imposed upon himself, when he became man's creator. He chose to create, foreseeing all, and knowing that if he created the race, it would, for hundreds of generations, be made up of sinners incapable of self-redemption. He foreknew that, in the very nature of things, as he himself would make them, not one child of Adam would be responsible for his birth into the world with a depraved

nature, which was sure to lead him astray—that whatever might or might not be true concerning our first parents, this would certainly be true of their descendants. He foreknew also that apart from continuous enlightenment by himself Adam's race would know nothing at all about righteousness, and that to save them into righteousness he would have to do a great deal more than simply enlighten them—that they would have to be created anew, indeed. Deliberately he chose such a race for himself—ignorant, that he might enlighten it; sinful, that he might make it holy; hateful and hating the highest, that he might fill it with his own loftiest love. To be forbearing towards such a race was simply to stand by his choice, and go forward under a necessity of his own creation. Whatever responsibility has stood in association with the *inherited* ignorance and sin of each generation, has been God's, not man's. No man and no generation could possibly be called to an account for more than the sins, which he or it had chosen in the face of a light and a help, which made the choice really avoidable. Apart from the work of divine redemption, which includes moral enlightenment, that is to say, there could be no such thing as moral responsibility for any son of Adam. God's very forbearance towards men becomes a reality only as his redeeming light and aid are consciously and willfully rejected. Precisely as far as men are without light, or without power to live up to the

light they have received, their sin is a missing of the mark, or the symptom of a moral disease; and their guilt is that of the child, that has inherited from its parents partial blindness, along with some other deeply disabling maladies. It is its doom to suffer for no fault of its own, and because God ordained it should be so. God linked sin and suffering together and doomed our race, at least after the first pair, with which, according to the Bible, it began, to both; and he made the suffering, on both the physical and the moral side, the lot of even those who are too young, or too ignorant, to choose the wrong which incurs the pain or the weakness under which they labor. God has loaded the body, the intellect, the affections and the will of our race, with the penalties he has attached to sin. He has made innocence to suffer with guilt in this mystery of his government.

In the last named fact do we not find the suggestion that he deals with men differently from the standpoint of the individual conscience? For if the individual suffers in his innocence as well as in his guilt, surely his conscience is left out of the account so far. What he endures he suffers as a member of the race, and not as a being endowed with an individuality which forces him to stand out also in an accountability to God which is personal and solitary.

Now what of the New Testament? Has it any word concerning such a distinction? Do its

writers tell us anything about the solidarity of the race, on the one hand, and personal responsibility on the other? Above all, have they, in addition, some word that will show us how far, in their opinion, God holds the individual man accountable for the sins of his heart and life? How far was sin to them a missing of the mark, or a disease of the moral nature, and how far was it a deliberate, wickedly-chosen and guilty thing?

The answer is easy. They faced the situation and expressed themselves clearly. Their memory of the teaching of Jesus guided them, and their grasp of the first principles of justice did the rest. They knew that the moral quality of an action must be sought for in the purpose from which it springs. They knew, too, that the man who is not aware that the action he contemplates, or the disposition he cherishes, is wrong, can purpose neither disobedience towards God, nor anything unrighteous towards his fellow-men, under any conditions whatever. So to them ignorance excused men and knowledge rendered them culpable. They believed a man must know he is breaking a law he should obey, if he is to be held guilty in the act he does, and that the purpose must be consciously wrong, if the formal act of transgression is to be set down as sinful. Paul, for instance, declared that "sin cannot be charged against a man where no law exists." (Rom. 5:13.) And this word, read in the light of Luke 12:47, 48, and John 15:22, 24, cannot be inter-

preted otherwise than as meaning that the place where the law must exist, to make the transgressor of it guilty before God is in the knowledge of the transgressor himself.

Paul made another distinction, which is to be found in one of the climaxes of the great classical passage on sin in his letter to the Romans.

“When I do the very thing I want not to do, the action is no longer my own, but that of sin which is within me.” (Chap. 7:17.) Here he looks upon sin, not as any proper feature of his character, or constituent of his personality, but as some foreign thing which has somehow got a victorious footing within him, and now acts itself out in spite of him.

No word truer to human experience than this was ever penned. Evil habits are common enough, but their commonness does not prevent us from being in continual astonishment at their power. No boy with his first cigarette between his lips, no man taking his first sip of an intoxicating beverage, can be persuaded that so simple an act may very soon mean the tightening upon him of fetters that he will vainly attempt to break. He smiles at every well-meant warning, because he feels sure that the strength of his own manhood is behind his unchained will to keep it forever free. And when he does find himself helpless to do more than struggle, he knows that his slavery was not self-chosen—that he had chosen its very opposite from the start, and had

scarcely dreamed of what was before him. His ignorance was played upon. He had been deceived and was now being mocked by his foe.

Let a man face all the sins of his life and defy them to hold him any longer in their grip. Let your man be one who has never fallen under the power of even one of the habits, which we call foolish or bad. Give him the most favorable conditions possible. Let him be a very Saul of Tarsus or a John Wesley, in what the world calls rectitude and high ambition. Yet the day will come to him when he will cry the cry of the man who knows himself to be held in a bitter bondage which he never consciously chose, and which he has come to loathe with a miserable helpless loathing, that can scarcely voice itself intelligibly. He will feel as if all the sin of all his dead grandsires had come out of the dark and ghastly past, to force him down with cruel bony hands, when he is fully resolved to step upward, instead, into the light of a worthy morning. And the feeling about his dead grandsires will be true to the facts, and no mere "as if."

"In Adam all died." Heredity can be terrible. Each man is the net resultant of all the forces that produced him, plus that God-given, better, feebly-aspiring something, which he knows to be himself—himself bound to a dead body which he can by no means shake off—himself crying—"Miserable man that I am! Who will deliver me?"

Now what is the fact behind this fact? When a man can truly say of his wrong-doing: "It is no longer I that do it," what are we bound to affirm besides? When we remember that the fact of his helplessness was the same before he realized it as it was afterwards, what are we to say? This—that up to the very limits of his helplessness, he is no more to blame for not doing his proper work in God's world, than is the strong man whose system has been invaded and rendered helpless by the typhoid bacillus. Further, his very delusions are themselves a part of his disease; and he cannot escape until his malady has been met and mastered by a delivering power stronger than either itself or him, and he is being led up to health and vigor.

To the conclusion that the place where the law of God must exist, to make its transgressor guilty before him, is in the knowledge of the transgressor himself, we must now add, therefore, this other word, that up to the very limits of each man's helplessness to avoid his transgressions, the divine righteousness must hold him personally guiltless. The victim of typhoid cannot fairly be held accountable for the full work of a healthy man. Sin is, in one of its phases, a disease for the existence of which no man, since Adam, can be held responsible. This is New Testament teaching. And, according to that same teaching, it was the darkness of our ignorance that brought the Light of the World to our relief; the

awfulness of our disease that brought the great Physician to our side, and our helplessness in our bitter bondage that brought the Mighty Deliverer to our rescue.

Over against this obligation of God to man, self-imposed and self-recognized, lies our own obligation to him. Each man knows himself to be individually responsible to God and feels that he has been a sinner against him on his own account. This consciousness of personal guilt arises out of the fact that God has been known to us as the God of Salvation from both our sins and sinfulness to a greater extent than we have availed ourselves of his sanctifying grace. But the bitterest cry that breaks from human lips and lifts itself to Heaven, is wrung from human hearts, not by this guilt, but in view of that helplessness through sin's disease or bondage, which makes the life of righteousness impossible without Heaven's help. Our joy is that He who made and maintains the need for infinite help has bestowed that aid from the start, and with growingly glorious results.

Here, then, we have reached this one clear fact, that the plan of redemption, in which the Incarnation was wrapped up from the beginning, found its primeval necessity in the righteousness of the Infinite Love.

III

JESUS AS A SIGN

A sign is some visible thing which represents an invisible reality greater than itself. Christianity has three of these signs. Two of them we call sacraments. They are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In baptism the outward and visible act of applying water to an individual who has been presented for the purpose of undergoing the rite, represents an invisible act indefinitely greater than itself. So also the visible act of one who partakes of the Lord's supper represents an indefinitely greater invisible act.

Water is invaluable as a food and also as an instrument of cleansing. Associate it with a cleansing agent in a Turkish bath institute and it means physical cleansing for all who come and submit to certain conditions. But associate water with one who is authorized to use it in baptism, and let him apply it to the persons of those who are presented for the rite, and the act of the baptizer represents that invisible act of the Holy Spirit, by which He purifies the hearts of those who believe in God as the God of their personal salvation through Jesus Christ.

Bread is invaluable as a sustainer of physical

life, and unfermented wine is the very life of the grape—the very life of the grape plant itself, indeed, since it produces the seed, or plants in embryo, of all future vineyards. Unfermented grape juice and bread taken together, therefore, are a sign of, or represent, physical life and its sustenance. And when you set portions of them apart for use in connection with the spiritual religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the rite which we call his Supper, they then represent him as at once the Spiritual life and the spiritual nourishment of all those who continuously receive him by obedient faith, just as obediently they partake of the bread and wine themselves in the Supper.

But before either of these symbols could be chosen on earth, one had to be chosen in heaven. The thing it was to represent was the divine love for our sinful race. It had to be something that could actually set forth the infinite thing that was to be represented. It had to be something also that even the worst man could understand and appreciate. The use of water in baptism could be understood and appreciated as symbolizing moral and spiritual cleansing. Partaking of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper could be understood and appreciated as showing forth the reception of Christ as the inbringer and sustainer of spiritual life in those who believe in him. But what could stand as a symbol of that love of the triune Jehovah, which stoops and suffers and

dies, that it may win bad men to holiness and peace and enduring riches? Could men have guessed?

The divine solution of the problem, when it first met human eyes, was a babe. But this babe would have been no solution at all, if it had died in childhood. For then it would have represented innocence, apart from conscious intelligence and personal choice, and God in himself cannot be truly represented thus. Each babe is God-like in its possibilities, but a babe must live on for years if these possibilities are ever to become the actual facts of character, which men can see and admire and love. The son of Mary, lying there in the manger, receives homage, because the spirit of prophecy has already seen him as the glorious man he afterwards became. It is not the babe, but the man the babe so soon became, that is approached with bended knee. Could it have been true that he was to die in infancy, the spirit of prophecy would never have been awakened concerning him, and he would have gone to a grave that would in a few short years have been nameless and forgotten. The worship of a babe, as a babe, is no true part of Christianity.

Man is at once a common being on this planet, and the most exalted in his attributes of all its inhabitants. So high is he in comparison with every other earthly being, that he is arbiter of the destinies of them all. One man is of more worth than every creature besides. So man is the

highest being that man can become acquainted with upon this planet, short of God himself. And if God had to be seen by bad men, not directly but through another, that other had himself to be a man, and a man worthy of the God for whom he was to stand. So the babe was born and grew to years as the Son of God and the Son of Man. And so utterly human was he that those who grew up with him, in the same home even, never dreamed of him as being essentially different from themselves. He began his public career and gathered disciples about him. They were impressed by his superiority, but after his transfiguration, which three of them witnessed, and even after he came back to them from the dead, he was still so truly human to them, that they asked him if he was not now at last going into their politics to restore the kingdom and place Israel at the very forefront of the nations.

We sometimes grieve over this blindness of theirs, as we call it. But after all they were not blind to the main fact. In Jesus they saw God. They saw he was human but they saw also that he represented their God—that his human life was a sign of the life of God, and, at length, that it stood for every infinite attribute of God, and specifically for the love that stoops and suffers that it may win bad men out of sin into holiness, out of trouble into peace, and out of poverty into wealth.

They saw, too, that he was a sign of God not

as in his heaven making all well with his world, but of God among men, dealing with everything on the spot. Instead of saying as they looked upon him, and as later they remembered him, "God's in his heaven," they said, God's in his world—"Immanuel, God is with us!"

Jesus Christ, the man who was the Son of God was not himself an infinite fact, but a finite one, and painfully finite. He was limited on every side, and is limited still, though less so than when here in the flesh. His sinless and wholly beneficent career, standing before his first followers in its solitary grandeur, made them say that God was here in one life. And when the Holy Spirit came upon themselves, and then upon the sinful men to whom they preached him as Savior, and soon upon Gentiles as well as Jews, they saw that his life of seeking the lost had represented the universal presence of God here doing the same thing.

"I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care."

This is the vast lesson that comes to us through the incarnation. The babe in the manger is in itself a fact of deep interest, but if this fact had stood alone, it would never have won power enough to get itself heralded down the ages, nor would there ever have been a Christmas or

a year of our Lord. Babe and man, Jesus Christ is a visible sign that represents an infinite reality, and that reality is the universally present love of God for bad men. Luke represents Jesus himself as declaring that, just as Jonah was, in spite of himself, a sign of God's holy love towards the wicked, but repentant, Ninevites, so he himself was a sign of that same love towards the men of his generation. (Luke 11:30.) And, according to the fourth gospel he continually kept this fact at the front.

He was great—so great that his early followers felt it was in every way fitting that he should speak of the lowliest member of his kingdom as greater than John the Baptist—the greatest prophet of the olden time. (Luke 7:28.) But his greatness both as helper and teacher was seen most of all in the fact that he was a sign, and represented an invisible authority, help and wisdom which were indefinitely greater than his own. So he is brought before us in the fourth gospel as saying: “The Son can do nothing of himself; he does only what he sees the Father doing.” (John 5:19.) “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will understand that I am what I am, and that I do nothing of myself, but that I say just what the Father has taught me. . . . I always do what pleases him.” (John 8:28, 29.) “The Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28.)

Such language can bear but one meaning.

It teaches us that the early followers of Jesus saw their chief cause of joy in the fact that he represented in the visible a corresponding invisible personality greater than himself—greater in authority, in might, in knowledge and in goodness. To them he was God within the limits of the highest possible manhood of his time, and represented the infinite deity. He was a sign, and, according to the New Testament writers, the precise fact which he came to represent was the continuous presence of the holy loving God among men. These writers did not hold the doctrine of an absentee deity, but of an omnipresent God, who could not be absent anywhere for even one moment, if he wished.

This comes out very clearly in Matthew 1:23 where we learn that the early church applied to Jesus the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. The one thing Isaiah was seeking to impress upon Ahaz was that God's abiding presence in Jerusalem made an alliance with Assyria unnecessary and an impertinence. When Ahaz obstinately refused to be convinced, the prophet burst in upon him with the declaration that God would force a sign upon him, and that the sign would be this. While he was still trusting in the armed hosts of Assyria, one absolutely a non-combatant, a young girl-mother, would so realize the protecting presence of God for herself and her babe, and for all the other babes and mothers of Judah, that she would name her child Immanuel—God is with us. To

her that presence would remain as the greatest fact of all for the quieting of her fears; and it would also be the greatest fact of all for Judah as a whole. Such protection and deliverance as remained possible in connection with the unbelieving and perilous policy of Ahaz and his foolish fear-haunted advisers, would arise out of the infinite fact for which that child would stand, as long as he bore the name his mother would give him. Centuries passed. Ahaz and all his royal successors to David's throne passed also. Another maiden was to be the mother of a son, and Matthew says that before the child was born, an angelic messenger informed the maiden's betrothed husband that this prophecy of Isaiah would be fulfilled over again in this new child, because they would call him, too, "Immanuel—a word which means, God is with us." And Luke says that when, after the child was born, they carried him to the temple as the first born son of the family, an aged prophet named Simeon took him into his arms and said: "This child is appointed to be . . . a sign. . . ." (Luke 2:34.)

Matthew and Luke recorded these things because the church had come to realize that Jesus stood for the fact that the invisible God is everywhere present for the salvation of men. That presence meant political or temporal deliverance in Isaiah's day, but to the Christian believers for whom "Matthew" and "Luke" were written, it

meant every spiritual good their hearts could crave, either for themselves or others.

To show how large this fact bulked in the thought of the apostolic church, we may note a few other New Testament words. "Members of God's household," is one of Paul's descriptions of the body of Christian believers at Ephesus. (Eph. 2:19.) But these believers were only the same in privilege as all the other believers of that and succeeding times. God at home with his children, or God's children at home with him, is the thought conveyed to the mind by this word.

That they thought of God as really dwelling here, with his people as his children, is made very plain in 2nd Cor. 6:16-18, where Paul makes the fact the basis of a call to the deepest worship and the highest possible holiness.

Finally, in Chapter 21 of the Revelation the fact is presented in the most inclusive way. "And I saw the Holy City, Jerusalem, descending new out of Heaven from God, like a bride adorned in readiness for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, which said—'See! the tabernacle of God is set up among men. God will dwell among them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be among them, and he will wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Rev. 21:2-4.) . . . He showed me Jerusalem, the Holy City, descending out of heaven from God, filled with the glory of God . . . (verse 10).

"And I saw no temple there, for the Lord, our

God, the Almighty, and the Lamb are its temple. The city has no need of 'the sun or the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God illuminated it,' and its lamp was the Lamb. 'The nations will walk by the light of it; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. Its gates shall never be shut by day,' and there will be no night there. And men will bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. (Verses 22-26.) . . .

"And the angel showed me 'a river of the Water of Life,' as clear as crystal, issuing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of the street of the city. On each side of the river was a tree of Life which bore twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 'Everything that is accursed will cease to be.' The throne of God and of the Lamb will be within it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face and his name will be in their foreheads." (Rev. 22: 1-4.) All this splendid imagery, drawn largely from the older prophets, conveyed one clear message to the hearts of the early Christians. God, as in Christ, was omnipresent among men, "reconciling the world to himself, not reckoning men's offences against them." (2nd Cor. 5:19.) The glory of his holy love shone forth in and through his church, enlightening, alluring and claiming men as his own, and blessing them with every good; and that glory would shine on till all peoples were won, and the whole

race found itself permanently rejoicing in the presence of God himself, and in the possession of every bounty in his gift. And Jesus Christ, the Lamb, was already the sign and pledge of it all. (Rom. 8:32.)

IV

THE MAKING OF JESUS

Each true man is always in the making. His making begins centuries before his birth and continues as long as he consciously chooses the better instead of the worse and the higher good in succession to the lower. Our Cromwells and Lincolns, our Shakespeares and Goethes, our Luthers and Wesleys, our Darwins and Wallaces and Huxleys and Haeckels, our Hugos and Dickenses, our Jameses and Bergsens have not sprung from the Veddahs of Ceylon, the African Bushmen or the Australian "Blacks." Heredity of race is a mighty factor in human affairs, and a race must itself have arrived at greatness before it can produce the intellectual, moral and spiritual giants of the world.

Jesus sprang from God's spiritual aristocracy, from a race that knew him, had fellowship with him, and rejoiced in his righteousness and his love, till their intellects and imaginations guided their pens into the production of a religious literature incomparable at once in its grandeur and its sweetness, its sublimity and its tenderness. Of Israel it has well been said that "the voices of her seers and singers sound silvery and soft

through the centuries." And it is quite as true, on the other hand, that the lightnings and thunder peals of her Sinai awe men's hearts at all the ends of the world. Jesus himself recognized the fact that the beginnings of his manhood were to be found as far back as Abraham at least. He sprang from no one of the peoples that were "far off," but from the one people that was "near." (Eph. 2:17.) Whatever, therefore, remains to be told besides, it is certainly true that all the available advantages of the religious and spiritual sort, derivable from a given race of men, were made the personal inheritance of Jesus. No other race existing upon the planet at the time, or that had ever existed upon it, could have conferred half as much. If the Greek stood supreme in purely intellectual acumen or subtlety, and the Roman in his genius for government, the Jew was still more a master in things pertaining to the spirit. Jesus was of the tribe of Judah and "belonged to the family and house of David." (Luke 2:4.) It may also be said in passing that all that is true of Jesus in this respect is true, too, of John the Baptist, only John sprang from the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron. (Luke 1:15.)

Three other things besides race are worthy of consideration in connection with the birth of every child. These are immediate parentage, prenatal influences and environment. Taking these up in the order in which I have just named them, and

leaving the scientific question of parthenogenesis for discussion in another place, I may note first of all that Joseph and Mary are introduced to us as among the most spiritually minded of their pious race. In them the animal instincts and passions are under the strictest control, and their ruling desires and motives are drawn from the will of God as that will touches them individually, rather than as it reaches them in a general way through the pages of their scriptures and the voices of their religious instructors. They are personally and particularly consecrated to all that he may at any time reveal to them as duty. They are living, that is to say, in conscious, vital, sanctifying and informing relations with the divine Spirit, just as were Zecharias and Elizabeth and those aged frequenters of the temple at Jerusalem, Simeon and Anna. In short, no parents could have been found for Jesus to excel in moral and religious character those who are brought before us by the two New Testament writers who described them.

However the Church may finally decide the question of the Virgin Birth, Joseph's relation to the child was very important before it was born as well as afterwards, for he stood at least *in loco parentis* to it in the most intimate way for weeks or months before he took his young wife to Bethlehem for the enrollment, and incidentally the accouchment. Where the relations of a husband to his wife are of the ordinary kind and he is

the father of the child that is to be born, the moral and spiritual atmosphere in which he lives his life, whether it is positively good or positively bad, constitutes no inconsiderable part of those influences of the prenatal sort which are helping to give character and bias to the nature of his offspring. The constant presence in a home of a peculiarly stealthy imbecile has been known to prenataally blast more than one child's life, through its effects upon the imagination and general nervous condition of the mother. A mother often transfers to her unborn infant's body the outward things which impress her mind, or indelible marks to represent them, and has been known to convey to it in this way, and to an extraordinary extent, both the outward appearance and low mentality of a bear or other animal, by which she has been startled at some critical moment. Jaundice, through one sight of a person suffering from it, has been communicated with such force and effect that the child was born only to die of the malady in a few days, while the mother herself remained healthy and vigorous, or too little affected by the disease to show any appreciable symptoms of it. Such a case came under my own notice about four years ago.

It is related of Constantin Von Tischendorf that the remarkable visual powers which enabled him to deal successfully with ancient manuscripts, which to most others were undecipherable were probably due to the fact that his mother, alarmed

at the peril created for her unborn child through the effect produced upon her mind by a sight she had had of some blind person, instantly passed into unceasing prayer, that it might nevertheless be born capable of seeing. This has been regarded as a case in which the ruling mental state of a mother resulted in the double achievement of superior organs of sight, to begin with, and then the ambition to use them to the utmost in the service of that God to whom she had made her continuous petition on the child's behalf. Prenatal influences supplied by mothers must be classed among the primary things in the lives of their children.

Considered from this point of view the stories of Matthew and Luke are of very deep interest for students of the life of Jesus. If they are historical in their central testimony, his conception by Mary was brought about through the invisible and physically unfelt embrace or overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. All of conscience and the religious emotions of which her fine nature was capable was aroused in the case, while everything pertaining to sexual passion was either stilled or else left slumbering where it had never yet been awakened. The one pleasure offered her was that of motherhood for God, and this was bound up with the terrible peril of being publicly disgraced as a consequence by a man to whom she had already been betrothed. In this unre-served consecration to God she was soon joined

by Joseph himself, and in that dedication of body as well as spirit they both continued until the child Jesus was heralded by angels near Bethlehem, and by "a star in the East." Thus the dealings of the Holy Spirit with the thoughts and purposes of Mary and afterwards of Joseph, must have filled her with such a sense of God, and of submission to and joy in his will, as constituted the divinest of all possible prenatal influences for the child she was to bear. If we reject the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as a fable of the pious imagination, we must at least accept this, unless we reject also the doctrine of the Virgin Birth itself; in which case the influence of heredity in this instance would remain to be emphasized, of course.

Heredity and prenatal influence—if the Son of God actually became a man, and not the mere phantasm of a man, to ignore these two potent factors in each human life is to blink out of sight matters which are essential to anything like a complete understanding of the elements which entered into the personal inheritance and original endowment of Jesus.

Coming now to the early environment of Jesus the first thing to be taken into account is the fact that he was through all his first years under the immediate guidance of the strong common-sense and spiritually instructed piety of Joseph and Mary themselves. And if the visits of the shepherds and the Magi, and the flight into

Egypt and return are not legends, Mary and Joseph were specially impressed, after his birth as well as before, regarding the honor and the obligation which had been thrust upon them of bringing up this child in the most particular way for God. This gave a seriousness and earnestness to their lives which must have been distinctly felt by their acquaintances, but most of all by him, with his highly sensitive mind and conscience. That they were faithful to their duty and opportunity from the first is made clear by the accounts of his circumcision, his presentation in the temple at Jerusalem at the end of Mary's days of seclusion, when the spirit of prophecy in Simeon and Anna woke to such glowing expression, and his presentation again as a Son of the Law at the age of twelve years. What his home had already been made to him came out in several ways on this occasion. In the first place the boy Jesus stands before us so deeply interested in questions of religion that he forgets the arrangements for the home journey through the liveliness of his thoughts in this direction. When Joseph and Mary after missing him returned to the city in search of him, "they found him in the Temple Courts, sitting among the teachers, now listening to them, now asking them questions, with all who listened to him marvelling at his intelligence and his answers." (Luke 2:46, 47.) In reply to their chiding he spoke to them of the supreme attractions of his Father's House in

words which, if they mystified them, yet caused them to see at once that he was not casting off their authority or despising their care or their instructions, but that he had come to think of God as his Father, quite probably through some word Mary herself had dropped in his ear concerning a difference between his origin and that of his brothers and sisters, and which she had at least for the moment forgotten. Finally taking him to his home again they found him obedient during still other years, while "he grew in wisdom and gained the blessing of God and men." (Luke 2:51, 52.)

His home was undoubtedly a great instrument in his making. It must be remembered, however, that this house did not exist apart from the synagogue where Mary and Joseph worshiped their God and studied his word in company with their neighbors, taking Jesus with them from Sabbath to Sabbath and, when his age warranted it, encouraging him to take his part in the exercises and discussions. Every man who had definite thoughts of his own and some ability to express them would find his opportunity to speak in his synagogue, and the more a man's utterances appealed to his fellow students of the scriptures, the oftener he would be looked to to address them. It can scarcely have been otherwise than that Jesus developed his deep acquaintance with the Old Testament writings and his supreme gifts as a teacher quite largely through the use he

made of his opportunities in this same synagogue.

Added to the home and synagogue there were the carpenter's shop and the town, with the broken heights surrounding the basin-like site. Whatever can be gained in precision of thought by means of manual training, and in conscience towards the public in connection with years of constant endeavor to give it full value for its money in suitable materials and work accurately and faithfully done, Jesus got out of that carpenter's shop. In it, too, he met his fellow townsmen in a more informal and intimate way than perhaps anywhere else. There they uncovered their thoughts and feelings in the most unconventional ways and approached and discussed the questions in which they were interested, with the least possible of reserve. Whether working in the presence of another or watching another work has the greater power of provoking the confidences of self-revelation, who shall say? And the man who has nothing evil to hide bears with him the constant challenge to others to hide nothing from him. In this carpenter's shop Jesus learned very fast what was in men, and how to read their hearts by means of the tones of their voices, their flitting changes in facial expression, their unconscious gestures, and their general bearing from time to time, till at length he observed and judged as by intuition and knew his man almost, if not quite, at a glance.

There was one characteristic of his fellow

Galileans, which Jesus counted a good thing even in Nazareth. This was their readiness to die for their country and their religion. Is it too much to say that to live among them was to drink in that spirit of patriotism which, being religious at the same time that it was political, was also the splendid spirit of the martyr? So with his unsullied purity and deeper spiritual insight it was impossible for him to grow up otherwise than as the strongest and most unselfish patriot of them all. They told him of their expectations touching the early coming of their Messiah to free them from the yoke of Rome, and his eyes kindled as he listened. At first nothing was clear to his mind but the fact that the prophecies must be fulfilled, and that the time was near. He no more knew on which side God's anointed would arise, nor on what precise lines he would proceed with his work when he did appear, than his neighbors did. But no one felt so deeply as he, or studied as he did the words of the prophets about the Coming One.

By and by both the shop and the town grew too narrow for the tumult of his thoughts, and he was often under the open sky alone, drinking almost unconsciously the lessons which the lily and the growing grains and the grasses, the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, the shadowed gorge and the towering height, the glory of the rising and setting sun and of the nightly sky, the clouds bathed in sunlight, chas-

ing each other in light fleeciness across the face of the moon, or gathering blackness and bursting in loud storm upon the world, have to teach the willing hearted. His Father spoke to him through nature, as well as through man and through the scriptures.

Probably Jesus visited Jerusalem from time to time in connection with the great yearly festivals, and as he grew somewhat familiar with both it and the people along the road or roads by which he journeyed back and forth, became more and more deeply convinced that the great basal need everywhere was moral and spiritual, and that no political movement or achievement could be much worth while to the Messiah, or anyone else, until this need was met. Brooding thus there somewhere came to him a day in which his heart almost stopped its beating, while he listened to a voice coming out of that Infinite, which is always nearness as well as distance, and saying—You yourself are the One for whose coming your people wait. Whether this voice came to him before he learned that his cousin John was already heralding the Coming One, who shall say? All we are sure of is that the voice was insistent and accompanied by such authority that he yielded, sure that it was no other than that of his Father. Meantime during all these years he had been building up such a piety as had made him a recognized pattern among the good, and probably also an offense to the wrongly disposed about

him. When has it ever been different with the wholly consecrated ones of our earth? And would it not be most so in the case of the incomparable man? Accordingly when Jesus presented himself at the Jordan for baptism by John, he was immediately met by the strongest possible testimony to his own spiritual attainments. John, who had declared of the Coming One beforehand—"I am not worthy to stoop down and unfasten his sandals" (Mk. 1:7) delayed Jesus now with the word—"It is I who need to be baptized by you; why then do you come to me?" and Jesus had to overrule his objections by insisting: "Let it be so for the present, since it is fitting for us thus to satisfy every claim of religion." (Matt. 3:14, 15.)

The point which stands out clearly here is that in the making of Jesus the supreme factor was always the revealed will of God. Both John and Jesus were moving on lines which were indicated to themselves alone, to begin with. Two things had to be made plain to John—first that the Messiah was somewhere in Israel and about to be revealed and then that he was the one man to act the part of his forerunner and Herald; while Jesus had to become convinced that he was himself the Messiah and in duty bound as such to go to John for Baptism. Neither was, or could have been, induced to do what he did until he was satisfied that his inwardly received instructions were from God and unmistakable; and always afterwards

each spoke of himself as one who had been sent by God to say and do the very things, which he was both defending and emphasizing when he made this claim. It is also true that each took the step first required of him, with no precise knowledge as to what his second step would be. The consecration of Jesus to the work of his Messiahship was, therefore, an all-embracing act, as far as his own individual life was concerned, and included duties and experiences of many sorts which he was to perceive and face only as his career developed. A consecration of this kind is not entered into excepting through a faith in God, which commits everything for good and all to his almighty wisdom and love, and looks to and trusts him for guidance and all desirable protection from day to day; and nothing can be so humbling and, at the same time, so exalting to the human spirit as this. In myself I am nothing, but in my God I am always fully informed and duly strengthened for my tasks as they arise, was the testimony of Jesus from first to last. Always he had a sufficiency, yet was never self-sufficient; he was always complete, yet never perfected. For the task of one day was constantly being succeeded by the more difficult task of the next, and it was his, as it is ours, to receive wisdom to see and courage to do only in the measure demanded by the conditions of each given time. His career was always being made for him and he for his career. That it was not, because it

could not have been otherwise with him who was "in all points made like his brothers" (Heb. 2:17) that he might become "the Leader and Perfect Example of our faith" (Heb. 12:2) is one of the claims put forward by the writer of the New Testament letter to the Hebrews.

Another thing, which as a matter of course entered into the making of Jesus, was a special divine enduement for the purposes of the work which it was his to do. This enduement is represented as having been given him in addition to all that he had received for the development and maturing of his sinless manhood, and for reaching the decisive conclusion that he himself was the Coming One whom John was announcing in complete ignorance as to his identity. Another point clearly indicated is that Jesus, realizing his need of additional divine aid, left the water with which he had been baptized, praying as he advanced, and was then baptized with the Holy Spirit. And the next record is that it was through the influence of this enduement rather than of his own motion, that he very soon withdrew to the wilds to battle with and overcome those popular ideas concerning the Messiah in the midst of which he had grown up, and which, had he been guided by them, would have blighted his career by ruining his personal character and losing him the favor of God. No less than this is implied in the three answers which at last he

was able to draw from the heart of the scriptures which he knew so well—

1st. "It is not on bread alone that man is to live, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

2nd. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

3rd. "Thou shalt do homage to the Lord thy God, and worship him only."

Each of these shows how strictly personal he felt his battle was, and that he had been drawn into a tremendous struggle for the integrity before God of his own manhood. The principle upon which he acted was that there is no genuine integrity whatever which does not include all that God demands, and that a man can really serve his people in the capacity of leader only as he ignores or rejects everything in their ideals which is not in harmony with God's revealed will. The fierceness of the battle he waged in spite of the richness and freshness of his divine enduement (or was it in a sense *because* of this enduement?) is evidenced by the forty days of fasting credited to him in the accounts we have of it. It was no set mechanical fast such as John's disciples and the Pharisees kept, but one of the natural, because strictly spiritual, sort. The combat was so severe and continuous that he had no attention to spare for the calls of hunger, until his victory was finally won.

Here then is another factor which entered into the making of Jesus, according to his biographers. The fine unbreakable steel of his spirit was forged in the fiercest fires of temptation, that it might be truly tempered in the sovereign, holy and loving will of his Father. His biographers make much of this fact. They point out again and again that he who was "in all points made like his brothers," was also "in all points tempted in like manner with them." (Heb. 4:15.) And they most distinctly link the idea of suffering with this fact of temptation. "He himself suffered under temptation" (Heb. 2:18) is the ground on which the writer of the letter to the Hebrews bases his teaching that he is now "a merciful as well as faithful High Priest in man's relations with God." And he plainly declares besides that this was one of the ends kept distinctly in view by the Father through the whole process. He even goes further and states that, since the Son of God was a man, there was no other way, because it is only through having himself suffered by having been tempted, that any man can be brought into a genuine or intelligent sympathy with those who are tempted. Indeed he startles us by at least seeming to go farther still, and to state by implication that the same sort of necessity exists in the nature of God himself; and that the incarnation has as one of its ends the building up of an intelligent and particular sympathy with men in the very heart of the divine Father. And he leaves

us asking whether the sympathy of God with men has not always been the mighty living thing which was more than guessed of old, because the incarnation was a fact in the divine heart "before the creation of the universe," when, as Paul assured the Ephesians, they "were chosen in their union with Christ." (Eph. 1:4.) According to these writers one thing is quite certain. All the thought and feeling of God touching our race was from the very first bound up with all he purposed and felt concerning the incarnation. The two were absolutely inseparable, and the heart of God could not have been what it has always been, had this not been so.

The ministry of suffering in the making of Jesus is still further emphasized by the writer of "Hebrews." So it is perhaps from the view-point of his declarations that the fact can be best approached. It may be enough to quote these two words from this author to show how definitely he thought that Jesus was gradually fitted for the place which he now holds and the power which he wields in connection with the divine scheme for the redemption of our race, and what an important part his sufferings played in the process:

"It is indeed fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, should, when leading many sons to glory, make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering (Heb. 2:10); and

"Son though he was he learnt obedience from

his sufferings; and being made perfect, he became to all those who obey him the source of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5:8, 9.)

The fitness of a person for any given office or vocation must always depend first upon what he definitely knows, and secondly upon what he really is. Now no man can ever know more than he has had the time and opportunity to learn, nor can anyone be strong and capable, or recognized as such, who has not been subjected to appropriate tests. To understand and appreciate the needs of men one must not only be a man himself, but must also have endured the sorest trials through which they pass. For he can know these distresses for what they actually are only through having experienced them. And if a man's work is to be that of relieving and comforting his fellows, this is the only line along which he can be made competent for his tasks. Our writer boldly applies all this to Jesus. He declares that he was born a babe, and had to be trained for the office of High Priest and Savior. And since his work was to be that of lifting men to the height of complete obedience to God, even where that obedience might involve them in the loss of everything, including life itself, he had himself to go this way. Only so could he learn what obedience to the utmost is, or have it called forth and tested in his own life, and so be fitted to lead and inspire others along that path.

The lot of other men was often to suffer be-

cause they sinned. This was not the case with him. Always when he suffered it was because he obeyed his Father. It was so in the wilderness. Had he yielded, he would no longer have suffered, being tempted. Instead he would have suffered, having sinned. It was the same in Gethsemane and on the cross. Had he turned back and refused to enter the garden, he would have escaped the agony of that sweat of blood out of which he emerged triumphant, and experienced instead the deadlier tortures of an accusing conscience and his Father's frown. And the cross, if he had reached it nevertheless, would not have wrung from him the same "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34), but one of deeper anguish still, and of a lasting awfulness. His prayer was always that he might be lifted to the full height of his Father's will concerning him. His agonies, his cries, his tears are so many proofs of what his obedience cost him. And the lessons he learned were for him only as they were for others besides. He recognized this. In his own estimation he was the kernel of wheat that falls into the ground and dies rather than "remain solitary." (Jno. 12:24.) The purpose of his obedience was manward at the same time that it was Godward. He knew indeed that it was only in dying for his fellows, because in the wrong-headedness which arose from their wrongheartedness they would have it so, he could continue his life of obedience. "This," he said, "is the com-

mand which I received from my Father.” (Jno. 10:18.) So through his sufferings he was made complete in and for the service of men, at the same time that he was made complete in and for his service towards God.

The final teaching of these writers is that it was strictly in view of this acquired and fully developed fitness of Jesus that he was raised to his present glory and service in connection with the salvation of our race. It was because he at length reached his fully tested perfection in obedience on behalf of others that “God himself pronounced him a High Priest of the order of Melchizedek.” (Heb. 5:10.) To these words Paul adds:

“He appeared among us as a man, and still further humbled himself by submitting to death—to death on a cross. And that is why God raised him to the very highest place, and gave him the Name which stands above all other names.” (Phil. 2:9.)

He who was born the son of Mary was fashioned by the divine will until, made complete for the vast work which he became a man to do, he was lifted by God to the place of supreme honor and opportunity in connection with all the needs and possibilities of our race, with the assurance that by this means all these possibilities will certainly be realized. And since every man must grow with the growth of the undertaking which he is successfully carrying forward, and particu-

larly in cases which are constantly presenting fresh and difficult problems, it is not unreasonable to think of Jesus as one who is still having his capacities developed, while he advances in self-realization through the steady exercise of his powers, and moves onward toward the day in which the finished product of all his toils is to be taken over by the Father himself. (I Cor. 15:24-28.)

V

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF JESUS

Each child begins life by studying objects external to itself, including its own fingers and toes. Then it slowly finds out how it should adjust itself towards these things and persons, and by and by reaches its first clear I-ought. But so dim is its vision of both the inward and outward realities in the case that for years it has to be continually recalled from a world of day-dreams into which it is forever being led by its imagination, prompted by its instincts; and sometimes physical maturity is reached by an individual who is still dreaming of himself as something he is not, and looking out upon the world about him through a mist of unreality, which either pains or delights his eyes.

To be able to take the true measure of one's powers through reading one's nature correctly, particularly at the moment when the task of one's life has to be faced, and to know that the thing which seems to challenge one is really his own task, is one of the essential things in connection with the opening of a great and successful career. It is this ability which inspires men with that sense of obligation in connection with given tasks

which we speak of as a call—a divine call, because it is never developed apart from that voice which reaches us from the hidden deeps of the Infinite Personality. The higher the task the greater the need.

The other thing essential to the greatest careers is that abiding sense of the Infinite Personality, which, penetrating all veils and over-leaping all barriers, arrives at the place where *IT* is known as *HE*, His presence as embracing, interpenetrating and upholding all things and all persons, his plan as one and of infinite scope, the purpose associated with it as incapable of being finally thwarted and therefore certain to reach all its far off goals, and his nature as one in which all great attributes inhere complete and perfect beyond our highest dreams. When God has become such to a living soul his service seems to that soul almost too high and holy to be attempted at all, and we see an Isaiah standing before his vision with a "Woe is me" breaking from his lips. But as he stays on with his vision a purifying and a power cleanse and transform him until he accepts his task with his "Here am I, send me," trumpeted to the four winds by a consecration which is prepared to go all lengths.

In the realm of consciousness Jesus had to begin at the beginning, like every other babe, and like every other human being he passed in its turn through each stage from first to last. This at least is how his biographers state the case. Our

first glimpse of him as a conscious being uncovers for us three phases of his inner life. The first of these is intellectual, the others moral and spiritual. He was twelve years of age at the time, and had accompanied Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem. Their duties done, Joseph and Mary joined the company from Galilee and started on their homeward journey. Towards the close of the first day of travel they missed Jesus, and when they discovered that he was certainly not in their group at all, they at once returned to the city in search of him. There they found him the following day sitting among the Rabbis listening to them and asking them questions, which, with his answers to their return quizzings, awakened their wonder. He had even then become conscious of the existence and importance of some of life's chief problems. He did not know everything. He had simply gone far for his years. And soon Joseph and Mary were astonished in their turn, for when she chided him for what she regarded as his unfilial behavior his answer conveyed a rebuke along the same lines:

“What made you search for me? Did not you know that I must be in my Father's house?” So already his consciousness had been invaded, and was permeated, by the fact of his divine Sonship, and his whole being was responding in happy obedience to the highest authority we men can ever know. This is at once the least and the most we can safely affirm. His consciousness was then,

as always, distinct from that of his Father; and that it was a truly human consciousness in the estimation of Luke is most clearly proven by that writer's next word:

"However he went down with them to Nazareth, and submitted himself to their control . . . And Jesus grew in wisdom as he grew in years, and 'gained the blessing of God and man.'" (Comp. I Sam. 2:26.)

To be conscious of duty to God as our Father as carrying with it the highest possible obligation, and of ordinary filial duty as standing in the closest relations with that, is to have reached the true level of human beings; and to grow in wisdom as we grow in years in such a fashion as to deserve the commendation of God, on the one hand, and of men, on the other, is to pass one's youth in the one truly normal way; and to the very extent to which an individual falls below that he is a sinner and abnormal. In both his inner consciousness and outward conduct the life of Jesus was conformed to the highest human standards from the first; and the highest human standards are the only true ones. But let us go a step further.

All growth in knowledge implies ignorance, for knowledge and ignorance, like light and darkness, cannot exist in one and the same place at one and the same time. If there is nothing of one to recede in a given mind there can take place in that mind no increase of the other. This statement

would be quite superfluous but for the fact that so many men have learned to do their thinking about Jesus under the influence of the theory that he was always practically omniscient, and so quite unconsciously to blink out of sight the fact that he began his human career in the stall at Bethlehem with a mind as completely unfurnished as that of any babe of to-day. All thinking about the person of Jesus which stands associated with the virtual denial of this first postulate of Matthew, Luke and the writer of the letter to the Hebrews, is necessarily false to a degree.

Jesus never forgot the incompleteness of his knowledge, and never shrank from confessing it either by implication or direct statement. Apart from it his temptations, his fears and his agonized prayers could never have taken their places in his life. His consciousness of ignorance made for him, as it has made for each other member of our race, some of his sorest trials. But for it our New Testaments would never have contained the words:

“Our High Priest is not one unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been in every way tempted, exactly as we have been . . . Jesus in the days of his earthly life offered prayers and supplications, with earnest cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death; and he was heard because of his devout submission.” (Heb. 4:15; 5:7.) Each man’s consciousness is continually revealing itself in his

deeds and words. It is because he perceives or judges himself to be this or the other that any given man takes the place he does before the world. John the Son of Zachariah and Elizabeth perceived or judged himself to be the herald of the long expected Messiah. Therefore he stepped forth from the wilderness seclusion into which he had retired for the completion of the deep musings, which had been kindling his consecrated desire and imagination, and began to declare the kingdom of God at hand, and to preach the baptism of repentance, that his people might experience such a divine forgiveness as would fit them to enter and act their holy part in that kingdom. And over against this consciousness of John stood that of Jesus by means of which he perceived or judged that he was the long looked for Messiah himself. For how many days or weeks either of them was aware of his true character and destiny before taking the inevitable step, we are not informed, but there was a definite moment when the inner eye caught the vision, or the inner tribunal rendered the verdict, in each case. Prior to that moment character and career alike were for many years not even surmised, then for a longer or shorter time surmised only, but then and always afterwards neither could have taken any other course than he did take, without consciously withdrawing himself from the direction of God. This was as true of John as of Jesus, and as true of him who "was in all points

made like his Brothers" (Heb. 2:27) as of John.

What a true man once sees he can never unsee. And no true man can put his hand to the plough and afterwards look back. (Luke 9:62.) So John and Jesus met at the Jordan and Jesus was baptized by John "to satisfy every claim of religion." (Matt. 3:15.) In that act the consecration of both reached completeness. John had now performed the supreme act connected with his mission, and Jesus had definitely and publicly devoted himself to his Messianic career, receiving a divine as well as a human baptism in confirmation of his personal convictions. (Matt. 3:16.)

Still he did not enter at once upon the work which lay before him. Why? His ignorance stood in the way, and he realized the fact. Two wholly different paths lay before him, both wrapped in mists which were for the moment quite impenetrable even to his clear vision. Like his brothers he was compelled to study each new situation, and only thus could he know it for what it really was. He was true to the Divine Spirit which had come upon him and that Spirit led him into the seclusion of the wilderness. Arrived there he became so absorbed in the study of his problem that he forgot food, and so disturbed, let us be assured, by the difficulties facing him in the path which soon began to reveal itself to him as the only one he could tread in the company of his Father, that forty days and forty nights passed

before he could enter that path with confidence. Mark, as well as Matthew and Luke, tell us of this experience and Matthew and Luke agree that the specific temptation of this period was to make an improper use of the power with which he had been endued, and that this temptation looked in three directions—the supply of his own physical need without due reference to the will of God; the adoption of presumptuous sensational and spectacular methods for advertising his person and mission; and the attempt to win world-wide dominion after the prevalent political type, that is to say, through ignoring the universal Fatherhood of God and resorting to physical force.

When Jesus emerged from this season of deep reflection he knew himself as the Prince of Peace and the prophet of the non-combatant. Once for all he had decided that none of his servants, excepting the slow-learning yet fiery-tempered Peter, nor even the sinless angels of his Father, could do deeds of physical violence either to protect him personally, or to further the interests of his work. (Matt. 26: 52-54; John 18:36.) Accordingly we are told by Luke that when, “moved by the power of the Spirit Jesus returned to Galilee . . . and went on the Sabbath into the synagogue at Nazareth” he read from the book of the Prophet Isaiah—

“The spirit of the Lord is upon me

For he has consecrated me to bring Good News to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and restoration of sight to the blind,
To set the oppressed at liberty,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

All his wonders were to be accomplished by spiritual means and through the application of righteous laws. Matthew was so impressed by this fact that when Jesus responded to the Pharisaic plots to put him to death by seeking complete privacy in a spirit which raised its voice and its hand only to comfort and heal every diseased and distressed one who came within their reach, he declared that all this was "in fulfillment of these words in the prophet Isaiah—

"Behold! the Servant of my Choice,
My Beloved, in whom my heart delights!
I will breathe my spirit upon him,
And he shall announce a time of judgment to the
Gentiles,
He shall not contend nor cry aloud,
Neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets;
A bruised reed he will not break,
And a smouldering wick he will not quench,
Till he has brought the judgment to a victorious issue.
And on his name shall the Gentiles rest their hopes!"

(Matt. 12:14-21)

Another incident in harmony with this decision of Jesus may be cited here. When after he had fed a multitude of five thousand, besides women

and children, and "his disciples had filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves which were left after all had eaten, and he discovered that they were intending to come and carry him off to make him a king," who could feed a prodigious army of fighting men with little or nothing in the shape of a commissariat department! "he retired again up the hill, quite alone," horror-stricken and discomfited—(Jno. 6:12-15).

Slowly and late it would seem to us from the evidence before us, Jesus became aware of a very painful relationship which it was his to sustain towards his people—the relationship of Judge. He saw that he would be compelled to judge them as a nation and condemn all but a remnant. Jerusalem and its temple would disappear, amid unspeakable horrors, and that within the life time of some into whose faces he looked as he taught. So intense was his patriotism that he could not contemplate this prospect without losing his self-composure, sometimes even to bitter tears and words broken by sobs. (Matt. 23:37; Luke 19:41-44; Luke 23:27-31.) So Jesus was more and more consciously burdened as he approached his cross. Elsewhere I shall try to show that the cup he could scarcely bring himself to drink was this bitter cup of becoming the condemning judge for his people as a whole. Readers of John 15:22, 24 will see how the terrible fact invaded the quiet of his spirit even while he was making himself

the comforter of his disciples in the stillness of the Upper Chamber.

His office of Savior to his own people was never absent from his thoughts and he was always consciously yearning over them. It was his to have saved them from their sins first, and through that to have saved them from utter political and social disruption and disorganization. Hence it was that he took up John's message and made it the first theme in the preaching of his disciples, who, according to John's gospel, soon surpassed John the Baptist himself in the numbers they were able to bring to repentance and baptize.

But, as we have already seen, he was less and less appreciated as a Savior and more and more desired as a king of the ordinary worldly sword-bearing and war-waging type. His people disappointed him and he in turn disappointed them. They would not follow him into spiritual union with his Father, and he could not give himself to them as the ruler they craved. As he became increasingly conscious of this impossible situation, and found that every wonderful deed that he wrought was so misinterpreted that it only served to estrange them more and more from the ideal which he cherished on their behalf, he began to remonstrate and entreat in the manner of Matt. 11, and to speak of them to his disciples after the fashion of Matt. 13:10-17. John tells us how from this viewpoint he declared to them—"You refuse to come to me to have Life," and asked re-

provingly and, at the same time, beseechingly—
 “How can you believe in me when you receive honor from one another, and do not desire the honor which comes from the only God?” (5:40, 44.)

The faith of the Roman centurion and the persistent believing pressure of the Syro-Phoenician woman cheered and enlightened him; and before the end he saw that many will come from East and West and take their places beside Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. (Matt. 8:5-13.) So when about the end “some Greeks” sent word to him through Philip of Bethsaida that they wished an interview with him, Jesus, forgetting for the moment his deep and abiding sorrow, exulted thus—“The time has come for the Son of Man to be exalted. . . .” His sorrow reasserted itself again till it wrung from him a cry and prayer of distress, but he was able to dismiss it once more and further exult—“Now this world is on its trial. Now the spirit that is ruling this world shall be driven out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men to myself.” In the Upper Room, too, he was largely victorious over that depression of spirits which was so soon to become overwhelming, and could exhort his disciples to believe in him as confidently as they believed in God, and assure them that he was the Truth and the Life and the One Way to the Father—He was the Vine and they the branches, while his Father was the Vinegrower! What a significant word in rela-

tion to himself as well as in relation to them! What a holy calm was his, too, while he breathed forth there his high-priestly prayer, saying again and again "Father," and just once "Holy Father!" But in this also, though sinless he was like his sinful brothers—He could not permanently make the far off good, which greeted his eyes so comfortingly at times, fill the place of the other immediate triumph upon which his desires had fixed themselves, and which only the bad hands of his own nation had thrust beyond his reach. He was not only capable of heart-breaking disappointment—he actually suffered it.

One thing, however, never failed him—the consciousness of his Father's presence and approval, and of his personal union with him. In all his perplexities and in every distress of his he was sure that his life was bound up in the life of God. "I always do what pleases Him," he said. My Father is the Vinegrower doing what he will with me, his Vine. Looking up at the graveside of Lazarus he called out to that Father this confident word—"Thou hearest me always." Turning once to look his critics full in the face he said, "The Father and I are one," and again, "In truth I tell you, before Abraham existed I was." It was in conformity with this last word that Jesus prayed in the Upper Room—"And now do Thou honor me, Father, at thy own side with the honor which I had at thy side before the world began. . . . For thou didst love me before the beginning of

the world." (Jno. 17:5, 24.) All three synoptics agree that he testified on oath during his trial before the Sanhedrin that he was the Son of God. Was this the expression of a self-perception or of a self-judgment? Did he reach the place where at last he knew God and himself directly as Father and Son, or was his affirmation a logical conclusion from unstated premises, a self-judgment?

However this may have been, his consciousness was personal and individual, and it was that of a man. In spite of that union with his Father which he was able to assert so confidently and strikingly, his desires sometimes conflicted with his Father's purposes so painfully that his prayers were strong cryings mingled with tears, and his will acquiesced only when he came to see his Father's way for him too clearly to resist any longer. His wishes, like ours, clouded his vision, and sometimes, like ourselves, and notably at the end, his wish that things could have been ordered otherwise than they were, forced him to question his Father's will again and again. The Son of God was the Son of Man and he was wondrously and gloriously human.

The only way a true sane man can be known is through his consciousness as that consciousness reveals itself, with or without purpose, in his words and acts. Jesus was such a man. It is interesting to guess what conclusions the early church theologians would have reached, had they studied

their Lord from this scientific standpoint, instead of mixing their philosophy and hermeneutics for the production of dogmas as they did. They knew how to anathematize and even slaughter each other in their pious rage over *homoousion* and *homoiousion*, as these Greek words stood related to the person of Jesus, and over the question whether he possessed one or two natures, and whether there were in him two wills, one human and the other divine. The party which could in the end muster the biggest fighting force was orthodox, to be sure! For was not Jesus Christ himself a great warrior who rode upon a white horse, with his name "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" written upon his robe and his thigh? And did he not "judge and make war"? They merely failed to observe that the one sharp sword he wielded "came out of the mouth of him who sat upon the horse!"

Suppose, however, that they had looked into the consciousness of Jesus for reliable information on these points, what would they have found? If they had humbly consulted the records of his life which they possessed, as we possess them now, asking, as they did so, what in act and word and disposition of his, calculated to throw light on these questions, lay embalmed in these writings, what conclusions would they have reached?

Reading Paul's letter to the Romans they would have found this word: "According to the inward man I delight in the law of God; but I see a dif-

ferent law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity." They might well have been tempted by a word like this to the conclusion that in sinful men there are two natures and two wills. And this classical passage does not stand alone. There is a similar one in his letter to the Galatians—

"For the flesh eagerly opposes the Spirit, and the Spirit the flesh; for these are hostile to each other." And in all likelihood the word "Spirit" here stands for the marshaled and fighting forces of good in each sinful man, while the word "flesh" represents the forces of evil resident in each. It is, on the other hand, not an unusual thing at all for a man to call upon the forces of good resident in himself to come to his aid so that he may act his part worthily. This fact also seems to point to something like a duality of natures in men—the higher and the lower, the better and the worse. Such is the consciousness of sinful men.

Now what of the consciousness of him concerning whom the best informed testimony affirms that "he never sinned"—that "he has in every way been tempted, exactly as we have been, but without sinning?" Did he ever speak of himself as the possessor of two natures or two wills? Did he in any strait or any distress call upon his higher, his divine nature and will, to assume full control, and instruct or guide him up out of the ignorance or weakness of his human nature?

The answer is easy. There cannot be found anywhere even one poor hint that he ever did. The distinction which he saw so clearly was not that between a divine nature and will and a human nature and will in himself, but that between himself in his entirety and his Father. To that Father and never to his own divinity he continually rendered his worship and service. It is to him we owe that teaching concerning the Holy Spirit upon which the doctrine of the Trinity has been erected. When at the time of his baptism Jesus came up from the water praying, we are told that "the heavens opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending, like a dove, and alighting upon him." Yet we have no hint that he ever prayed to the Holy Spirit any more than that he prayed to himself. The Father was his sole object of adoration, and to him alone he fled from his human ignorance, weakness and awful distresses. Nor did he ever instruct his disciples to pray to any other but this same Father in heaven.

It may be well for me to do no more here than simply point out these facts. It cannot, however, prove otherwise than helpful for us to maintain the viewpoint from which we can distinguish clearly between the doctrines which have arisen directly out of the consciousness of Jesus, and the ones which have sprung from those of sinful men like ourselves. Praying in the name, or as the agents, representatives and brothers of Jesus, is a thing clearly enjoined by himself, but out of

his consciousness there never flowed to any man the command to pray either to himself or the Holy Spirit. He simply taught his disciples to call upon and adore "My Father and your Father, and my God and your God." (Jno. 20:17.)

From all this it can be easily seen that the doctrine of the Trinity can never be truly taught till full account has been taken of the fact that a human consciousness is bound up with the divine consciousness in the working out of God's plan of redemption, the vicegerent of the Father in the realization of the Kingdom of God being the man Christ Jesus—the divine Logos, the Son of God, who became this man. He who gives final form to this doctrine must do all his thinking in full view of the life history of God, which is indissolubly bound up with the life history of the Son of God, who is now known to us as the man Jesus Christ. This history must be written in four periods, the first dealing with conditions as they existed prior to the Incarnation, the second with conditions as they obtained during the life of Jesus in the flesh, the third with conditions as they have existed since his ascension to glory, and will exist until he surrenders the completed kingdom to his God and Father, and the fourth with those higher conditions which must prevail from that moment onward.

And what of the human consciousness of Jesus, when, the kingdom completed at last, he "surren-

ders it to his God and Father, and places himself under God who placed all things under him, that God may be all in all?" Will that human consciousness then disappear through absorption in the divine? That condition would be Nirvana. But it must either do that or persist forever. Our hearts surely incline us to the latter alternative, but is there any man who can speak here with final authority?

VI

JESUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Waiving entirely all direct discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity, I may introduce this subject with a general word touching the offices assigned by the New Testament writers to "the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," or, as Paul names them together, "the Lord Jesus Christ . . . God and . . . the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19; 2nd Cor. 13:14.)

The Father is God universally transcendent and universally governing in righteousness and love, that is, in the exercise constantly of due consideration for the interests of all his creatures and all his worlds. The Son is God confining himself to the limits of a human personality, including for a time its physical frailties, its ignorance, and even its extreme temptableness, and working out under all these disabilities a career so beneficent and praiseworthy that it must at length fill the whole universe with adoring wonder and gratitude. And the Holy Spirit is God universally immanent, pervading and interpenetrating all things and all persons, and carrying forward everywhere in all its details an infinite divine plan for the bringing into existence and the per-

fecting of a vast variety of things and beings, including our human race itself. The Son is brought before us not only as "the man Christ Jesus," but also as the archetypal man, "the First-born and Head or Lord of all Creation" (Col. 1:15; Rev. 3:14); and the Holy Spirit may in the name of correct scientific philosophy, as well as of sound New Testament exegesis, be identified as the one basal, organizing and perfecting Life of all that is, and author of that infinite variety in unity which exhibits itself on every hand—the Son the Norm and the Holy Spirit the Operator in one evolutionary process of illimitable scope (Jno. 1: 1-5).

If the First-born of all creation was the Archetypal Man and he stood as the norm for the whole process, then clearly the goal of all must find itself in a race resplendent with the various glories of the Archetypal Man himself. But the race found itself allied to the brute and so poorly seized of its high destiny, that it required some one who could both point out the goal and lead in the way to it. Who could possibly do this but this same Archetypal Man? And how could he do it excepting through a full entrance into the life of the race, as he would experience it, if he should be born and grow up and act and suffer, in the flesh, as a genuine member of it? Such seems to be the philosophy underlying the New Testament story of the incarnation. But here also the Norm calls for the Operator, and the Son

can never be separated from the Holy Spirit. These writers perceived this clearly.

All through the story of the life of Jesus the Holy Spirit is to be seen as the power upon and behind the Son, just as distinctly as the "Father in Heaven" is to be seen as the directing and controlling authority above Him. In presenting this fact I shall begin with the accounts of the resurrection and, moving backwards, conclude with that of the Virgin Birth.

In dealing with the resurrection of Jesus a word of his own touching it may be first cited, and perhaps that given in John 10:18 is the best for my purpose—"I have authority to lay down my life, and I have authority to receive it again. This is the command which I received from my Father." He always recognized the fact that the authority he wielded was delegated authority. He constantly described himself as having been sent under the strictest orders, and took pains also to make it clear that his instructions did not reach him all at once at the beginning of his career, but gradually as his circumstances demanded them. When he uttered these words his Father's "command" had reached him to move straight on in his faithfulness as the Son till he had laid down his life and received it again. To contemplate the first step was to pass at length through his Gethsemane agony, but the thought of the second was a portion of "the joy that lay before him." (Heb. 12:2.) It was on

the "authority" of his Father's "command" that he looked towards both. But he was not called upon either to take his own life or to restore it to himself after he had, "by the hands of lawless men, been nailed to a cross and put to death." The record is that "God released him from the pangs of death and raised him to life." (Acts 2: 23, 24.) And a further word of Peter is—"The very Guide of Life you put to death! But God raised him from the dead." (Acts 3: 14, 15.) In writing to the Romans, Paul made two statements on this point which I may note here. "Christ was raised from the dead by a manifestation of the Father's power" (Chap. 6: 4), is the first; and the second (Chap 8: 11) affirms: If the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives within you, he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life even to your mortal bodies, through his Spirit living within you." In the resurrection, therefore, as in all else the Holy Spirit is the divine Operator. So even if 1st Peter 3:15 should not be translated "quickenened by the Spirit," the thing is true nevertheless. The Father's power to raise from the dead and give life to mortal human bodies is manifested, or put forth, by the Holy Spirit.

In calling attention to the next point I may first remark that Peter and Paul both wrote at least once of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Jesus Christ—1st Peter 1:11; Phil. 1:19—just as Paul in 1st Thessalonians 4:8 writes of "God

(the Father) who gives you his Holy Spirit." The point itself is advanced in these words of Heb. 9:14—"Christ, who through his eternal Spirit offered himself up to God as a victim without blemish." While here a man in the flesh Jesus made the Holy Spirit his by receiving him to the full measure of his capacity, so that through his power he might do and endure to the utmost the things required by the position which he had assumed. And the thing here asserted is that it was through a strength of courage and devotion which the Holy Spirit wrought in him that he was able to pass safely through his Gethsemane test and yield himself up unflinchingly, and in the very "beauties of holiness" as an offering to God his Father, in the sufferings and death which followed.

One of the latest teachings of Jesus himself was that the Holy Spirit would lead his disciples, after his removal from them, in the ways of all necessary spiritual knowledge, and that he would do this partly by quickening their memories, and partly by invigorating their intellectual powers (Jno. 15: 26); that they would in this way be fitted to offer effective testimony concerning him as the Savior of men (Jno. 15:27); and that he would so open up the Truth to their minds as to make clear to them each step they would be required to take as they advanced with the task which it was theirs to undertake in his name. (Jno. 16: 13.) Thus Jesus made it plain that

he most definitely relied upon the operations of the Holy Spirit for both the progress of his church and the conversion of the world.

He knew how it would be in the case of the small company of followers he was to leave behind him, because he knew how it had been with himself. The servant was to be as his Master. When he stood up in his home synagogue at Nazareth he read from Isaiah—"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, etc." and sat down to open his address with the words, "This very day this passage has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4: 18-21.) And all "the beautiful words that fell from his lips" at other times were uttered under the same mighty inspiration.

When he passed from his baptism to the long season of spiritual struggle in the wilderness, he went under the guidance of the spirit. (Matt. 4: 1; Luke 4: 1.) Each of the four accounts of his baptism by John gives a most careful statement concerning the divine baptism which stood most intimately associated with it. "Just as He was coming up from the water, the heavens opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon him, and from the heavens there came a voice which said: 'This is my Son, the Beloved, in whom I delight!'" (Matt. 3: 16, 17.) Mark says, not that he saw the heavens opened, but that "he saw the heavens rent apart," as by a mighty force suddenly applied. Luke tells us that it was "when Jesus had been bap-

tized and was still praying" that "the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit descended, in a visible form, like a dove, upon him." This implies that the dove-like form was seen by others besides Jesus himself. John furnishes us with the testimony of John Baptist on this point—"I have seen the Spirit descending out of the heavens, and it remained upon him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water, he said to me: 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him—he it is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'" (John 1:32, 33.)

According to this word his baptism with the Holy Spirit was John's great means of identifying him as the one person in whose interests chiefly he had himself been commissioned. According to it also Jesus was revealed to John Baptist as the receiver of the Spirit for others as well as for himself; and this is certainly true to the very nature of his mission.

The purpose and value of this baptism are set forth in the words of Peter's address before the company gathered at the home of Cornelius in Cæsarea: "The story, I mean, of Jesus of Nazareth, and how God consecrated him his Christ by enduing him with the Holy Spirit and with power; and how he went about doing good and curing all who were under the power of the Devil, because God was with him." (Acts 10: 38.)

This language sets Jesus before the mind as owing his career most definitely to his consecration

and enduement by God. It was "because God was with him" that "he went about doing good and curing all who were under the power of the Devil." The consecration and enduement were essential things. Before receiving them he was Jesus of Nazareth, superior in goodness and spiritual insight to his neighbors, no doubt, but simply taking his share in his home life, the work of the carpenter's shop, and the life of the town and its synagogue. Along some practical lines he may have seemed to his neighbors, and his own family even, to be considerably deficient. He lacked in what was currently regarded as bargaining ability we may be sure. He had no cunning or craftiness, and did not know how to find the blind side of anyone, excepting for the purpose of becoming eyes to him. He was probably looked upon as too good-hearted by half, too unambitious, over conscientious and altogether unlikely ever to go far in any practical direction.

Before his consecration and enduement he was just Jesus of Nazareth, religious, thoughtful, generous, but not strikingly strong or commandingly eminent even in the religious life of the little town itself. He had not yet found his place and his work. He was waiting in the half conscious fashion of the great, whose proper tasks have not yet reached them. Then the breezes bore him tidings of what an awakening of public interest was taking place under the preaching of his cousin John. "The kingdom of God" was the

very word to quicken his pulses. So was the other word "Repent," for his own heart had already told him that this kingdom must belong to no other than a holy nation. What would his part be in this great and growing movement? This question grew upon him until at last it took him to the scene of John's labors and into John's presence. He knew his place and his work at last. He accepted his mission in his heart. He would publicly avow it. But first John must baptize him. John felt unworthy. But his scruples were overborne and the waters of the Jordan touched the Holy One and were themselves made holy for the thought of all the succeeding Christian generations. Jesus knew the tremendousness of this crisis. He went to John praying, came from his hands praying, and, praying still, received his divine baptism. Then at once Jesus of Nazareth found himself what he has been ever since—the anointed and consecrated One, God's Christ, and endued with a power which was to prove adequate to the various features of the whole task which lay before him. And it was the reception of the Holy Spirit into a completely consecrated nature which made all the difference.

Thus far everything was clear to the primitive Christian mind. Another question remained, however. What was there peculiar about Jesus of Nazareth that he alone was entrusted with this mission and endued with the Holy Spirit in this supreme way? And how was it that he be-

came possessed of his singular fitness to be made the divine instrument in the case? The natural general answer was the one which has been given in connection with the same sort of question as it has been asked in view of the lives of great men generally—it must have been a matter of original endowment. But how was this endowment secured? The question of parentage came in here. Could merely human parentage ever secure so much for any child? The thing was unbelievable. What then? They must if possible obtain all the facts of the case. So we have the stories of Matthew and Luke which can be set out in four words—Parthenogenesis through divine interposition. And what shall we do with these stories?

Evolutionary science of the materialistic type waves them aside with a superior air, remarking as it does so that among the higher orders of living organisms it knows no such things as virgin births, and no such things as divine interpositions among the advancing forces of nature. These are statements which no one can absolutely disprove. But one can accept these and still retain the recollection that nothing very solid can be built upon human ignorance. One may also be free to think, if he cares to, that what we call interpositions are perhaps not interpositions at all. They are not, that is to say, entrances of God into places from which he is usually absent, nor results of an activity on the part of God

where he was inactive before. The divine immanence must not be forgotten, and wherever God exists he exists as both thought and action. Nothing which ought to come into being does so apart from his will, and the more conspicuously necessary a given life is the more definitely that life can be traced to God as its source. Indeed God is the source of all life and so of all lives. And it is safe to assume, as I have done in one of the opening paragraphs of this chapter, that the Holy Spirit himself may be identified as the one basal, organizing and perfecting life of all that is, and author of that infinite variety in unity which exhibits itself on every hand; and that Nature with the capital N owes all she is to him as the very soul of her soul. He made her and he sustains her.

And what does science know about the laws of human reproduction? Do a male and female actually produce a new being like themselves? Or is their union only the condition of that production? It is certainly quite as safe to take the latter position as the former. What are the facts?

Several things are true of the inception of every human life. First of all the event does not take place in obedience to human wishing or willing. The most earnest desires and purposes are often met by nothing but disappointment. On the other hand, where the sexes, even in the marriage relation, regard each other only as companion instruments for sensual gratification, the

inception of a new life is often attained as a distinct triumph over all the obstacles which have with wicked and persistent care been piled in the way. In the second place the event occurs without human supervision, and altogether apart from even the consciousness of her who is to play the part of mother in the case. The more closely one looks into the actual physical facts the more apparent this becomes. Two invisible units seem to seek each other in a space which to them is vast, but they find each other. An almost infinitesimal embrace take place in darkness. Then the human embryo which results, fixes itself as a parasite upon some point, more or less suitable of the living chamber in which it has thus begun its career, and, after undergoing a variety of changes in form, it is forced to take its place in the air and sunshine of this planet, as the most immature and helpless of all sentient creatures.

During all this period it was not nurtured through the purposing or planning of any man or woman, and the period itself came to an end through no wishing or willing of any mortal whatever. Birth throes, as well as gestation, represent a will which has imposed itself upon the whole animal world—a will which is as vast in its scope as it is inescapable, and as wise in its hidden operations as it is powerful. It is true, too, that, as a rule, the birth-pangs themselves are used to awaken, where it did not exist before, a love strong enough to supply the care required

by the helplessness of the babe. The full breast yearns for the pressure of the infant lips and the soft touch of the tiny fingers; so the little form is caressed and held close to the heart, and before this vision latent father love leaps up strong to defend and to maintain.

Nothing, then, is clearer than that the conscious vital purpose which governs the propagation of our race lies elsewhere than in the visible actors or agents themselves. It reveals itself at every step in the process. The immanent God is here as elsewhere a constant and consistent doer, steadfastly carrying out the purposes of his own wisdom and love.

Coming now to the question before us, namely, the conception of Jesus, as it is set forth by Matthew and Luke, is there any apparent provision in our humanity for the occurrence of such an event? My answer is this. The personal letter of a living scientist, which now lies before me, refers to Dr. Edward Wilson's book on "The Cell Development and Inheritance," and, in view of the positions of that great authority, makes this statement: "It is quite safe to say that Parthenogenesis is by no means uncommon in the lower orders and it remains a wonder that it is not still more common in all ranges of life," when polar bodies and germ cells are so constantly found in the presence of each other in virgin wombs. No possibility, therefore, could be more distinct than this. There is here even the sug-

gestion of probability. Can this probability be strengthened by any facts or considerations which are well within our reach?

Let us look at the story of evolution itself as it reveals the succession of living organisms. This story, as Henri Bergsen well argues, is not that of a chain which was forged link by link, but rather that of several series of ascending steps which were separated from each other by chasms across each of which an upward leap was successfully made, in order that the evolutionary progress might be still triumphantly maintained. Not to name any other such leap, it is still safe, if not too fashionable, to say that our own race, low as it may have been at the start, was reached in this way. At the same time we are undoubtedly related to all the animals below us. To pass up from such a sinning world as that in which Jesus lived, to his own unsinning life, was certainly another leap, and one demanded by the conscience of the race itself, but felt to be impossible. When we look upon him long enough we see clearly that he was a man like every other man, excepting in this one thing—he did no sin. But this is a tremendous difference. How did it come about? The New Testament answer is not negatived by scientific facts.

Identify the Holy Spirit with Life; make Him the creator of all things and beings in the order in which they have actually appeared and are appearing; take parthenogenesis as an established

fact in nature, and confess the possibility of it in every race of beings; and the virgin birth of Jesus is seen to be at least as scientifically probable as that living organisms should have appeared in a world of so called non-living matter, altogether apart from any direct action of a living being either finite or infinite—an assumption which the scientific materialist entertains and propounds with a very quick faith. And placing the emphasis upon the word “direct” any one may perhaps receive this latter doctrine calmly, because in that case the axiom touching sufficient causes is not necessarily contravened. The story of living organisms is the history of the upward march of Life—the word, which, I anticipate, will one day take the place of the word Nature, which has proved so elusive and deceptive.

Life with the whole great task of Creation before Him, including the intellectual, the moral and the wholly god-like, proceeded with His task by slow and steady steps for the most part. But here and there He shot upward with a stride or leap. When at length he came to living organisms, he built the virgin birth into the regular order of events, and made provision for its occurrence everywhere, that it might be employed at any stage whatever, opening the way for it when he came to our race just as he had done before. In view of all this is it unreasonable to say that when he wished a race with well-nigh illimitable

intellectual moral and spiritual possibilities he resorted to this provision of his, and placed in the arms of an ape-like mother a child who had no ape-like father; and that when the time was ripe for placing before this splendid race a man who would never display an evil disposition or sin against his own conscience, he did this by putting into the arms of an Israelitish virgin a son whose father was not a sinning man?

Say that man is related to the whole brute creation on the mother's side, and Jesus is a brother on the mother's side to all other men; and the whole story is told.¹ You have then given creation its place as a part of God's long toil towards self-realization, without making him it, or it him, in whole or in part, any more than the human mother is her own son, or the human son his own mother. You have given man his proper place at the top of the ascending animal series, and have shown clearly that he was endowed with conscience and his power of knowing God, with a view to having these developed to the fullest possible extent, and made absolutely triumphant in their

¹ Yet not the whole perhaps. What if the Virgin Birth itself should prove the key to unlock the mystery in which the origin of species is still so closely shut up! Evolution rightly understood applies only to the development of each species after its appearance. Its work is that of strengthening characteristics and producing varieties. Were the various species themselves brought forth one after another by means of parthenogenesis? A case by no means weak might be made out for this view.

struggle with darkness and wrong. You have made it plain, also, that Jesus was projected with his unsinning life into the midst of the sinning, yet nobly striving race of men, as, on the one hand, a token to them that their ideal of a human life in every way true to its place and time, was far from being an empty dream, and as, on the other, a guide and an inspiration for every seeker after God's sufficient help and saving smile. You have shown, too, that the highest office of the Holy Spirit here upon the earth is that of uniting men to Jesus Christ in a life of supreme devotion to God and each other. And, finally, you have come to the place where it is seen that Jesus in the flesh is the Holy Spirit's norm in both his creating and recreating work, while the glorified or Archetypal Man, the Son of God himself, is his norm in his work where men come to know in full, as they have been fully known.

The first human child brought with it but the beginnings of all that was to be realized through its advent. Millennium has had to follow millennium in connection with the full realization of the rich and various possibilities which it carried with it when it came. So Jesus himself was but the beginning of the sinless order among men. He vividly realized this himself, renounced the idea of his completeness in the goodness of God, confessed his ignorance and his limitations, and held before his disciples the prospect of larger things to follow his removal from the earth. His com-

pleteness was that of disposition and purpose as these could be displayed within the limitations of his knowledge, on the one hand, and his social environment, on the other.

It was his, moreover, not to replace the sinning race by means of a new one, physically, as well as morally and spiritually, descended from himself. But by slowly lifting the sinning race itself, through intellectual enlightenment, the invigoration of the conscience and the clarifying of the spiritual vision, he was to lead it at last beyond every degrading, disabling and painful limitation into the fullness of its inheritance in God. That is to say, the Holy Spirit as Life brought Jesus upon the scene as his final instrument in the realization of that completely holy end, which alone could make the plan of creation itself worthy and glorious.

VII

THE SINLESSNESS OF JESUS

In dealing with this theme one has first to say who Jesus was and is, then ask what it would be for such a person to be sinless, and, finally, to determine, if he can, whether Jesus was really sinless or not. In giving our answer to the first of these questions we may state an affirmation which comes to us from every side—He was a man. The New Testament writers lead the way here, telling us of his birth and infancy, his boyhood, his consecration to God, his temptations and distresses, his prayers to his divine Father, his human agony in Gethsemane and on the cross, and of his death and burial. While they most positively affirmed his resurrection from the dead and his ascension to glory, they still spoke of him as “Jesus of Nazareth, a man . . .” “and how God consecrated him his Christ by enduing him with the Holy Spirit and with power.” (Acts 2: 23; 10: 38.) When Paul asserted the unity of God and the existence of one mediator between God and men, he declared that this mediator was “the *man* Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 2: 25.) It is in these same New Testament writers, of course, that we find the doctrine of both his pre-existence

and persistence as the Son of God. But constantly and consistently they represent him as having become a man, and seem never to have been troubled by any feelings of perplexity in view of his complete humanness. They believed he had no independent authority, but received continuous authorization from his Father. He could not even perform his first miracle without a clear intimation that it would be well-timed. They taught also that his power to do deeds that were beyond the ability of others did not spring from within, but came upon him from without; and that he himself anticipated that these deeds would be exceeded by those of his followers. They even saw in his life the proof that apart from heavenly aid, incessantly given in answer to prayers that were sometimes associated "with earnest crying and with tears," he would have failed both in his mission and his personal career. And when his earthly task was ended and he was about to pass from their sight to the Father, they understood him to say that the enlarged authority then given him was strictly delegated authority, and would continue only until the Father had through his instrumentality, along with the mightier instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, secured the complete triumph of the principles of love and truth which he had been sent to exemplify and enforce. In brief, Jesus was, to his apostles, a man while he was here in the flesh, and still a man after his resurrection and entrance upon his glorified ca-

reer in the invisible. That is to say, he was God become man and continuing as such.

These apostles were Jews, not Greeks. They were, therefore, content to abide without questioning in what they regarded as their world of ascertained facts. They rejoiced in the essential greatness of their Master and Savior. Had they philosophized at all, they would have said that the pre-existent Son of God did not in becoming a man cease to exist. Had he ceased to exist he could not have become a man at all. He had not ceased to exist, but only to exist as God. Hence, though now he was a man, he was divine still—the *God-man*.

What they did say, or rather, what they continually assumed, was that everything that he had done as Creator, Upholder, and Revealer, prior to his incarnation, had now to stand associated with the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God; since it could be credited to no other either on earth or in heaven. An individual's record attaches to himself alone, no matter what the changes which may take place in him. So to them he was "Jesus Christ yesterday and today—yes, and forever." He was the one who came down, stayed here for a time in our humanity, and then, in our humanity glorified, went up to where he was before. In his own person they saw him lift this humanity of ours, even while he was here in the flesh, to heights only imagined before. And all he did he did as a man.

Accepting, therefore, all that the New Testament writers affirm about the pre-existence and divinity of Jesus, we must recognize that it is as a man that we are to consider him when we ask whether he was sinless or not. But we cannot intelligently proceed with our inquiry until we have first named one of the outstanding facts of our humanity. This fact is ignorance. To enter upon a human career is to begin as a babe, with no knowledge at all, and always remain a learner. It must not be forgotten that the New Testament writers present Jesus to us as both a babe and a learner. It is recorded of him that he grew in knowledge in his boyhood. He did not know at the time of his baptism on what precise lines he was to conduct his career, and it was only as he moved cautiously forward that all became clear. During two years or more of his public life he did not think of his ministry as meant for any but Jews. When on his one vacation outside the territory of his own people, he declared to a pleading Canaanitish woman that he had no mission to her or her people. There and later he learned a new lesson regarding his own work. He confessed his ignorance of the time of a future event, and told his apostles, even after his resurrection, that the Father had reserved "times and hours . . . for his own decision." We have no hint either that he had a wider geographical or literary knowledge than the men of his time. He had no reputation whatever for learn-

ing. What gave him superiority and authority was his amazing spiritual insight. He read the heart of God and the hearts of men as no other ever did, and so was wiser than all others in the essential things of human life.

His knowledge and originality, even in the field of ethics, can easily be overestimated. He did not originate either "the first and great commandment" or "the second." Thou shalt love thy God with all thy powers and thy neighbor as thyself arrived ages before his coming. He found these commandments in the sacred writings of his people, and codified and illuminated them in his teaching. He was ahead of his times on divorce, on oaths, and on the requital of injuries, but he never even hinted at the great moral reforms of recent years. The Father had not made him acquainted with the "times and hours" in which the great principles he affirmed would work themselves out in these and all other particulars. From the standpoint of the moral reformer, as well as from that of the scholar, he was a man of his own time.

Now knowledge has so much to do with the correctness of human conduct that no thinker on the subject believes it possible for a life to be lived which is perfect in the sense of being complete in every particular, until the time arrives when all the relationships of men toward each other, with all the duties arising out of them shall have become fully known. Ignorance is one

of the greatest foes to progress, and progress is the one road to perfection. If, then, the perfect life is the life which is complete in every particular, Jesus did not live the perfect life. His times did not make it possible. The best he could do was to live as complete a life as was then within his reach. And he would find it the same to-day, if he were here in the flesh, and living in the most Christian country on the planet. If, therefore, sinlessness and fullblown perfection are to be considered as one and the same thing in connection with a human life, it cannot be claimed that Jesus was sinless. But this is by no means the last word on the subject.

We have now reached the place where it is necessary to state the self-evident fact that the claim that Jesus was sinless must be judged by the ethical standards of those magnificent men who first put it forward. What did the New Testament writers mean by sinlessness? After we have discovered this, and decided whether Jesus was sinless in the sense in which they used the term, we can, if we wish, ask whether sinlessness in their sense could be regarded as sinlessness here and now.

It can be said at once that the principle which guided the New Testament writers in this matter is the common-sense one that the attitude of an individual toward good and evil is not to be found in any outward act whatever, but in the disposition and purpose from which his acts pro-

ceed. They held that to make himself a sinner against God in connection with any given action the doer of the deed must at least fear beforehand that he would in that way either injure his neighbor or disobey or offend his God, or that he would thus disobey and offend his own conscience. They held, that is to say, that as far as ignorance existed it stood forth as a valid excuse for any act or word which was wrong in itself, and that as far as knowledge of its wrongness stood associated with any such word or act in the mind of the doer or speaker of it, that knowledge was proof positive of guilt on his part. Luke and John present the following as words of Jesus himself on this subject: "The servant who knows his master's wishes and yet does not prepare and act accordingly will receive many lashes; while one who does not know his master's wishes, but acts so as to deserve a flogging, will receive but few." "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have had no sin to answer for; but as it is they have no excuse for their sin. . . . If I had not done among them such works as no one else ever did, they would have had no sin to answer for; but, as it is, they have both seen and hated both me and my Father" (see also John 9:41). Paul's words in his letter to the Romans are terse and clear—"Where no law exists, no breach of it is possible. . . . Sin cannot be charged against a man where no Law exists. . . . Love fully satisfies the Law." Over against this

last word may be placed this strong one of John, "Every one who hates his brother is a murderer."

Jesus and his apostles after him emphasized knowledge, on the one hand, and disposition on the other. They taught that to love was for the person loving to abstain at once and continually from everything known to him to be injurious to the object of his affections, and to do instead every helpful thing that lay in his power; and that a man should love his very enemies. It was by this high standard that the apostles of our Lord measured him. Let us listen to some of them as they announce the result. Peter says, "He 'never sinned, nor was anything deceitful ever heard from his lips.' He was abused but he did not answer with abuse; he suffered but he did not threaten." On the contrary, "He 'himself carried our sins' in his own body to the cross, so that we might die to our sins, and live for righteousness." Peter knew Jesus better than any other man, excepting John, perhaps, and his deliberate written word is that Jesus never sinned in either act or speech. He never showed wrong disposition, but went to the cross, even, in the spirit of a love that carried every sinner on its heart in yearning for his salvation. John's testimony is that "in him sin has no place." He never admitted sin into his nature; so sin never prepared itself a room or abiding place there. "Holy, innocent, spotless, withdrawn from sinners," is the description given of him by the

writer of the letter to the Hebrews. And his word concerning his own consciousness, according to John 8:28, 29, was, "I do nothing of myself. . . . I say just what the Father has taught me. . . . I always do what pleases him." No sins of presumption, no running before he was sent—obedience to the Father represented by every word he uttered and every deed he did; is the claim that welled up from the clear depths of Christ's own knowledge of himself, according to the writer of the Fourth Gospel.

Does someone say, "After all, however, he was a man of his own time, as we are of ours, and his obedience was only as far as he knew. We know more of the particulars of human righteousness than he did, just as those who come after us will know more of them than we do. So admitting his claims in full, it must be remembered that he could not have lived a complete human life?"

Such words as these have a foundation in fact which we have already recognized, and they deserve careful attention. The first thing that should be said in view of them is this: He convinced men whose chief business in our world was the pursuit of righteousness and real holiness that he never once failed where they did—that his inner life, as well as his outward, was in perfect harmony with all of moral good and the will of God that he did know. And they saw so much in his life beyond what they had ever been able to build into their own that they regarded him

as knowing practically everything. Instead of having to make apologies for his ignorance, they stood amazed at his knowledge. This is clear. It is equally clear that no other man ever impressed the hearts of his fellows in this manner, and to the same extent. No other man was ever regarded as sinless by the holiest of his contemporaries, who were at the same time the men who knew him best. Here Jesus Christ stands forth unique and glorious, clothed with the perfect calm which could enwrap only the man whose fine composure had never been disturbed by any self-accusings. It was to the holy he seemed holiest, and to them he seemed perfectly holy.

Now how would a life of this sort be regarded if it should present itself in one of our towns or cities to-day? It would certainly be misunderstood and persecuted. But how would it impress men after it had run its remarkable course and reached its extraordinary termination? If a man should arise among ourselves whose every word and act, and his very dispositions, were, as far as we could see, in perfect harmony with the law of love toward both God and men, from the beginning to the end of his career—if he should seem in our eyes never to have been a transgressor in even the slightest particular, but to have given himself without a moment's cessation to the most unselfish service, alike Godward and manward; would we speak of him as having been sinless or not?

We know what sin is. We have long defined it as any transgression of, or want of conformity to, the law of God. And when we have been asked to define the law of God, we have done it in two ways, and said (1) It is that perfect and complete ethical code which is to be found in the absolute holiness of God himself, and stands partly revealed in the Christian scriptures and elsewhere; and (2) It is that same code as far as it has become a matter of knowledge to any individual whose character or conduct may happen to be under consideration. When we are asked why we have the two definitions, and not one only, we answer that we need the first, because we must keep ourselves reminded that the holiness of God has more of duty and privilege in store for us than any man has ever seen as yet; and we need the second as a standard with which to measure individual accountability, on the one hand, and individual moral worth, on the other; since the first cannot be used in this way at all, on account of the fact that beyond a certain point no man has ever yet known what it is in its various particulars. In other words, no man can test another by the standard of absolute holiness. For no man knows what that standard is, except in part. He can judge only by the particulars he knows, whether it is himself or another he has under scrutiny. So any man who should in disposition and purpose, as well as in word and deed, live in complete and positive obedience to

all the requirements of the divine holiness, as far as they have become known to him, would be sinless from the viewpoint of his own consciousness. And if some man with a larger knowledge of these requirements than any or all of his contemporaries should attain to this complete and positive obedience, he would be sinless, not only from the viewpoint of his own consciousness, but also, and even more distinctly, in the unprejudiced opinion of all who knew him. That is to say, if Jesus had led a nineteenth-century life with the same devotion to God and duty that he showed in the first-century life that he actually did live, there would be no hesitation on our part in ascribing sinlessness to him to-day, particularly if he had begun his public career during the second half, beginning, let us say, with 1875.

Sinlessness is one thing; absolute holiness, and even complete human righteousness, another. It was probably because Jesus, the human learner, had discovered this for himself that he turned so sharply once upon a flattering inquirer with the word, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God." The New Testament claim for Jesus is simply that he was sinless.

Jesus was not jealous of those who were to succeed him. He was at once too generous and too sure of himself for that. He knew the future would be his, and rejoiced all the more because those who were to follow him would surpass him in their grip upon the whole human situation, and

in the things they would be able to accomplish. He knew that their success would be his, along with the whole new order of things which he came to establish, and retired to superintend under his Father.

Our conclusion touching the sinlessness of Jesus is this: Complete human righteousness follows upon complete human knowledge along ethical lines, and can never be attained apart from it. Jesus came fairly to open up the way for this attainment by living a life in perfect inner agreement with the highest principles that can ever govern a human career, and in complete harmony with the fullest ethical knowledge of his time; that is to say, he came to do, and actually did, all that a man of his time could possibly do along the lines of ethical duty. And in doing this he accomplished a thing which was never done before, and has never been done since. He never failed in either disposition or purpose, but lived towards both God and his fellows, from first to last, a life that was, not only to those holy men who knew him best, but also to his own highly enlightened and sensitive conscience, free from every stain of wrongdoing on the one hand, and of neglected duty on the other. It may be confidently added that in achieving this moral and spiritual triumph he reached in principle a height beyond which no man can ever go. For it is impossible for anyone to do more than live up to his own highest light. And, let me repeat it, the

glory of that achievement, so far, belongs to Jesus Christ alone.

Two other questions seem to demand an answer before this discussion closes. Was sinlessness easier in Jesus's day than men find it now? Let each reach his answer as he notes the tremendous odds which truth and righteousness had to face in that old world of decayed and abandoned ideals. Will sinlessness be easier or more difficult when all men have at length, through the spirit of Jesus, been lifted to the high level of complete knowledge of their duties towards God and each other? They will then all be helpers of each other, and they will remember to his glory and praise that he alone kept the sinless way when the task was all but impossible even for himself, because every man he met was to some extent, at least, a hinderer. Knowledge of righteousness can advance to completeness among men only as their practice of it pursues the same direction. On the other hand, each access of genuine spiritual consecration must inevitably result in a broader vision, until at length, every earthly duty stands forth plain and unmistakable, and each member of our race then inhabiting this planet has been both disposed and empowered to live agreeably with his all-round knowledge of righteousness Godward and manward.

VIII

JESUS THE SOCIAL REFORMER

No man who has read the New Testament stories of Levi's feast in honor of Jesus, the conversion of Zacchaeus and that other feast in the house of Simon, at which Jesus was more honored by a woman of the street than by Simon himself, and has added to these the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, can doubt the fact that Jesus stood in the most radical way for a reform of the social system of his time and place. And these are not the only instances given us of acts and words of his which show the deep interest he took in social conditions, and the radical manner in which he handled the social problems which confronted him.

Wherever it was possible he proceeded guardedly and cautiously with the work which he undertook in this direction. He refused to assume the rôle of a judge in a property dispute and dismissed the man who tried to get a verdict from him, with this finalizing question—

“Man, who made me a judge or an arbiter between you?” (Luke 12:14). And when an attempt was made to draw from him a compromising word on the vexed question whether a faithful Jew should or should not pay taxes to his

Roman conqueror, his reply was as safe as it was skillful and unanswerable.

“Why are you testing me? Bring me a florin to look at. And when they had brought it, he asked: ‘Whose head and title are these?’ ‘The Emperor’s,’ they said; and Jesus replied: ‘Pay to the Emperor what belongs to the Emperor and to God what belongs to God.’” Jesus always took the highest ground and spoke as the prophet of God. His appeal was to first principles. And when he saw that this was not sufficiently realized he stated the fact tersely and distinctly:— “Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to do away with them, but to complete them.” (Matt. 5:17.)

He affirmed the progressive revelation of God and duty, and looked towards that

“ . . . one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.”

But he saw that each generation and each man had his inevitable steps to take in the one general direction, knew the steps which he himself should take, and took them.

The taking of these steps cost him his life. Had he temporized and compromised he might perhaps have lived on to old age and died in his bed. But he could not have either lived or died thus as the prophet of God, and much less as his Son. The man who has “no stomach for martyr-

dom" can never rise to the highest place in the kingdom of God, and makes too low a bid for even the full and lasting approval of his fellows. If Jesus was not an Erasmus in poverty of resolution, he was an Erasmus in the perils he had to meet and the odds he had to face, if he went straight on. The same Priest and Lawyer who had stood up in deadly hostility to every great advance and every great reform of the past were still there to be reckoned with. Before the close of the first year of his public career Jesus had abundant evidence of this fact, and was led in view of it to choose a small band, whom he might furnish as far as possible with his own ideas, and inspire with his own courage and devotion. He made that band twelve, that it might represent all Israel and give proper headship to each of its tribes. (Luke 6:1-16; Matt. 19:28.) Israel had to be reconstituted. If Jesus saw this vaguely at first, he soon saw it clearly enough to proceed upon these lines, which were at once symbolical and practical.

The general principle upon which Jesus proceeded in his programme of reform was that of the rights of man. These words may bear an ill savor to the nostrils of some, because of their association with the excesses of a time in which the highest Christian aim, so far as earthly things go, found itself associated with the fiercest renunciation of Christianity, the bible and God himself. The Priest and the Lawyer together

had by their perfectly devilish oppressions in the name of Christ—oppressions of body, mind, religious aspirations and worldly estate—secured the flat denial, in the name of all that was holy in manhood, of the name of the divine man which they had so unworthily and so falsely worn. But further they were unable to go. They could not kill out of God's world the original inspiration of God's Christ, and frenzied mob and frenzied legislature and executive alike, proclaimed The Rights of Man, and knew them to be holy. Christ inspired, though he did not direct, the French Revolution. The hate that was in it was not his, but the work which it effected has never been undone. On the contrary, it is still being carried on towards its completion under the eyes of all the peoples. And besides, the unavoidable misunderstanding, which stood associated with it, and for which the Priest and Lawyer were wholly responsible, is fast passing away, and the Christ is evidently about to come to his own in France as never before. Already the Lawyer and a considerable body of the Priests are under his direction to do his will as far and as fast as that will becomes known to them. That in many instances they do not recognize the fact makes no difference. Was not the word of Jehovah to Cyrus—

“I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me?”

The rights of men were always holy to the prophets whether they were the rights of a

Naboth, a Uriah, some poor widow, or the rights of a whole people. Not only Micah and Isaiah but every true messenger of Jehovah besides, was prepared to risk his life in their defense. Property rights, home rights, the rights of a husband in his wife and the rights of the wife in her husband, the rights of parents in their children and of children in their parents, the rights of the ruler over his subjects and of subjects in the presence of their ruler, the rights of men generally in the presence of each other, and above all the right of each Israelite to an unhindered acquaintance with, and a worship in spirit and in truth, of the holy and invisible God of his fathers, these rights were continually insisted upon before kings and rulers and at all hazards by Jehovah's prophets all down the centuries. But they were never insisted upon so graciously, yet vehemently, so intelligently and so passionately, as by Jesus himself. It was he first who spoke about the rights of man as man—rights of man as man in the presence of his Creator and Moral Governor—rights of each man as a man in the presence of his fellows.

Jesus acknowledged no personal or property rights of the strong, no rights of the rich as distinguished from the poor, no rights of the learned as distinguished from the unlearned, no rights of the morally upright and respectable as distinguished from the fallen and the outcast. The doctrine of human rights which Jesus preached

was the very antipodes of all this. The weak had a right to the care of the strong, the poor a right to the help of the rich, the sick a right to the aid of the healthy, the ignorant a right to the instruction of the learned, and the fallen and the wretched a right to the loving, patient reclaiming effort of the morally upright and respectable. So precisely where the favored classes had been finding rights of a special kind Jesus uncovered duties. Superiority creates the obligation to serve rather than the privilege to enjoy, was his constant teaching. And he brought himself forward as the supreme evidence of the truth of this doctrine. To his own twelve in their craving for place and honor he said:

“Those who are regarded as ruling among the Gentiles lord it over them, as you know, and their great men oppress them. But among you it is not so. No. Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to take the first place among you must be the servant of all; for even the Son of Man came, not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:42-45.) The higher, the stronger and the holier one is, the larger his obligation to serve his low and weak and sinful fellows, is the constant teaching of Jesus. And he goes further yet. He declares that the right of the helplessly sinful to the salvation he alone could bring them was so great because God had created them men, with all a

man's right to truth and holiness, that, in recognition of all the facts, he had to take his place as a man among them, to do, and suffer in the doing, all that needed to be done and suffered in their behalf.

In the teaching of Jesus, therefore, individual rights are based upon individual needs, and each man's claim upon the help of others becomes insistent at the precise point where his power to help himself finds its limit. To Jesus the human race was a family of which his own Father was the head and the provider. Whether Jesus ever distinctly regarded himself as a brother of every man may not be clear, but that he came to be regarded by his followers as a brother to those who received him as their Savior is very evident to the careful reader of the letter to the Hebrews. And was not this conclusion inevitable from the moment he spoke of God to his disciples as "My Father and your Father"—just as inevitable as it was that they should have reached the doctrine of the brotherhood of men in general from the "Our Father" which he prepared for all human lips? In the family the supply of need is never a question of earning power to start with. Husband and wife do not constitute a family. In Jesus teaching the two are but one from the family viewpoint. In them as thus united the family finds its possibility and, when the union is fruitful, its source. Each new family finds its right to be called such in the birth of a

human babe that has the instant right, though not the instant ability, to look up and call the man and woman immediately concerned father and mother. And before the human court, as well as before Heaven, this right of a child to say father and mother carries with it the right to demand everything which its weakness and helplessness may require, and for as many years as these may render it incapable of self-support and self-development. It is also true that in the family sickness, physical or moral, makes the same claims as infancy. In other words, in this world of God our Father, the measure of the individual's need, truly taken, is always and in every direction the measure of his rights. Commercial principles of the short-sighted human variety at least, are set at defiance under the government of the Father. To him loss is gain and death is life. To gain all love loses all, and in the end love will own all that exists. The goal of our humanity under the leadership of Jesus Christ is an innumerable family in which health and vigor and plenty continue forever, under the care of the infinite Father. (Eph. 3:14, 15; Col. 1:20.)

This is the direction in which Jesus was looking when he puzzled men with such sayings as—

“It is not those who are in health that need a doctor but those who are ill. I did not come to call the religious, but the outcast.” (Mark 2:17.) And as he himself implies in this very

word, his face was always in this direction. We shall never reach the stage of the platitude here, not even when through his church Jesus shall at length see all the long travail of his soul realized in perfected men living in perfected conditions. For the perfected will never be the finished. The infinite must forever be realizing itself in growingly glorious ways. The completion of the Christly kingdom marks the beginning of that which is diviner still (1st Cor. 15:28).

Noting now some of the applications which Jesus gave to these high principles I may first refer to his teaching on the weekly day of rest. His word is that it represents a human right growing out of a human need,¹ and that its observance must be so ordered as not to bring it into conflict with any other genuinely human interest. He was most insistent at this point; so much so that one is almost tempted to think that once or twice he even went out of his way for the sake of exposing the absurdity of the Pharisaic notions which had made the day in some respects a burden instead of a blessing. Jesus was a Sabbath law reformer. He set out to rationalize it. Rationalize is still a word hated by every Pharisee. As long as his hide-hound, heartless and supercilious race continues to bring forth its characteristic progeny this distrust and dislike of the unfettered human intellect will continue to be cherished. The Pharisee hates that appeal to first principles which throws light upon every

problem that vexes the human mind and conscience. Jesus, as the antipodes of the Pharisee, placed his whole reliance upon this appeal. He knew that men came into the life of genuine obedience through seeing and knowing the truth of things, and in this way only. So to the Pharisee's word in religious matters do not think, but listen to the voice of your spiritual superiors, Jesus opposed the command to think right down to the bed-rock, and build duty upon that alone. And the first thing to be sure about regarding the Sabbath, he went on to say, is that it was made for man, and not he for it, to become its bond-slave. He is its master, just as he is the master of his horse or his house. He is the master of it as man knowing God and not as an animal, however. He is its master as one who needs both physical rest and spiritual refreshment. And it is forever his to say what precise uses he must make of it in his own real interests. That responsibility has been laid upon him by God. And so I, not as Son of God, but as Son of Man and representative of all Israel, am charged with the distinct duty of assuring you that an irrational Sabbath observance is the very opposite of that which God requires at your hands. Wake up and think, and when through thinking you have come to see what a genuinely rational observance of the day is, then take your rest, on the one hand, and perform your acts of worship, on the other, in the strictest conformity

with the views which you will then entertain. You are not God's slaves, but free men in the enjoyment of a great God-given possession; therefore play the part of men by being true to yourselves. Of course the Pharisee could never understand anything so sensible as this, and the Pharisee was strong. Jesus could see that he was creating grave perils for himself, but he went bravely on.

There has been much debate over the question whether Jesus took any definite ground on the subject of war. Here one needs to proceed carefully. But it is safe to make at least two affirmations. The first is this: He held himself completely aloof, as I have shown elsewhere, from every position which would have made him even seem to assume responsibility for the existence or contemplation of armed force. This negative condemnation was as pronounced as it could be made. He simply would not be made a king, and the testimony of Matthew and Luke is that he assumed this attitude at the very opening of his ministry, because he saw with perfect distinctness that the office would have to reach him from the hands of that arch-murderer the devil.

The second thing which may be safely affirmed here is that Jesus pronounced most strongly against all personal violence. His warning to Peter when he struck Malchus could not have been made more emphatic, and his testimony before Pilate on the subject left nothing to be added.

At the same time it is quite true that Jesus attempted no crusade against either the existence or employment of armed forces. The time was not ripe for that. So he contented himself with stating most distinctly his own attitude towards them, and left his witness and his example to do the work they are so clearly doing at this moment. Personally Jesus was certainly opposed, and consciously so, to every sort of physical violence. And how could this have been otherwise? For Jesus had a perfect passion for justice. And war in the name of justice is monstrous. Can justice be reached through the taking of unoffending human lives? If rulers did their own bloody work when their quarrels grow hot enough for the appeal to the sword, the matter might look less serious. But even then the case would really be the same. The question whether this man or that, or this nation or the other, is entitled to a given piece of property or territory, cannot possibly be determined through finding out by a bloody test which has the cleverest knack at taking human lives and destroying valuable property. The question is one with which the intellect and conscience alone are fitted to deal, and war or physical violence can never be resorted to without perpetrating a fraud against both. It was this fact which led to the establishment of courts of justice in every land, and to the erection so recently of a court of justice of international scope.

Tennyson heard the pistol shots in the duel between Maud's lovers. Later, too, he heard the lover who survived moaning his moan thus:

"For front to front in an hour we stood,
 And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke
 From the red-ribbed hollow behind the wood,
 And thundered up into Heaven the Christless code,
 That must have life for a blow."

But, as he himself suggests, the awfulness of the echo made by the shot which proved fatal was due to the fact that it reached him mixed with echoes of the voice of Jesus, which repeated his

"I, however, say to you that you must not resist wrong; but if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him also. . . . Love your enemies, and pray for those that persecute you, that you may become Sons of your Father who is in Heaven; for he causes his sun to rise on the bad and good alike, and sends rain upon the righteous and upon the unrighteous."
 (Matt. 5:39, 44, 45.)

Jesus forbade the blow which it is most difficult to hinder, that he might thus put a stop to all blows besides. His veto was directed against the very battle which men have thought they must wage in self-defense. And he lived as he taught, going to the cross at last as a positive advocate of non-resistance, on behalf both of himself and of all who called him Master. (John 18:36.)

Looking in another direction we see Jesus doing all he could to educate men into such a practice of truthfulness as would secure the facts in every matter with which they might have to deal, either privately or publicly, against all conscious misrepresentation. It was for the sake of this that he attacked the taking of an oath to bind one's self to tell a true story anywhere. Why should a man bind himself to be truthful in one case, unless he were free to confess himself a man of unregenerate speech in the general way? Surely the person who really needed to be dealt with in such a humiliating fashion before a court of law, must be so lacking in fairmindedness as to be unreliable even then! He must be accustomed to lying, and how can a man who has trained himself long in prevarication, bring himself to even see the whole truth of a thing during some brief moment, which may make a special demand upon him? The one way to a true statement at any particular time lies through making true statements at all times. And the one way to the statement which is in all respects true to fact must always lie through the unswerving purpose and effort to be absolutely true in all one's views of things, as well as in each of one's statements concerning them. Therefore said Jesus:

“Let your words be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from what is wrong.” And this word is as invulnerable as it was em-

phatic, as important and necessary as it was far in advance of the time.

In the matter of divorce Jesus took ground equally high. We may assume that his disciples were familiar with the teachings of Hillel and Shammai, and knew that the latter opposed the loose ideas of the former by insisting that a sufficient ground for divorce could be found in nothing short of adultery. Jesus astonished his disciples in a way which at least suggests that he went so much farther than Shammai himself that he pronounced the marriage tie absolutely indissoluble in the very nature of things.

“Have you not read . . . that the man and his wife become one? So, when once they are married, they are no longer two but one. What God himself, then, has yoked together man must not separate.”

“Why then,” they said, “did Moses direct that a man should serve his wife with a notice of separation and divorce her?”

“Moses, owing to the hardness of your hearts,” answered Jesus, “permitted you to divorce your wives, but that was not so at the beginning. . . .”

“If that,” said the disciples, “is the position of a man in regard to his wife, it is better not to marry.”

“It is not every one,” replied Jesus, “who can accept this teaching, but only those who have been enabled to do so.” (Matt. 9:3-11.)

There are two ways of attempting to account for this amazement and dismay of the disciples. One may take the ground that they regarded Shammai as so severe that they stood with Hillel for an easy dissolution of the marriage bond, and were astonished that Jesus, who opposed the severity of the Sabbath laws of the time, should have taken his stand so definitely for strictness here. One has strong reasons, however, for doubting that the disciples were in this matter followers of Hillel. But if they accepted the teachings of Shammai there was no ground whatever for their dismay unless Jesus actually declared that not even adultery was a sufficient ground for divorce. On the other hand, too, would Jesus have said that only those who have been enabled to do so have accepted this, the teaching of God from the beginning, if he was at the same time merely announcing that he stood firmly with Shammai, and went no further. It looks, indeed, as if Jesus pronounced against divorce as absolutely on this occasion as both before and afterwards he did against every sort of violence against the person, and as if the words "for every cause" in the third verse, and the words "except on the ground of her unchastity" in the ninth and elsewhere had been supplied or interpolated by some hand at some time.

Very clearly if Jesus taught thus on this subject our world has a long way to go before it will be found marching side by side with

him, for it has not yet overtaken its Shammais.

In short Jesus stood for perfect justice for every human being, and demanded that justice both from the court of law and from society at large. He saw and taught also that justice could never be attained apart from the largest exercise of mercy and love. His doctrine was, as I have tried to show, that helplessness, physical, moral or spiritual, creates the most peremptory rights of all. Justice divorced from mercy and love was, therefore, regarded by him as no justice at all. This is why he dealt so unsparingly with that legal dodge by means of which the "Pharisees and Teachers of the Law" had managed to turn into the coffers of the Temple, which were very largely under their control, so much wealth, which should have been devoted by the heartless religious devotees concerned to the really pious use of keeping their own fathers and mothers back from the dire straits of poverty in the helplessness of their old age. (Matt. 15:3-6.) "Hypocrites" was the one suitable word which Jesus found to place as a label upon this sort of religionist at this time. Later he chose "fools," "blind guides" and "children of hell" as suitable additions. (Matt. 23.)

To him, for the man or woman who was down, justice meant a genuine chance to rise. He saw very clearly that ostracism did not provide for this in any adequate way. It simply meant instead—Get to the devil out of this, for that is where you belong. In ostracism there was neither

love nor mercy. It was a compound of contempt and hate. What a genuine chance really meant he told in his stories of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son. It meant all that the utmost strength and skill of love to the uttermost could devise and do for and with the lost man and the lost woman—that, and nothing less than that. It meant the coming of God himself in the person of a man into precisely this relationship with outcast men and fallen women and every other sort of sinner. And the coming of this man into this relationship was a call to every happily privileged man and woman to join him in his saving tasks. The moment men and women knew themselves to be the Sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty they were to understand that they had been taken into the family, or born into it by spiritual regeneration, to be the associates of Jesus in this age-long work. It was for this the church on earth was constituted, and for this it has been perpetuated. Paul knew this when he labored in degraded Corinth. Consequently after writing to the church which he organized there—"Do not be deceived. No one who is immoral, or an idolater, or an adulterer, or licentious, or a sodomite, or a thief, or covetous, or a drunkard, or abusive, or grasping, will have any share in God's kingdom;" he was able to add: "Such some of you used to be; but you washed yourselves clean! You became Christ's People! You were pronounced righteous through the name

of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the Spirit of our God!" (1st Cor. 6:9-11.)

While here in the flesh Jesus immortalized the names of Levi and Zacchaeus. He immortalized also "a woman who was an outcast in the town" (Luke 7:37). His motto was—God's will, which I came to do myself, and to teach others to do, is that every fallen man and woman should be given that genuine chance to rise which can be secured for him only by that perfect justice, which is what it is, because it is forever associated with infinite mercy and love, as well as with infinite wisdom and might! Or more briefly—All purified and loving hearts to the rescue!

IX

JESUS THE REVEALER OF THE FATHER

The New Testament writers believed Jesus Christ to be, in the supremest way, the Son of God. Paul, at once the most voluminous and, with one exception, the earliest among them, gave expression to this faith before he had gone twenty lines in his first extant letter to a Christian Church. Congratulating the Thessalonians, he told them "how, turning to God from your idols, you became servants of the true and living God, and are now awaiting the return from heaven of his Son, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus." (1 Thess. 1:9, 10.) They believed him to be God's Son in the same way that any man is the son of his father. Accordingly the gospel of Luke tells us that before he was conceived by Mary, she was distinctly notified of the divine purpose that she should become a mother by means of the Holy Spirit, that she consented, and that a little later, knowing herself to be in a mother's condition, she went some distance to visit her cousin Elizabeth, and was raised to an ecstasy of joy by being greeted on her arrival as "the mother of my Lord." (Luke 1:26-56.) Matthew's gospel supplements this by telling us

that when her betrothed husband also became aware of her extraordinary situation, he, too, was supernaturally informed and brought into the same spirit of consecration to God's will which she had manifested from the beginning. (Matt. 1:18-21.) The early church, therefore, looked upon Jesus as naturally the revealer of God as Father. Since like begets like, they believed that he revealed God, first of all, through his character, and the fourth gospel represents Jesus as saying to his eleven apostles, just before they went with him to Gethsemane: "He who has seen me has seen the Father." (Jno. 14:9.)

Whether the church reasoned from the resplendent holiness of the character of Jesus to the fact of his divine Sonship, to begin with, as might be inferred from one at least of the gospel stories (Matt. 16:13-17), or were convinced of that Sonship rather by the things recorded in Matthew and Luke, to which I have just referred, is a matter of little practical importance. In whatever way it was brought about, the early church was from the beginning absolutely convinced that Jesus of Nazareth, the man, was at the same time Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And its members were perfectly responsive to the declaration—"No one knows who the Son is, except the Father, nor who the Father is, except the Son and those to whom the Son may choose to reveal him." (Luke 10:22.)

The distinction between revealing God as God,

and revealing God as Father, should not be forgotten. The former revelation greeted the child Jesus in his own home and in the synagogue at Nazareth. Every one he met while he was growing up, was asserting, as his fathers had done before him, and as Mohammedan, equally with Jew and Christian, asserts to-day—God is, and there is no God besides. Jesus received that revelation from his fellow-countrymen, when it was centuries old. They were also acquainted with and taught him, Isaiah's tender word about God as the Father of the Israelitish race. (Isa. 63: 16.) He was their debtor, not they his, so far. The things which Jesus brought to the amazed attention of his time were God's fatherly care for the individual human being down to the very infant (Matt. 5 & 6; Mark 10:13-16), and his bestowal of his holy likeness upon believers in Christ through a real spiritual begetting, which made them his sons and daughters, whether they were descendants of Israel or not. (Jno. 3:3-8; 1 Jno. 3:1-10; Matt. 8:11; Rom. 4; Eph. 2:11-22.) And this idea of the Divine Father is becoming the very core of Christian teaching in our own day.

Now in studying Jesus as the great discloser of the divine Fatherhood, and keeping in mind the fact that he revealed the Father partly through his own character and partly by means of his teaching concerning him, we may safely ask at once what phases of the divine character he

stressed. What impressions concerning the divine Father will the New Testament, and particularly the gospels, make upon the mind of the careful reader? Will such a reader, looking upon Jesus as he is to be seen in these, and listening to him as he can be heard through them, come necessarily to regard the Father as stern and severe? Or will he be impressed rather by his kindness and his pitying tenderness? In other words, are the four New Testament histories of Jesus and his teaching better fitted to convey to the mind the tremendous requirements of the infinite holiness which they bring into view, than to awaken in the heart a humble, yet joyful, confidence in the infinitely loving care, and the forgiving help of the God, whom Jesus taught his disciples to call "our Father?" If there is any lack of perfect balance in his life and teaching, on which side is the greater weight to be found? God is holy, God is loving—which of these infinite facts did Jesus take most pains to write upon human hearts? Can we be sure, to begin with, that if he stressed one more than he did the other, it was because that one had become obscured, and needed to be drawn forth into clearer light once more? Would any one dare say that either is in itself of less importance for us than the other?

When we ask all these questions we show that we are not yet on the right track. It can never be forgotten that Jesus impressed John in such a way that he wrote down for all time, not God

is holiness, but "God is love." And is not the key-note of the whole New Testament to be found in John 3:16? Love is active good-will, and holiness is but a phase of that. Holiness simply means the absence from a nature of all injurious dispositions, desires and purposes, and the presence in it of all helpful ones; and that condition is just an aspect or part of love itself. Holiness is therefore a part of which love is the whole, and the whole is forever greater than any of its parts. We reach the truth here only when we get John's vision, and learn that to be love is more than to be loving. Loving some persons may be associated with hating others (Matt. 5:43-48), but He who *is* love can hate no person whatever. He can hate only things—the things which mar and harm persons, or sin in its various forms. When we say God is loving, we can match that statement in another direction by saying that he is holy. But "God is love" is a statement that can never be matched until a part can be found which is as great as the whole to which it belongs.

It was the greatness of this revelation of Jesus Christ that made him so hard to understand, in both his teachings and his life. Some found it impossible to take in the fact that he could hate no one—not even the oppressors of his countrymen. His very disciples seem never to have divined, in the days of his flesh, the secret of his steady refusal to look towards the earthly throne, which they thought he would some day be com-

pelled by circumstances to mount. Such a throne would have meant war, and disguise the fact as men may, war is based upon hate. Every armed conflict means either that men want to kill each other, because they have come to hate each other enough for that, without any definite reason which they can name, blindly and brutally; or that, because one of them stands in the way of the other's acquisition or enjoyment of property, or liberty, they have come to hate each other enough to glory in hewing or shooting the souls out of each other.

“Hateful and hating one another,” and glorying in the vengeance they could wreak upon each other, the men of Christ's day could not believe that he meant them individually and collectively to entirely dismiss the law of retaliation, and adopt the gentle method of loving their enemies, doing good to them that hated them and praying for those who despitefully used them and persecuted them. And when a Caiaphas did understand him, it was only, of course, to hate him for his peace policy worse, if anything, than he already hated the Roman, and advise his murder under forms of law. The coming of the Holy Spirit from the Father upon Jesus, in the form of a dove, at the time of his baptism; his immediate impulsion by that Spirit into the wilderness, that he might determine the lines along which he would move during his public career; and his rejection there of every suggestion that

looked in the direction of gathering the people about him, as they were, for the founding of a world-wide kingdom, that would largely rely upon the support of murderous physical force; is the New Testament's way of telling us that, when Jesus laid himself open to the sneer of being a peace-at-any-price man, and so awakened against himself the bitterest malice of the warlike rulers of his people, he did it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that he might show forth the mind of the Father in the matter. And the further New Testament stories which bring Jesus before us as reproving Peter and healing the wound he inflicted, when he drew his sword to defend his master at the time of his betrayal and arrest (Luke 22:50, 51); as informing Pilate—"My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence" (Jno. 18:36); and as even rejecting the thought of having twelve legions of angels put all his blood-thirsty persecutors out of action by some sort of spiritual *jiu-jitsu*; show us how, in the opinion of his followers, Jesus felt himself led by the spirit of his Father to his first decision to eschew everything that looked in the direction of a compulsion, which did not address itself to the unfettered intellect and conscience. Under his Father he was king of the truth and of all who would receive it. (Jno. 18:37.) And all who witnessed his in-

ability to hate even his enemies, looked through him upon his father. (Matt. 5:44-48.)

The difficulty was that his contemporaries would not believe it. They had not known God as love, or universal Father, and did not want to know him as such. They thought their God as deep a hater of persons as themselves, gloried in the fact that he was almighty, and were simply waiting for him to make bare his arm for the slaughter, which they regarded as already overdue. In the meantime they felt there was nothing else for them to do but to prepare for this wholesale butchery by shedding the blood of the one man who most of all stood in the way of it. (Jno. 11:50; 18:14.)

If we look in the direction of the social and religious life of men, we shall still see Jesus giving offense, on the one hand, and unspeakable comfort on the other, because he stood for a love that knew no caste barriers and no depths of sinning that were beyond its embrace. He went so far in this matter that he fell under the suspicion of being short in patriotism and penetration, if not also in personal purity. Confining ourselves to the gospel of Luke, we shall get all the light we need on the social characteristics of Jesus. The "righteous" people of the time like many of the "unco guid" of our own, thought of holiness as a moral superiority one of the chief duties of which was to guard its own reputation or sanctity by ostracising those who did not con-

form to its ideals. This notion of holiness had worked itself out in a political direction, and placed under the social ban every Jew who took office as a collector of taxes under the Roman government. Taking another direction it had ostracised also the fallen woman, and given her a sort of preëminence among wrong-doers by labeling her "sinner." It may be noted, however, that the seducer and paramour of such a woman does not seem to have fallen under the ban of this holiness distinctly enough to have shared with her either her title or her disabilities. It was that sort of holiness which makes up for its inability to keep the man pure by punishing the woman for her inevitable share in his sin; and who shall say that such a holiness has even now disappeared from the earth? To pull the sweetness of virgin purity down into their own filth, and then despise their sisters and cast them out of their places in society and the home, because they are no longer pure, has been one of the constant achievements of the male members of our race, in which they have not lacked the too ready assistance of the wronged sex itself. The propriety of such acts of ostracism, in view of the eternal principles of right, could scarcely remain unchallenged forever. It was quite certain from the first that some one would rise and ask what the Father of us all was thinking about it.

According to Luke, Jesus forced the issue. He did it, to begin with, by calling a tax-gatherer

of Capernaum, named Levi, to be one of his intimate disciples, and by making himself perfectly at home at a feast which Levi immediately prepared for him at his home, the other guests at which were necessarily tax-gatherers and outcasts. When the inevitable criticisms were voiced, he made the obvious yet to them startling remark—"It is not those who are well that need a doctor, but those who are ill. I have not come to call the religious, but the outcast, to repent." Later a Pharisee named Simon invited him to a meal, and while they were still at the table a poor outcast woman crept to his feet and anointed them with a costly perfume, weeping over them the while the tender tears of her contrition, and wiping these away with her abundant hair, because of her sense of unworthiness, as they fell. When Simon looked his disapproval of Jesus himself, as well as of the woman, he was taught that he had been ignoring two of the most beautiful things in God's world—the forgiveness He waits to confer upon the repentant sinner, and the humble tender love which wells up from the depths of such a sinner's nature when that forgiveness has been consciously received. (Luke 7:36-44.) On another occasion when "the tax-gatherers and the outcasts were all drawing near to Jesus to listen to him, but the Pharisees and the teachers of the law found fault—"This man always welcomes outcasts and takes meals with them"; he replied by telling three stories, one about a lost sheep, another

about a lost coin and the third about a lost son. The first of these he concluded with the statement: "So I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in Heaven over one outcast that repents, than over ninety-nine religious men, who have no need to repent" (Luke 15); the second with the like word: "So I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of God's angels over one outcast that repents"; while the third, which we may rename *The Father and His Two Sons*, closes with the last joyful word of the father, on the occasion of the return home, in sorrowing penitence and humble confession, of the son who had turned his back upon purity and thrift, and fallen into sore want into a far off land—

"We could but make merry and rejoice, for here is your brother who was dead, and is alive; who was lost and is found."

What is the gist of all this teaching of Jesus but this? You can never make men and women such outcasts but they will still remain your brothers and sisters, and still sons and daughters to the heart of the Father in Heaven. And no one can ever sin himself, or be cast by his fellows, beyond the pale of omnipresent and infinite love.

Luke's additional story along this same line of the social life of his time—that of *Zacchaeus*—can well be left untold. We need only remark as we pass it by, that throughout this teaching of Jesus about his Father, we all but lose sight of his holiness, in the awed wonder awakened by his

amazing love. Not that the former is absent, but that it takes its proper place as a constituent element of the vast love itself.

Religiously, as well as socially, Jesus had to face perverted notions of holiness. The Jewish religionist taught that the divine holiness was an exacting thing, which ignored to quite an extent the every day needs of men, that it might make them holy in every minutest detail of their conduct. As interpreters of this holiness the teachers of the law multiplied their petty requirements till they made that law a tyranny and all life a burden and a vexation, so that men could no longer think of law and love as the inseparable things they really are. The Sabbath requirements of these legalistic teachers were perhaps the most irksome of all. No man in crossing a wheat field to attend the Sabbath service in his synagogue, could break off a head of the ripening grain and eat the kernels, for that would be doing three or four kinds of labor—reaping, threshing, winnowing and grinding. They taught also that only danger to life could justify any effort on the Sabbath towards the relief or removal of pain or disease. Under such conditions the people, of course, soon learned how many evasions could be secretly practised and numbers of these evasions came at length to be provided for by succeeding generations of lawgivers. But the moment Jesus became obnoxious to the Jewish leaders, they seem to have made up their minds

to apply their Sabbath laws in all their remaining strictness, at least, to the work he was doing. For his part he saw in their attitude one of his great opportunities, with the result that we have in the four gospels the stories of eight interesting occasions when, defying their malice, he poured floods of light about their thinkings and doings along this line.

To begin with, he reminded them of things that had been done, and of others that were still being done with their own consent, against law, including the laws which forbade labor on the Sabbath. David had entered the ancient tabernacle and taken the sacred shew-bread for himself and his military followers. A man, with but one sheep, might rescue it from a pit on the Sabbath, such was the recognized value of property. On that day, too, oxen and asses were led out to watering places, that they might not suffer from thirst, and any man might pull his boy or his ox out of a well and so save him from perishing. Clearly, therefore, the Sabbath law knew certain reasonable exceptions, and the only question remaining to be dealt with was that of the principles upon which these exceptions could be determined. One of these, he went on to assert, was the principle of mercy and good-will, and the Sabbath institution itself represented that, for

“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; so that the Son of Man (the man of mercy and love) is lord even of the Sab-

bath," and must be free to exercise his judgment as to what helpful deeds should be done on that day. And he would not be likely to leave a human being, throughout a Sabbath, in a condition of peril or suffering from which he would rescue a brute; because the cry of a man always represents a worth that can never be found in any beast.

There was again the fact that religious rites were performed on the Sabbath, though they involved much labor; and the male child that reached his eighth day on a Sabbath, was circumcised without delay, that the law on that matter might be honored to the utmost. If so much was done to satisfy law, how much might be done to satisfy love—the love of the infinite Father? Along these lines, he added—"My Father works to this very hour, and" that is why "I work also" along these lines. I follow my Father to show you what he is like. My Father is not Law but Love, and because he is love, the laws he lays down are never to fetter, but always to guide into true liberty and happiness those whom he has made to be his own sons and daughters.

One might lay beside all this teaching of Jesus, as it comes to us from the first century, much more besides of what he is reported to have said and done as the Son and revealer of the Father. But one further word of his own and another of Paul's must suffice. His own is this—

"The Father is greater than I."

It was never in the mind of the apostles that the Son of God became a man to make himself the center of human thought and worship. Their conviction was that Jesus no more purposed to assume that position, than that a woman—his own mother—should be lifted into the place of pitying tenderness and helpful, gracious mediatorship belonging to himself. To them he was, far beyond and above all others, the revealer of God, and came that man might through him enter into such an understanding of God, the Father of all, as would eventually make all further effort of his on their account wholly unnecessary. His work as a man was, in their view, to have an end as definite as was its beginning in the manger at Bethlehem, or at the Jordan, where John baptized him and he began to attract disciples. Consequently we have Paul's word in his first letter to the Corinthians—"Then will come the end—when he surrenders the kingdom to his God and Father, having overthrown all other rule and all other authority and power . . . and when everything has been placed under him, the Son will place himself under God who placed everything under him, that God may be all in all!" (1 Cor. 15:24-28.)

If the New Testament can be trusted, the theology Jesus Christ came to establish and perfect is theocentric, and has the Father as its chief object of love and worship, with the Son as his greatest Revealer; and the purpose of the Son's

mission was that of bringing all men at length into the place where they would so know and enjoy God in his Fatherhood, as no longer to need either revealer or mediator. That creed of one article—"I believe in God through Jesus Christ" suggested by Dr. Denny for the uniting of the scattered fragments of a dismembered Christendom, is a good creed, because its God is—

"The God and Father of Jesus Christ our Lord, the all-merciful Father" (2 Cor. 1:3), the "one God and Father of all—the God who is over all, pervades all, and is in all." (Eph. 4:6.)

X

THE KINGDOM AND CHURCH OF JESUS

A study of the Kingdom of God, or of Heaven, of which several New Testament writers make Jesus the head, can be best approached perhaps through Paul's affirmations touching political rulers in general. He declares in the most emphatic manner that these hold office by divine appointment. They are God's ministers or servants appointed to inflict his punishments upon those who do wrong. They are God's officers devoting themselves to this special work. Addressing the church to which he is writing he asks its members a question which he immediately answers for them. "Do you want to have no reason to fear the authorities? Then do what is good, and you will win their praise. Therefore he who sets himself against the authorities (by doing evil) is resisting God's appointment, and those who resist will bring a judgment upon themselves." (Rom. 13:1-7.)

The point unmistakably involved here is that all human government is theocratic, and that the laws of every country are in the main the righteous laws of God himself. And this point is well taken. Thou shalt not commit adultery,

thou shalt not steal, thou shalt do no murder were as divine at Rome as at Jerusalem, and, upon the whole, as well enforced perhaps; for was not Jerusalem, the bloody city from of old, always the murderess of the most righteous, including "the Righteous One" himself?

Paul saw that the world of our humanity is God's in spite of "the Rulers of the Powers of the Air—the various Powers of Evil that hold sway in the darkness around us." (Eph. 2:2; 6:12.) It was his faith in God as supreme Ruler which made him so optimistic touching prayer and the ultimate result of all brave battling for the truth in the individual life, in the Church and in the world at large.

Another thing which Paul saw plainly was that the world could and would become Christ's because it was already God's and Jesus was God's anointed and well-beloved Son. No one can bestow what is not in his possession, but all that is actually his he can dispose of as he pleases, kingdoms and thrones being no exceptions. Paul represents Jesus as already reigning on the earth in his day, and God as continually adding to the number of his subjects. Accordingly one of his words to the Colossians was—

"God has rescued us from the tyranny of Darkness, and has removed us into the kingdom of his Son." (Col. 1:3.)

This tyranny of darkness which existed, and still exists, under the rule of God is the despotism

of ignorance, self-will and ill-will, which the ethnic religions and governmental codes could but partially dissipate and overcome. Further rescue was possible only through further enlightenment as to right conduct and disposition, on the one hand, and through the mighty persuasiveness of an immeasurable love, on the other. But God made both stand forth in the life of Jesus, and so made that life (including the death on the cross) both illuminating and transforming for all who should be brought within the sphere of its influence. As the gospel of the grace of God was preached to men they came under law to Christ, and experienced at once a change so vital that they called it now a passing out of death into life, and now a new birth or re-creation. Had it been possible at any time for men to comprehend the whole law of the life of Jesus, and to realize all the power and sweetness of the love of God set forth in him, the race would speedily have been conformed to his likeness in every respect. But we are slow-learning beings and still far from the goal, and only the smaller portion of our race has been removed into the kingdom of God's Son at all as yet. The tyranny of darkness is visibly weakening, however, as the kingdom of the Son widens and strengthens. In preparing men for their first introduction to his Christ, God moved with a deliberation waymarks of which we find in the man of the Neanderthal skull and the man of the cranium, femur and two molar teeth found by DuBois in Java—a delib-

eration which consumed millions of years, it may be, and we need not wonder if after nineteen short centuries the student of God's work of bringing men wholly under law to his Christ, must satisfy himself with simply reporting progress.

A word of Paul to the Philippians should be linked on here—"Our commonwealth, or the state of which we are citizens, is in heaven." (Phil. 3:20.) For it beautifully supplements that word to the Romans with which this chapter began. Heaven is the state of which Rome was but a rude province, incomplete and sometimes wrong in its laws, because of the darkness in which it was still so largely enshrouded, but a province under divine rule nevertheless. Its code of laws needed revision, correction, and many additions. To this end the Son of God had come as Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, had finished the work which it was his to do while here in the flesh as the light of the world, had passed again into the invisible heaven from which he had come forth, and was now introducing growing numbers on earth to the consciousness of their direct association with the King of heaven itself as his subjects. Out of this illuminating consciousness a sense of new duties was arising, which would, as Paul believed, secure the needed changes in the codes of earth. In the meantime these codes of earth were themselves heavenly in their origin and authority as far as they were in harmony with the law of Christ, and every man who knew

himself a citizen of heaven was on that very ground obligated to a life of the most whole-hearted obedience, within these limits, to earthly rulers of whatever name. "For," to quote from Romans again, "they are God's servants appointed for your good. You are bound, therefore, to obey as a matter of conscience. This, too, is why you pay taxes."

There are no mystifications here. Earth is literally a province of heaven, or a set of such provinces, if it is viewed nationally. God is the great King, every righteous law is his wherever it is found, and hearty obedience to these laws is obedience to him as true and acceptable as any that is rendered to him in heaven itself. (Acts 10:34, 35.) If therefore one is to define the kingdom of God as it is represented here upon the earth, he must say, at the least, that it includes God's government of men in their every day affairs through the agency of human rulers. And if he is asked how the kingdom is to come or be extended, his answer will not be that its territory is to be increased until it embraces the whole earth, for it has done that from the beginning, but that its coming or extension must be effected through an increase of the knowledge of God and his righteous loving will, on the one hand, and of the disposition and power to do that will, on the other. The light must continue to scatter the darkness until the human conscience is fully informed, and the dispositions and energies of

men are completely rectified and empowered.

Now the New Testament assigns to Jesus all but the supreme place in the accomplishment of this end. His position, with its authority and power and glory is next to God's, and far above that of any other that can be named. He is the great intercessor and the "one mediator." So exalted did he appear in the eyes of his noblest first followers and apostles that at times they almost lost the fact of his humanity in the glory of his divinity. In comparison with him they saw themselves dwarfed and weak and sinful. To know him increasingly, and through the transforming ministry of the Holy Spirit in his steady application of that knowledge of heart and life, to grow ever more like him, was their most blessed hope and their loftiest aim. Still they were not unaware either of his humanity itself and of the secondary place in the great undertaking for which it fitted, and to which, at the same time, it confined him. They believed that his work was that of expressing divinity in the terms of humanity. Accordingly when Paul presents him as the "One Mediator" he presents him also as "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom on behalf of all men." (1 Tim. 2:5.) And the writer of the letter to the Hebrews insists that his fitness for the office he holds as high-priestly mediator arises out of the intensity of his sufferings and the consequent force and quickness of his human sympathies. (Heb. 2:5-18; 4:14-

16.) These writers teach also that his conquest of the world is not being wrought out so much by him as for him. The placing of everything under Jesus is the placing of everything under man (Heb. 2:8), and this, according to Paul was the work of the Father—

“For he must reign until God has put all his enemies under his feet . . . And when everything has been placed under him, the Son will place himself under God who placed everything under him.” (I Cor. 15:25, 28); uttering as he does so his final—

“See here am I and the children whom God gave me (Heb. 2:13).

“That God may be all in all.” (1 Cor. 15:28.)

The Hebrew mind found it quite impossible to raise the God-man to the height of pure divinity. The second person of their Trinity was by his very constitution a limited being and in that respect a lesser being than the first and the third. According to John's gospel Jesus himself was no exception to this rule, for it reports him as teaching at the last that his disciples were to await the coming of a greater one, the Holy Spirit, who was to make his words and his whole earthly career, as these should be proclaimed by them, mightily effective for the transformation of men both individually and socially. They were to find that through his humanity he had simply become rather the chief instrument than the mightiest agent of the Father, and it was as such an

instrument that all power had been given to him. Whether in heaven or on earth men would find in him their highest ideal of devotion to the Father's will, and would through the Holy Spirit's use of that ideal be at length fully conformed to his image. The Father would thus by degrees make his rule world-wide and all pervasive. The word of the Father to him was—

“Sit thou at my right hand until I put thy enemies as a stool for thy feet.” (Heb. 1:13.) So, “After he had offered one sacrifice for sins, which should serve for all time, he took his seat at the right hand of God, and has since then been waiting for his enemies to be put as a stool for his feet.” (Heb. 10:12, 13.)

A further thought of Paul is that this Kingdom of Christ will endure only until it is completed, and that then it will be finally merged in the universal kingdom of the Father. But this has already been so distinctly indicated that it needs no elaboration. Still it cannot be safely forgotten by those who wish a complete view of the subject. The kingdom of Christ exists for the sake of bringing men fully to God and when this end is reached there will be no further need for its continuance.

It may also be observed here that the New Testament writers present other phases of the Kingdom besides that of an earthly society conformed to the law and spirit of Christ. They viewed it as extending far enough into the invis-

ible to include the most distant abode of men who are no longer here in the flesh. Falling under the deadly hail of stones Stephen prayed:—

“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59); Paul declared to the Philippians:—

“My own desire is to depart and be with Christ, for this would be far better” (Phil. 1:23); and the writer of the Revelation of John heard him proclaiming:

“I hold the keys of the grave and of the place of the dead.” (Rev. 1:18.) They believed in Jesus as Savior and Judge of the dead as well as the living, and that all the race of mankind was embraced within the bounds of his rule.

A study of the gospels will reveal the fact that it was his kingdom as distinguished from his church, or as some may prefer to say, his kingdom as including his church, which was constantly in the thought of Jesus. Matthew alone reports Jesus as having named his church all. He tells us of two occasions on which he did it, and says that on the first of these occasions he brought the kingdom of heaven into most direct association with it.

On coming into the neighborhood of Cesarea Philippi Jesus asked his disciples this question:

“Who do people say that the son of man is?”

“Some say John the Baptist,” they answered. “Others, however, say that he is Elijah, while others again say Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

“But you,” he said, “who do you say that I am?” And Simon answered: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

“Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah,” Jesus replied. “For no human being has revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. Yes, and I say to you your name is Peter, a Rock, and on this rock I will build my church, and the Powers of the Place of Death shall not prevail over it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 16:13-18.)

It can scarcely be denied that these words indicate the distinction between his church and his kingdom which existed in the mind of Jesus. And we may quite safely assume that this distinction is the one which was before the mind of Paul when he wrote Romans 13:1-6, from which I have drawn some conclusions at the beginning of this chapter. He asserted that the state is a divine institution as truly as the church, and consequently that its righteous laws are to be obeyed as the very laws of God. He did not there touch upon the fact that through human ignorance and sin church and state alike were marked, and would long be marked, by both imperfection and wrong. But elsewhere he emphasized the limitations of the church and taught its members to look forward to a time in which at length a generation would arise that would “reach the complete manhood—the full standard of the perfection of the Christ.” (Eph. 4:13.)

Paul saw that the primitive Christian church found the Roman state guiding men along the lines of the divine righteousness in their every day activities and that the first business of that church was to give the world correct ideas of God and his worship and lead men through faith in Jesus Christ into lives of active obedience toward God and of positive good-will towards each other. The church was in this way to produce at one and the same time the highest possible order of worshipers or religionists and the best possible class of citizens, and to go on with its task until perfection was attained in both church and state. The work had begun and would proceed to the end in obedience to Christ, on the one hand, and with his character and spirit as its rule and inspiration, on the other. And since all men were eventually to be taken up into the movement and fully conformed to its life and its law, the resulting religious and political institutions would be Christ's—the church of Christ thus producing the kingdom of Christ among men, growing steadily itself and securing a steady growth for the kingdom. This was the inspiring vision of these earliest followers of Jesus. We cannot doubt that if the apostles found their way into India and China, they regarded the political rulers of these lands as God's ministers in the same way as they had those of the Roman empire in which they had been brought up, and labored to produce by means of their preaching of Christ

not only the same sort of worshipers, but also the same sort of citizens as before, and that without any reference to the various forms of government then existing in those lands. These were minor things and they left them to undergo such modifications as the new conditions they were seeking to produce might require from time to time. At the same time, however, they were so far from being blind to the need of improvement everywhere that they looked joyfully forward to the passing away of all, whether religious or political, that could be shaken, and to the complete triumph of that kingdom which cannot be shaken, which they had already received as its citizens. And they rejoiced all the more because it was in obedience to the voice of their God that unstable and imperfect things were to disappear. (Heb. 12:26-28.)

One need not pause to ask whether Jesus or his apostles ever dreamed of some one form of government, or some definite set of laws, to which nothing could be added, and from which nothing could be taken away. It may well be that perfection and variety will never be found incompatible with each other in connection with God's government of men, any more than it is in connection with their personal characteristics under his creative hand. Not a perfection of uniformity but the perfection of adaptation seems to be one end of the ways of God. The Christian's God is not the God of monotony.

We have now seen how and why the world of mankind is becoming the kingdom, as well as the church, of Christ, and we may go on to note the manner in which Jesus himself is reported to have talked on the matter. Our material is abundant. We are told that when Jesus urged upon Nicodemus the necessity of the new birth, or birth from above, the argument he pressed home upon the intellect and conscience of that member of the Sanhedrin was the deeply spiritual character of the kingdom of God, which John the Baptist had been preaching for months. It was in view of the holy humility which this kingdom demanded that Jesus insisted upon the birth by water as well as by the Spirit in this case. Nicodemus was informed that unless he ceased trusting in his Jewish descent or his high standing among men, and publicly confessed his sins and his need of cleansing from them in the manner then prescribed by John, he would never see the kingdom. The baptism itself was a symbol. But it was also a test which the Pharisees and the Students of the Law rejected, and so frustrated God's purpose in regard to them. (Luke 7:30.) Undoubtedly this purpose was that these natural leaders of the Jewish people should be first in their recognition of Jesus as the anointed head of the coming kingdom, and foremost in the work of pushing that kingdom towards the ends of the earth. Jesus warned Nicodemus that the test was not there in vain, and that if he refused to submit to it, he

would have to bear the consequences in self-exclusion from the kingdom.

It may be as well to assert here that no attempt to import into the Kingdom of Heaven, as the phrase was used by Jesus, the idea of a place somewhere in the invisible can ever permanently succeed. Its only invisibility arose out of the fact that it found its place at the beginning in the secret abodes of Christ-like character, purpose and possibility. The kingdom Jesus had in mind was that earthly one which he came to establish and carry to its consummation. "The field is the world." "The wheat or people of the kingdom" are the good among men, while "the tares are the wicked." (Matt. 13:38, 39.)

The parables of the kingdom found in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew show it in three of its phases. First we see it seeking its subjects among men. Then we see men seeking it as a thing of surpassing value. And finally we see it choosing or rejecting men in view of their good or evil characters. In harmony with all this the burden of John the Baptist's preaching was the absolute necessity of repentance for all who wished the privilege of being its subjects or citizens. And when John was thrown into prison Jesus and his disciples continued to utter the same word. To seek the kingdom of God was also to seek his righteousness and its accompaniments, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus put upon the lips of his praying disci-

ples no petition on behalf of the church, but he most definitely asked them to pray "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done—on' earth, as in heaven." He emphasized the obligations of citizenship and insisted that no amount of scrupulous churchmanship could be accepted in the place of fidelity in the discharge of these. Tithing mint and fennel and carraway seed was not to be neglected, but justice, mercy and good faith were weightier matters of the Law. Washing the hands before eating was of little account, but honoring parents was a fundamental duty of citizenship, and to make a way of escape from it in the name of religion was to imperil the life of the nation by calling down upon it the wrath of God. (Mark 7: 10:13.)

The realization of the kingdom of God upon earth under his Christ required a holy and righteous citizenship. This sort of citizenship should have characterized the Jewish people. But instead they compelled Jesus to denounce them as tenants of a vineyard, who had come to regard themselves as so securely in possession that they could safely refuse to make the returns agreed upon, and even beat or kill all, including his own Son, whom the king sent to remonstrate.

"'And that I tell you', continued Jesus, 'is why the Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation that does produce the fruit of the Kingdom.'" (Matt. 21:43.)

This new people had to be produced through

the preaching of the gospel of Christ. Agreeable to this fact is the language of the great commission.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations . . . teaching them to lay to heart all the commands that I have given them.” (Matt. 28:19.)

In brief the great earthly work of the Church of Jesus Christ is that of supplying the Kingdom of God with subjects, and of inspiring these with the highest possible ideals, until at length the whole race has been led up into all Christliness in its varied pursuits and activities. The Church of Christ exists for the sake of the Kingdom of Christ, which is the New Testament Kingdom of God and of Heaven.

In the chapter which follows we shall see what Jesus regarded as properly his church, and what that church compelled him to do.

XI

JESUS THE REDEEMER OF HIS CHURCH

According to the New Testament, the idea with which Jesus began his public career differed from the Messianic expectations of his people at one point only. They were looking for political deliverance rather than spiritual, and so were filled with visions of successful statecraft and martial valor; while he set out to achieve spiritual freedom for them, leaving such political results to follow as it might please the Father to grant.

The power of the Holy Spirit which was upon him had brought him safely through the struggle of his initial temptations; and would not that same power do all that was necessary towards the correction of false ideas and wrong attitudes in the people as a whole? With this work accomplished the nation would be the true church of God and his chosen evangelizing agency for the enlightenment and salvation of all the world besides. Had not this glorious movement kindled the consecrated imaginations of Micah and Isaiah centuries before? And surely what the prophets foresaw would prove no phantom. Micah had said—

“But in the latter days it shall come to pass

that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." And Isaiah had pictured the same magnificent future of spiritual Israel in words no less glowing, placing in the foreground one splendid personality—"And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of its roots shall bear fruit: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord; and his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf and young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow

and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." To these this prophet had added such sentences as one finds in Chapters 42:19; 49:1-7 and 60-62:3, including the one quoted by Jesus in his home synagogue at Nazareth—

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

With such thoughts of God's great purposes inspiring him, and his clear sense of the vast demands of the situation steadying him, Jesus joined John the Baptist in preaching, Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and its righteousness must be yours to begin with, else you cannot even enter it. There can be no doubt that to Jesus the kingdom of Heaven meant a reconstituted humanity, and that in his view this reconstitution was to be effected through the exchange of love for hate and right for might in every relationship of individuals and peoples towards each

other. This exchange would break down every outer and inner wall of partition that harmfully separated men from each other, so that they would flow together and find themselves one household of God. (Eph. 2:14-22.) The prayer put upon the lips, and the laws framed to govern, the subjects of this kingdom, both alike presuppose this. (Matt. 5:43-48; 6:9-15.) The Kingdom, when completed, will include the church of God, or will itself be included in that church, if any one prefers putting the case in that way.

For a time Jesus's ministry awakened the largest expectations of the people, and the crowds that flocked into the country parts of Judea to be baptized by his disciples, exceeded those which gathered about John the Baptist himself. In this John rejoiced, for he took it as a proof that he had made no mistake when he fixed upon Jesus as the Unknown One, whose forerunner he had undertaken to be. This success lasted until it began to be definitely realized that his idea of the Kingdom of God was after all substantially the antipodes of that which was cherished by rulers and people alike. His own Nazareth endured its disappointment until one Sabbath when he declared in its synagogue that Elisha's act of healing the Syrian leper, and Elijah's bestowal of relief upon a widow of Sidon during a season of famine, though Israel had many lepers and needy widows in those times, were both in harmony with the principle that God would always turn

his back upon his people when, through blind disobedience, they ceased to be his in reality; and that he would then bestow his favors elsewhere. Then his city rose against him in a fury that nearly cost him his life, and he escaped southward to make his home at Capernaum.

Here again he prospered until by calling a tax-gatherer named Levi from his very place of business, to enter the number of his few intimate disciples, and by sitting down with a promiscuous company of tax-gatherers and other social outcasts, at a feast which Levi immediately prepared in his honor, he once more made it abundantly clear that, if the thing he represented was the kingdom of God at all, it was too unpalatable to be received by the leaders of opinion in that region. What use could the kingdom of God have for men of Levi's ilk? The lot as a whole was bad, and no decent society, to say nothing of the Kingdom of God, would have anything to do with it!

Soon afterwards we find Jesus looking into the heart of the nation at Jerusalem, only to find it angry and contemptuously malicious. The Jewish rulers would tolerate no Kingdom of God which ignored their notions of Sabbath-keeping. They would permit the watering of an ox or an ass, and allow any man to rescue his son or his ox from a well, if either should chance to fall into it, on the Sabbath; but they would tolerate no cures of the sick, where life itself was in no immediate

peril, on that day. Neither would they endure any man who would represent the kingdom of God as non-militant. For was not the Roman there to be cast out, and how could his armies be got rid of except by force? So the presence of this prophet from Nazareth made them as mad with rage as it had made the Nazarenes themselves, and nothing but his remaining hold upon the popular imagination and heart, and the consequent necessity of proceeding with his taking off under forms of law, saved Jesus from immediate death.

Through these experiences it gradually grew upon him that his mission was to prove a failure, so far forth at least as its success depended upon the co-operation of the one church which, through age-long divine processes, had been prepared with this definite office in view. The revelation was most painful. It meant that he must revise his first programme. But how? The history of his people and the words of their prophets gave him his cue. What could not be accomplished easily and speedily, because the people were too dark and evil to be used in the work, could be wrought out by a spiritual remnant through a long but glorious agony of toil, involving both tears and blood. The teaching and guiding Servant of Jehovah would also be his suffering Servant.

When Jesus met this situation, he at once dealt with it as a thing which ought never to have

been. He faced it first with remonstrance and later with denunciation, followed by an overwhelming grief, that deepened into the dark dismay of that sweat of blood, from which he was rescued only by that love of his Father, to which he resigned himself throughout the struggle. At what precise point in his public career this struggle began we may not be able clearly to determine. It may have been at the time of his rejection at Nazareth. But perhaps his language in the synagogue there did not represent an instant rising of his nature to meet a hostility of the existence of which he had until then been unaware, but rather a thought which, like the hostility itself, had been gathering force for some time. It may be, however, that he did not see at first that his own death by violence was involved in the inevitable clash of ideals. For he may well have thought in the beginning that his vision was too clear and commanding to be rejected, when he had once set it forth with sufficient plainness.

The fifth chapter of John shows how he appealed to the intellects and consciences of his hostile critics:

“I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name you will receive him. How can you believe in me, when you receive honor one from another and do not desire the honor which comes from the only God?” In the eleventh chapter of Matthew a day is described in which “Jesus began to reproach

the towns in which most of his miracles had been done, because they had not repented: 'Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida . . . and you, Capernaum!' " Through the twenty-third chapter of this same gospel we learn that a day came when this "Alas for you!" was repeated in Jerusalem itself, in connection with such an exposure of the character of the Jewish leaders as no man who heard it could ever forget, ending with the words: "Alas for you, Teachers of the Law and Pharisees, hypocrites that you are! You build the tombs of the prophets, and decorate the monuments of religious men, and say, 'Had we been living in the days of our ancestors, we should have taken no part in their murder of the Prophets!' By doing this you are furnishing evidence against yourselves that you are true children of the men who murdered the Prophets. Fill up the measure of your ancestor's guilt. You serpents and brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to the Pit? That is why I send you prophets, wise men and Teachers of the Law, some of whom you will crucify and kill, and some of whom you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from town to town; in order that upon your heads may fall every drop of innocent 'blood spilt on earth,' from the blood of innocent Abel down to that of Zachariah, Barachiah's son, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. All this, I tell you, will come home to the present generation."

His biographers made no mistake at this point. They saw that whether he reasoned or expostulated or denounced, he did it as a patriot who, besides loving that impersonal thing which men call their country, loved every man, woman and child within its territory, and was deeply distressed by the awful fate towards which he saw they were moving. They did not forget that his reproaches against the three Galileean towns were immediately succeeded by that yearning, "Come to me, all you who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest!" which has been wooing men to righteousness ever since; and that his denunciations of the Teachers of the Law and Pharisees at Jerusalem had scarcely died upon his lips before, with heaving bosom and breaking voice, he exclaimed:—

"Jerusalem! Jerusalem! she who slays the Prophets and stones the messengers sent to her—Oh! how often have I wished to gather your children round me, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not come!"

In Luke we are told of a time during the closing days of his career, when turning from the acclaim of his many disciples, and the corresponding criticisms of the Pharisees—

"Seeing the city, he wept over it, and said: 'Would that you had known, while yet there was time—even you—the things that make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your sight.'" The same writer remembered also that this love

voiced itself again, while he was proceeding painfully towards Calvary—"There was a great crowd of people following him, many being women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. So Jesus turned and said to them: 'Women of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.'" (Luke 23: 27-31.)

The one thing to which love can scarcely bring itself is that its object, however unworthy, should suffer. And perhaps love suffers more through sympathy than its object can suffer through any injuries which may be inflicted upon it. This fact receives its supreme illustration in the sphere of the moral and spiritual. Wrong-doing deadens sensitiveness to mental pain, while righteousness quickens it. The greater the moral distance between two characters, the greater will be the difference in their individual power to suffer for each other. It is therefore true that "the Righteous One" exceeded all others in this respect. To him it was an agony, in the first place, that his people were bad and deserved to suffer. And that they were bad was doubly an agony, because they, above all others, had been meant by his Father to attain goodness—a goodness which would have fitted them to be the bearers of the message of righteousness and peace to all others. He might reason about the remnant, and find something like rest in the thought of all God could do through them. He might reach the place where he could

say to his disciples: "Do not be afraid, my little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." But how much better after all were these disciples than the great body of the people from whom he had drawn them? Did they not persist in retaining the common wrong idea of the Kingdom of God and individually covet the first places in it? Was not one of them a thief and a traitor? And would not all the rest of them, in spite of all his teaching, be ill-informed and weak enough to reckon everything lost, if he should be taken from them with nothing further accomplished?

So Jesus was torn by questionings, first regarding his disciples themselves, and then by corresponding questions touching his people as a whole. Those regarding his disciples seem to have been set at rest in the Upper Room or even before the Passover which he ate with them there. They would certainly all be confounded or worse than confounded, by his death, but, Judas excepted, all would, after his resurrection, rally again to their place and work. And if these questions were settled, surely all the others, too, were disposed of. Not yet fully and finally, however.

The human mind with its limited knowledge, cannot easily reach absolute certainty. One part of the cost to us of this imperfect knowledge is the painful way our most distressing problems have of suddenly opening themselves up afresh after they have apparently been settled out-

right. Often we reach our chief conclusions only to laboriously review them. And this necessity for review is practically assured each time one wishes his conclusion were unwarranted, for then his heart will not let him rest in it. Now Jesus certainly wished this in regard to his conclusion. The great desire of his life, next to that of pleasing his Father, had been that Israel, as a whole, might accept him as its Messiah, just as his few disciples had done. How much it would have meant if it had! His own escape from an ignominious death—it would have meant that! But it would also have meant so much more besides. It would have meant the almost immediate salvation of all Israel to spiritual ideals, and so the early realization in a large way of the Kingdom of God itself. It would have meant that Israel would have filled her true place as the center of an evangelism which would speedily have embraced all lands, and brought all peoples into the glorious light of God.

As he passed into Gethsemane under the shadows cast by the olives under that passover moon, he began to groan with a deeper agony than he had ever felt before—

“This is what ought to be! And surely it cannot even now be impossible! This is the thing that ought to be, yet I am to go to the cross instead! And my nation is to reach, not the place of the glory of the highest service to all the world besides, but a future of hideous darkness

and pain and shame! Surely, Father, there must yet be a way out, which I cannot see! My Father, if it is possible, let me be spared this cup." Thus he cried and cried, till the bloody sweat oozed and fell to the earth on which he lay, and he reached for the last time the awful conclusion that nothing in harmony with the moral government of the world could avert this crowning tragedy. Then he prayed again, passing as he did so into an almost completely satisfying vision of the whole situation—

"My Father, if I cannot be spared this cup, but must drink it, thy will be done!"

So our Christ cried his cry and lost the boon he craved, to win instead the place where he could through all the pain and shame, be the Savior to men who were so disappointingly bad, convincing them of their blindness and sin by means of his death, though he could not do it by means of the richest human life that was ever lived in God.

It has often happened that the thing which ought to have been has proved only the thing which might have been, and the thing which ought never to have been the thing which no available power could avert. Such results stand associated with the freedom of the human will and the conscious confessed badness and ignorance of men. When Jesus was finally rejected at Jerusalem the greatest event our sinful world could have known at that period was made impossible for all time; for then the anointed of God was

sent to the cross by the very people whom he came to build into a church so great and glorious that it would successfully preach the Salvation of God from Palestine to the uttermost parts of the earth. Then, too, was committed a sin and crime as far beyond that involved in the slaughter of preceding prophets and righteous men as Jesus Christ was superior to these. In it, as he himself is reported to have warned them would be the case, was wrapped up, as it were, the guilt of "every drop of innocent 'blood spilt on earth,' from the blood of innocent Abel down to that of Zachariah." And this guilt rested upon the church that Christ came to inspire and lead in the spiritual conquest of the earth.

Recognition of this fact prepares us for several words of the New Testament which indicate that, in Christ's view, it was the church rather than the world, for which he paid his life as a ransom or redemption price. In the very nature of the case the church was his first concern. He had a vast work to do, and for its speedy accomplishment he needed a great host of workers, specially fitted for the discharge of the duties of the various offices which that work involved. That host would be his church; so he thought at the start. And when later he saw his host dwindle to a handful, his concern was correspondingly deepened. For his handful was much like the rest, and it also needed redeeming from its false ideals and its deplorable unspirituality.

Then, too, as conversions would take place through its instrumentality, the new believers would become an additional part of the church or working force itself. Only so could the world as a whole be lifted into the light of God. This, I say, is why his followers wrote and spoke as they did about his redemption of his Church—his buying it for God out of the general body of humanity.

These writers tell us that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son," and that Jesus was, because of his sufferings and death, crowned with glory and honor; so that his tasting the bitterness of death should, in God's loving-kindness, be on behalf of all mankind. But they never tell us that Jesus Christ loved the world. On the other hand they dwell rapturously upon his love for the church.

A few of these words ought to be quoted here. When John set out to record the story of the way the Master washed his disciples' feet at the time of the last passover supper he ate with them, he began by stating that "he loved those who were his own in the world, and he loved them to the last." To the Ephesians and to his true child Titus Paul wrote: "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for her, to make her holy. . . . So that he might himself bring the Church, in all her beauty, into his presence, with no spot or wrinkle or blemish of any kind, but that she might be holy and faultless." "He gave himself

on our behalf, to deliver us from all wickedness, and purify for himself a People who should be peculiarly his own and eager to do good."

The Church was on his heart when, in the upper room, he was face to face with the cross, and poured out his soul to the Father—"I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me. . . . Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one . . . that the world may believe that thou didst send me." His feeling was that, first of all, he was the redeemer of his church, and afterwards through it the Savior of the world, or, as Paul puts it, "the Savior of all men and especially of those who hold the Faith." Looking in precisely the same direction are the words of John concerning the blood-thirsty advice regarding Jesus which the high-priest Caiaphas gave the Sanhedrin—that unconsciously "he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation," which should as a whole have been his church,— "and not for the nation only, but also that he might unite in one body the children of God now scattered far and wide."

The heart of Jesus was broken by disappointment. This disappointment voiced itself for the last time when, just before he expired on the cross, he cried out in anguish—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And the thing which disappointed him was the sin of his church.

He ought never to have been called upon to redeem it. But its ignorance and badness, growing out of its lack of spirituality, forced the task upon him. He ought, instead, to have been the church's accepted head from the first. No teaching of the New Testament is clearer than this for one who has come to view that life in its true perspective. He came to his own, and his own ought to have received him. It was theirs to have been in their deepest hearts a theocracy, with their spiritual overtopping their political ambitions. But they were no such thing. On the contrary, their religion consisted in a sincere, but vain, attempt to bend the Almighty to their will, and get the All-wise One to take a reasonable view of things! They nursed the delusion that, since they had Abraham as their ancestor, God was under large obligations to them, if not actually dependent upon them.

They were bound to get the worst of it in the end, of course. Counting themselves the first of patriots their rejection of Jesus as no patriot at all cost them everything a patriot holds dear. Because the moral government of God is no poor pretense, that can safely be mocked, the penalty it exacted was the absolute overthrow of their religion, as far as it was represented by sacrificial rites and ceremonies, the permanent breaking up of their political institutions, and their age-long expatriation from a soil so dear to them, that their descendants two thousand years after

the event, still prostrate themselves to kiss it, when their wanderings permit them the opportunity.

When "the Word became Man" and "His own" stood face to face with him, they found themselves compelled to choose one of two courses. They had either to accept his leadership or "become his betrayers and murderers." God who has from the first triumphed over human wickedness by building its deeds into his plans (Acts 3:13-19; 2:23), foresaw that this church would pursue the latter course, involving itself in the most awful thralldom possible, and decreed that in spite of its ill deserts it should be redeemed (Rom. 11:25, 26); so that, when it could not, because it would not, be reconciled to God by the life of his Son, God put his love for it beyond all doubt, by sending his Son to the cross, to reconcile to himself, through that death, each member of it, and all men besides. (Rom. 5:8-10.) Thus by means of a sacrifice, which ought never to have been necessary, our race is being brought to God. And the whole body of believers continually recites—

"Christ loved the Church and gave himself for her" (Eph. 5:25); while individually they adoringly add—

He is "the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20.)

XII

JESUS AND THE ATONEMENT

The death of Jesus Christ is the most awful and at the same time the most glorious event in the spiritual history of our race. He was murdered by his own people, when he was sent to bless them by turning each one of them from his wicked ways. (Acts 3:26.) But it is also true that he was handed over to death both by his God and Father and by himself. His death was included in the vast redeeming plan of God from the beginning. It was by his stripes that men were to be healed. After his incarnation this fact became at last a part of his human knowledge, and, agreeably to it, he laid down his life, falling as a grain of wheat falls into the earth, to produce a harvest. "Once for all he died for our sins, the innocent One for the guilty many, that he might bring us to God." (1st Pet. 3:18.) By his bringing us to God he reconciles us to him or at-ones us with him. And since his death is the means by which he effects this work of reconciliation and at-one-ment, it has been called his at-one-ing or atoning death. Then another step in thought and its expression has brought it to pass that the death itself is spoken of as the atonement.

This word atonement is often upon the lips of Christian believers, and has been for generations. Still it was not a word of the apostolic church. It occurs but once in the new Testament, namely, in Romans 5:11. And no modern translator of the Greek New Testament uses the word even here but represents the Greek *Katallage* and *Katalasso* by the words reconciliation and reconcile. The reason for this is that the word atonement is more or less misleading, while reconcile and reconciliation are not so open to that objection. The word is favored to-day by theologians who entertain certain views touching the purpose of Christ's death. They use it to represent the work which they say he accomplished by his death upon the cross, and which they call his finished work—his all-sufficient atonement.

The work which had to be effected, according to this teaching, was the bringing of God into the place where his wrath against the race of sinners he had created, or the offense his holiness had taken in view of their sin, would be so far appeased or mollified that he could forgive its individual members—forgive them in a body once and for all, if we may trust Principal Forsyth in his "Cruciality of The Cross." On page 89 of this book he declares—

"The conscience finds no rest till it finds in the cross the one final act in which both the goodness and the severity of God are reconciled and inwoven, with the grace uppermost. I meet the atonement where the

sin of the world is taken away, which carries in it the foregone forgiveness of sins that I dread and yet am sure that I shall do."

On pages 90, 91 he adds—

"A man with his eyes truly opened to his sin must have a finished work, and a God who has made a full end. A conscience in his state, as soon as it thinks on a world scale, must have a grace and salvation which is not benignant only, but gathers up the total moral situation in one act, and settles the great strife for good and all. He must have more than a full forgiveness, he must have a complete redemption. . . . A man needs something to make him confident that his past sin, and the sin he is yet sure to commit, are all taken up into God's redemption, and the great moral transaction of his life is done. The real complete forgiveness is the appropriation of the world's atonement."

The learned principal is by no means easy to follow. On page 78 where he says "The atonement did not procure grace; it flowed from grace," he renounces ideas which simply refuse to quit him.

The gist of all such teaching is this—God had to become a man and die on a cross, or otherwise, as a victim to the malice of those whom, through his incarnation, he had made his fellows, before he could consent to bless our race with his saving mercy. (P. 177.) So in an article of his published as its leader by the *British Weekly* of February 10th, 1910, Principal Forsyth supplements

his book by declaring—"The death of Christ was the active atonement made to holiness by God himself."

In examining such a teaching one asks first—What is the holiness to which God is said to have made this "active atonement?" Does it reside in himself or outside of him? If outside of him, it must be greater than He, and able to command him; which is absurd. If within him and a part of his nature, then God had to propitiate a part of himself, or an attribute of his own, as one may choose to put it, by offering up a sufficient sacrifice and expiation to that attribute. And each may think of this as he can.

The rest of the teaching is that, apart from this atonement—this "sacrifice offered by God to holiness"—He could not, because of some obstacle existing in himself, have forgiven men at all, but that having made this offering, He not only can forgive them, but has actually forgiven every man's sin, past, present and to come; yet only in such a way that each man, to make his forgiveness an actual, or lasting, advantage to himself, must accept it on certain prescribed conditions; otherwise he will be no better off than he would have been if he had never been forgiven at all, and probably much worse off, because every failure to accept will likely be treated as a wicked rejection. (P. 169.)

Such a teaching raises a number of questions that have often been debated. To deal with any

one of these in a satisfactory way, it is necessary to take some primary facts and principles into account. This I shall now proceed to do. And my thoughts, like those of Principal Forsyth, shall begin and end with God.

God is man's creator. Not only did he create the first human pair, but he has been equally the creator of every individual since. For he established and maintains the law of reproduction, and the associate law that like must beget like. He foresaw the sin of the race before creating it. His perfect prevision saw sin enter the world to work its terrible ravages. Yet he proceeded to create, and proceeds still. The result, as Paul viewed it in his day, is that "all have sinned." God has, therefore, always been responsible for maintaining a race of sinners upon the earth. The work of nutrition going on within them, along with their every breath and heart-beat, are each instant dependent upon his will, for to them these are involuntary activities, which many of them in their deep misery have often wished might cease; and too often they have rashly stopped them.

It is no answer to this to say that God has gifted each man with a conscience which tells him that he should not sin. For God has not associated with that conscience the power that can steadily enable the man to obey it, and so keep himself from sinning. Thus men in their natural state, according to both the Bible and universal experience, are sinners who cannot keep from sin-

ning, no matter how earnestly they may strive to do so. Their consciences make them wretched in their sins, and their moral weakness makes it impossible for them to climb out of the horrible pit and miry clay in which they find themselves sinking. So their most sustained moral endeavor is but the Sisyphus-act of rolling the stone almost to the hill's summit, only to see it roll back to the foot once more, while they experience now the agony of strained effort, and now the bitterer agony of defeat. This is how the Gentile mind pictured the situation. A Jeremiah, on the other hand, cried out:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is desperately sick: who can know it?” (Jer. 17: 9.) And a Paul declared—

“I am earthly—sold into slavery to sin I find myself doing the very thing that I hate The bad thing that I want not to do—that I habitually do The action is no longer my own, but that of sin which is within me,” and which I can by no means cast out. “Miserable man that I am!”

To say that sin, with all this slavery and wretchedness, is hereditary, and that it can all be traced back to the fault of the first human pair, is to say too little. The thing is true, but it is only a small part of the truth. The great fact is the one which I have already noticed. The God who knew the end from the beginning and had all things in his power, knowing men would be

such tortured slaves if he brought them into being, did and does bring them into being. And it was he that established the law of hereditary sin. It was he who made it true that—

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and gave each child over to the training of a sinful home and a sinful society. His own action made it certain that once sin entered into the world it would be perpetuated. Man a sinner and helpless to rise above his sin, though torturing himself on account of his wrong-doing and wrong-being, is the word which describes the actual moral history of the race. And no man, since the first pair at least, has had any choice in the matter. On the contrary each has just helplessly come and taken his place in one of the miserable sin-cursed generations.

Unless there is a personal devil with vast powers, God alone is responsible for all. And if there is such a devil, then God is responsible for having created us to fall and remain under his power for all these thousands of years. The first human pair could not, in the very nature of the case, have been responsible for more than themselves. For they could neither shake off their own sin, when once they had fallen under it, nor prevent themselves from passing its crushing weight on to their descendants.

But if, in the final analysis, the awful presence of sin among men is due to the deliberate foreseeing choice of God himself in the matter; and,

as we have seen, there is absolutely no escape from this conclusion; then there are other conclusions that are equally inevitable. The first of these is that his act needs justification, and particularly in view of the fact that he has treated sin so seriously as to convince men, through the conscience with which he has gifted them, that it ought not to exist. If sin ought not to exist, and yet God opened up the way for its entrance and long perpetuation here, then it must be further true that nothing can justify this act of his, short of some adequate effort on his part to destroy sin, and bring men as a whole into that life of complete righteousness and holy love for which they feel they were meant.

It is at this point that the New Testament meets us with its heavenly message, and I shall name five things which it makes perfectly clear—

1. God has from the beginning recognized the obligations under which he placed himself by the creation of our race. John the Revelator brings this fact forward when he writes of Jesus as "the Lamb that has been sacrificed from the foundation of the world." The writer of second Timothy calls attention to the love of God which "was extended to us through Christ Jesus before time began," or "before times eternal." And one of Paul's words to the Ephesians assures us that "He chose us in him before the creation of the universe." This last word makes the scheme of man's redemption from sin older than the work of

creation. That is to say, God counted the full cost from the first and took no step towards producing the race, which he knew would fall into sin, until he had devised the very scheme for its recovery, which filled the New Testament writers with such adoring wonder, and has made the book, into which the unambitious productions of their pens were soon gathered, the greatest in all literature.

2. Having foreordained the human career of his divine Son, God prepared the large central section of the world of mankind both religiously and politically for his incarnation; so that, as Paul states, "when the full time came, God sent his son." Then, when the visible work of Christ came to an end, that invisible agent, the Holy Spirit, began to use the facts of his life, death and resurrection in such a way as to build up that (with one exception) greatest and most enduring of earthly institutions, the Church of Christ.

3. God views his sinless Son as his sufficient vindication before the whole universe. Foreknowing all, he had created and maintained a race, every member of which had been a suffering, self-condemned sinner, whose chief wretchedness had grown out of the fact that no righteous I-ought-and-I-will of his could lift him into the place of purity and goodness that would satisfy even himself. And there was really nothing on earth to show that God had anything better in store for

the race than moral and spiritual disappointment and confusion—no convincing proof whatever that he was not either taking some secret delight in the frightful situation, or finding himself too weak or too unskillful to cope with it. A Pilate was being prepared to ask with a levity too bitter to laugh, "What is truth?" The most earnest souls had been plagued by the thought that the moral government of the world was largely a failure and would remain so. Again and again they had found themselves in the deepest doubt as to whether anything really worth while could result from any man's efforts toward holiness.

Then the child was born in Bethlehem that grew up unsinning, entered upon a public career on behalf of his people, stood for active good-will in every direction, and that in the face of the deepest misunderstanding and malice, and died praying for his murderers rather than swerve one hairsbreadth from truth and righteousness. So at length, as Paul puts it—

"God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3); to convince men, in the first place, that no sin whatever had his approval, and that "in passing over the sins done aforetime," he had been exercising "forbearance," with the new and holy order of things continually in view.

4. Justified thus in his own eyes, and also partly in ours, God looks towards the comple-

tion of Christ's saving work, when he will be, not only justified, but also glorified in the vision of all. Here again it is Paul who draws aside the veil for us. His first word is—

“And this God did . . . as a proof, I repeat, at the present time, of his own righteousness that he might be righteous in our eyes.” (Rom. 3:26.) And his second word beautifully supplements it—

“As yet we see in a mirror, dimly, but then, when the Perfect has come—face to face. As yet my knowledge is incomplete, but then I shall know in full, as I have been fully known.” (1 Cor. 13:12).

To these John of the Revelation adds—

“Then I saw new heavens and a new earth . . . The old order has passed away.” (Rev. 21:1, 4.)

5. God sees his Son also as the propitiation for the sins of our whole race. This word propitiation, used twice only in the New Testament, and both times in first John, looks in two directions, perhaps—Godward and manward. Godward it indicates that Jesus Christ perfectly satisfied the Father in his individual earthly life, regarded both by itself and as the divine-human instrument by means of which the whole race will at length be raised to the same satisfying height of sinlessness, on the one hand, and of sharing in the divine nature on the other. (2 Pet. 1:4.) Glancing manward, it notes our hostility to God

and views Jesus Christ as the appeaser of all our wrath against him. (Rom. 8:7-9.) Through him men's understandings are being so enlightened that at length they will see that God is love, and will trust him wholly, with not one Job's wife left to utter her exhortation to renounce God and commit suicide. (Job. 2:9.)

So, according to Paul, Christ is in himself the very place of propitiation where God and men are continually meeting each other, to establish harmonious relations, and where, before all is done, they will realize, through that full divine explanation of every issue involved, which resides in Christ himself, the completest reconciliation and the highest mutual satisfaction. (Rom. 3:25) and (2 Cor. 5:17-21.) All true gospel preachers proclaim this story and look towards this goal. It is, therefore, clear that for the question—Why did God create man to be miserable physically and morally, his conscience and will out of joint and the former wielding a whip of scorpions?—the New Testament has the answer—That he might save him, by bringing him into the fullest harmony with himself and his whole environment; and when this salvation has been fully received, the whole race will exult in it as absolutely sufficient. (Rom. 11:25, T. C. N. T.)

Now in view of all we have seen, what shall we say regarding the nature of the atonement? We have seen that in giving his Son to be the Savior of the World, God discharged to the full a self-

imposed obligation, and was true to himself as the eternal source of every I-ought that was ever felt or uttered or acted upon in our universe. We whom he made to reason on righteousness, and respond to its claims, can clearly perceive the nature of this obligation. He simply could not have made himself the creator of our race, foreseeing its fall into sin without providing for its recovery, and have remained righteous. On the other hand, as the infinitely Righteous One, he could not do an unrighteous thing in any direction. Consequently he undertook our race's rescue as a matter of course, and arranged for it in the fullest manner before beginning his work of creation at all. Because he is love he created us as beings whom he would care for, and in whose development he might delight; and because he is love he made himself also our Redeemer.

So far all is clear. The question which as yet is for the most part wrapped in mystery, is how it was that our God, who is almighty love, found sin and suffering unavoidable in connection with his holy plans for our race. We know, however, that some day we shall have this problem also solved for us.

As our example in obedience towards his Father, and thus our Savior to the uttermost, Jesus was compelled to lay down his life. But the thing his Father required was not his death but his obedience unto death. If he could have been obedient to the utmost in speaking and living the truth,

without provoking the leaders of his people to secure his death by crucifixion, he would have been our race's Savior without dying, quite as effectively as he is now. He himself represented his rejection and murder as the crowning act of human wickedness along that line, and fought against it from the first moment he became aware of it as a peril, doing everything in his power both Godward and manward to avert it. It was, therefore, Christ's obedience to the utmost, and not his death considered in itself, that counted. The death itself was simply the worst of all murders. But the obedience associated with it was necessary to our redemption to the same height of devotion to the will of our Father in heaven. It was on this account, and on this account alone, that Jesus laid down his life—he could not under the circumstances have been obedient to the utmost and retained it. Failing at that point of the supreme test, he would have made himself a disobedient sinner, by turning aside from the truth as really as Peter did when he denied all knowledge of him.

How then shall we truly express in brief the New Testament doctrine of the atonement? Shall we not say this? It stands for the fact that God gave his Son to the death of the cross (1) because his righteous love knew and honored its own obligation to provide us a Savior who could not fail in his task, and (2) because nothing short of obedience to the utmost could have fitted Jesus

Christ to be such a Savior. As representing the utter yielding up of one life to God on behalf of others, Christ's death was a sacrifice. To God it was a satisfaction because it represents the one life in which he has always rested as all it should be in itself, and at the same time, all that is required by him for the full recovery to himself of the whole race. It was a propitiation for the reason that through it the destruction of all the race's sin and enmity against God stands provided for. Because it was a perfectly righteous human life yielding itself up on behalf of its sinning race, it could be called an expiation; and as the appointed means for bringing men into perfect harmony with God, it can be spoken of as an atonement. But Jesus never became any man's substitute. That idea is essentially immoral, and has been gladly abandoned.

If all this is true—if the righteous love that created us could not find rest for itself except in redeeming us; and if that in Jesus Christ by means of which we are redeemed is his obedience to the utmost on our account; are we not warranted in saying that our God, who is love, has always done, is now doing, and will continue to do all that can be done for the further redemption of each succeeding generation of our race, until he has at length lifted it into the fullest fellowship with himself? And are we not darkening counsel with words when we talk as if there was something in God himself that had to be dealt

with by sacrifice, and silenced, and that by himself, before he could bless us with his saving grace? Does not the very word atonement become a stumbling block, the moment it is used to convey this idea? When we speak of "the death of Christ as the active atonement made to holiness by God himself," or say that God has and has not forgiven a soul at one and the same time, we use language of which it can be truly affirmed, that it neither belongs to the field of working ideas, nor pertains to a philosophy that makes anything plain.

When one is asked to explain how the death of Christ, or, rather, his obedience unto death, is of such infinite value to us, and how God atones us with himself by means of it, he need not regard the answer as quite beyond our present reach. Christ was our example in his death quite as truly, and much more convincingly, than in his life. It has been by his obedience unto death that he has redeemed men up to the present. By means of that death the Holy Spirit enlightens, convicts, converts, cleanses and girds men with invincible holy might. That is why the New Testament declares that each believer in Christ is saved by his blood, and that for these the cross stands so distinctly in the foreground. Christ's obedience unto death is God's supreme instrument in lifting men from sin to righteousness. Had his obedience not been equal to this final test it would have proved a poor lever indeed, but hav-

ing triumphed then as always before, it was the mightiest that even God could provide himself with.

Man was made to think, and to rise no higher than his own thought. Through Christ God is slowly teaching him to think in the terms of a life which, obeying him to the utmost, rises to sinlessness, on the one hand, and the completest positive righteousness, on the other. In saving men the Holy Spirit uses only each individual's I-see-and-I-ought, but he lifts each one to the level of that the moment he adopts it as his chief immediate object of desire and faith. And the highest I-see-and-I-ought emanates forever from the cross of Christ, or rather, from the Christ of the cross. God made man to think and to raise him to the level of the highest thought he could give him through Jesus Christ. (1 Jno. 3:1-3.)

XIII

JESUS AND THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

In Israel the priest and the prophet could never agree, excepting when the priest himself was also a prophet. The Priest stood for the shadow, the Prophet for the substance; the priest for ritual, the prophet for righteousness; the priest for services conducted before God, the prophet for services rendered to God; the priest for the outward, the prophet for the inward; the priest for the imagination and the emotions, the prophet for the intellect and the conscience as well; the priest for a showy ceremonial and dead offerings, the prophet for living, palpitating holy and righteous human reality. And because the quarrel was deadly it brought about a contrast of its own. The priest murdered the prophet, and the prophet died for the priest; and only thus could the prophet redeem the priest and lead him up out of his shadows into the light and life of God. Thus it continued through the centuries, the priest always repenting of his father's murders while reddening his hands with his own, in that slow, conservative, yet blood-thirsty stupidity, so vividly portrayed by Jesus himself, when he, the greatest prophet of all time, found himself face

to face with this same stupidly slow, blood-thirsty and murderous priest.

The priest and the prophet have continued confronting each other. They live on still, each bearing the same name as the other, and each preserving his own characteristics and discharging his own peculiar functions, precisely as in the older days. Once both were Israelites, then both were Jews, now both wear the name of Christ. But now, as then, the first stands for a fact outworn and probably also perverted, the second for the vital fact which is struggling up to victory to-day and will be crowned and reigning to-morrow. Now, also, as from the beginning, it is as perfectly natural for the first to appeal to fraud and violence, physical and intellectual, and the second to make his appeal calmly and fairly to the unfettered intellect and conscience; as it is for the first to claim that if you would be convinced of the authority of a fact, no matter how unjust or perverted it may be, all you need do is find out that it had its origin very far back in the years and is not yet quite extinct, and for the second to espouse and proclaim his fact on the simple ground of its evident present and future value to the individual and society at large. The priest arrogates to himself all the respectability that exists anywhere, denounces the prophet as an upstart who never even had a father worth mentioning and knows that the future will be his own because he has already reached the place where he enjoys

the same respect and inviolability which men accord to the corpse that is being kept for burial! The priest does not believe much in burials, however, and that for the very good and sufficient reason that the prophets whom he slaughters never stay in their graves, and that he considers himself much more respectably alive than any living prophet. But he has great faith in the prophet of the past. For he knows this prophet to be alive, though his father slew him. The prophet of the past is therefore his standing miracle, his prodigy, and more impressive to him than even God himself. He judges others by himself. How could a clod like him be inspired? (How indeed!) Inspired poetically, or along the lines of art or science, he might be, but divinely inspired—never! He dismisses the very thought as blasphemous. God and he have no intellectual intimacies, though he may feel sure they have certain emotional ones. They never see each other excepting across his altar fires, and then as much as ever—more than ever, perhaps—God is far off in his heaven. And how could it be different with anyone else? So he can never bring himself to see that the prophet of the present is indeed the greater son of that prophet of the past, whose monument was erected yesterday by his father, or just now by himself. He knows no truth but old truth, and no inspiration save that of the past. To him the prophet of to-day is but a fatherless fraud who deserves nothing

better than the worst that can possibly be measured out to him. So in his fine respectability he rises to the height of misrepresenting and vilifying this prophet. In his malicious hatred he cannot let him alone. Growing "frantic" he pursues him "even to strange cities," "breathing murderous threats." Meanwhile the pursued and persecuted prophet himself reasons, expostulates, entreats, making his unceasing "appeal to men of reason and religion," "suffers because God wills it so, and commits his life into the hands of a faithful creator." (1 Pet. 4:19.)

The priest of each generation dies to enter upon the infamous immortality of the persecutor and murderer of the prophet, secured for him by that son of his who builds the prophet's monument, and writes the inscription on it in enduring brass. The prophet, on the other hand, can scarcely be said to die. Rather he lives on, murdered though he may have been, wears a crown, and enjoys the homage and obedience of a constantly increasing number.

This irrepressible conflict between priest and prophet began early. Its echoes have reverberated in every land which has been distinguished by great and rapid progress. There have been priests and prophets of science and philosophy as well as of religion. And the priest and prophet in politics constituted in Israel, as they do also to-day, as stern a fact almost as the priest and prophet in religion; for whether we take due ac-

count of it or not, the one actual form of government is the theocracy, where every human legislator, judge and magistrate, including the sovereign himself, is but an official under law to God. There is absolutely no escape from this situation. God holds peoples and their officials alike in the place of strictest accountability to himself during every moment of their worthy or unworthy tenure of the positions he gives them.

I am now to deal in a particular rather than a general way with the priest and prophet in their relations to the sacrificial system which obtained under Mosaism, and point out, if I can, how Jesus stands associated with that system.

Jesus is at once "the Apostle and High Priest of our Religion." (Heb. 3:1.) Just because he is the High Priest, he is also the apostle—the man sent, approved and sustained by God to speak for him as his Prophet. The Priest and the Prophet are always united when both are well informed and faithful. Under Mosaism the priest went wrong. It was his departure from reality which put him in a class by himself and precipitated that conflict between him and the prophet which I have been indicating. In Jesus both offices were blended and harmonized. This is not very clearly recognized. I shall begin here by pointing out the nature of the conflict between the two in Israel itself. In doing this it will be necessary for me to go no further than quote from two or three of Israel's strong prophets.

I shall begin with the great classical passage in Micah—"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

"He hath showed me, Oh man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Here undoubtedly the substitutionary idea of sacrifice is most strongly condemned, the prophet going even so far as to make the horrible suggestion that when a man has once struck out on that line he should rest only after he has offered up his own son—his best and dearest possession. He then declares that such substitutionary sacrifices can find no basis in the mind and will of God. Jehovah wanted his worshiper himself. He wanted his conscience, his intellect, his will, his loving devotion, the service of all his powers in doing all the good among his fellows that might lie within his reach. What to God were thousands of rams or ten thousands of rivers of oil compared with that? And what to God was the man who went the length of presenting his son as a substitutionary sacrifice but a murderer?

This last thought is the one which seems to

have gripped the mind of Isaiah in such a painful way. He writhes in agony as he writes in righteous rage—

“Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom: Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? Saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts? Bring no more empty oblations . . . your hands are full of blood.” Your substitutionary idea, which has led you to thrust your bloody offerings before me, instead of your own reverently worshipping, devotedly obedient and lovingly righteous selves, has made your very slaughter of your sacrificial beasts an abominable series of murders. “Bring no more empty oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease

to do evil: learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." (Isa. 1:10-17.)

Coming down across the centuries we find the priest still standing for a worship and a holiness which were the poorest of blasphemous shams, and the second Isaiah exposing him in the very spirit of the first—

"To this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word. He that killeth an ox" (as a substitutionary offering) "is as he that slayeth a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as he that breaketh a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation as he that offereth swine's blood; he that burneth frankincense, as he that blesseth an idol: yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations." (Isa. 66:3, 4.) And thus the situation continued, men destroying their own souls and committing spiritual suicide in connection with the most sacred rites of their religion. And thus it was found by Jesus himself and those who after him laid the foundations of the Christian church.

We are not left in any doubt on the question whether Jesus sided with the priest or the prophet in the long controversy. His whole life and teaching were those of the greatest of all the prophets. He would let no man put anything whatever in the place of the personal righteousness of high ideals and an unceasing struggle for their at-

tainment which his own life exemplified. For the weakest striver he had the tenderest compassion and the most abounding encouragements, but his word for those who would not enter the holy strife was "judgment," while that for the wicked loiterer was, "I know you not." And when he was called upon to express himself on the very point before us he did so by quoting from Hosea 6:6, with a reference to 1 Sam. 15:22, where the words are given in which the prophet administered his rebuke to Saul, when that king attempted to atone for his royal disobedience by slaughtering in sacrifice thousands of bullocks and sheep—

"Go and learn what this means—

'I desire mercy and not sacrifice'"—

a godlike manhood and no substitute for it whatever.

The disciples of Jesus were continually so hampered by the priestly idea that they took in but slowly the full meaning of their Lord's life and words, and the full meaning of their Lord's life and death. In their writings the mighty fact set forth by the prophet is often badly blurred by the misty pretensions of the priest. I shall not attempt here to make anything like a full exposition of this feature of the New Testament, but content myself with briefly indicating it. More than a dozen theories of the atonement have resulted from this entanglement of ideas in the

apostolic mind, and not wholly from an incapacity for clear thinking on the part of subsequent Christian theologians. "This treasure we have in these earthen vessels, that its all-prevailing power may be seen to come from God, and not to be our own" (2 Cor. 4:7), is a word of Paul regarding his own limitations and those of his fellow apostles and Christian co-workers generally; and it looked in directions which he did not perhaps have in mind when he wrote it, though he was well aware always that he was seeing "in a mirror, dimly," and that his knowledge was incomplete and his preaching incomplete. (1 Cor. 13:12, 9.) To see dimly is to perceive cloudily, and even misleadingly; and no teacher can instruct more clearly than he can see the things which he attempts to convey to other minds. That the writer of 2nd Peter recognized a pronounced cloudiness in Paul's writings he makes abundantly evident in these words—

"There are some things in them difficult to understand, etc." The precise point of this writer is that the reader of Paul's writings needed to be well versed in the facts and main purpose of Christianity, and firmly established in his own experience of salvation through Jesus Christ, before giving himself safely to the perusal of some parts of Paul's letters. And if this was true of the most intellectual and most thoroughly schooled apostle of all, it can surely be no offense against the rest to say that the cloudiness which hinders

our progress, when we attempt to get a clear idea of the system of thought which lies behind their words, is more than apparent. They found the treasure too vast to be set forth by them in an orderly fashion, and in such a way that each portion of it could be distinctly seen and duly appreciated. And perhaps the old priestly conception of things proved more disabling to them than any other thing that can be named.

In Peter and John and above all in Paul we see the great truth represented by the prophets, including Jesus himself struggling and stumbling towards adequate expression through the rivers of blood shed by the animal victims of the priest, and the blinding smoke from his altars, or through the mists which enveloped the proceedings of the Roman law courts; and never absolutely arriving, excepting in such a glorious passage as—

“But all this was the work of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of Reconciliation—to proclaim that God, in Christ, was reconciling the world to himself, not reckoning men’s offences against them, and that he had entrusted us with the Message of this reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 5:18, 19.) With the second Paul, who wrote the letter to the Hebrews, it was different. He, too, struggled and stumbled as he carried his message, but at length he arose to stumble no more, and arrived at the viewpoint from which he read the con-

sciousness of Jesus as no man before him had done, and as few have done since.

It is interesting to note that as soon as he got this vision he found the text for his discourse in the Old Testament. So human was the heart of Jesus into which he gazed, that he found himself able to put into his lips without change of any kind some words of the fortieth Psalm which he took from the Septuagint version. Hence we read—

“When he was coming into the world the Christ declared—‘Sacrifice and offering thou dost not desire, but thou hast provided for me a body. Thou dost take no pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. So I said, “See, I have come” (as is written of me in the pages of the Book), “To do thy will, O God.”’”

“First,” he writes, “come the words—‘Thou dost not desire, nor dost thou take pleasure in, sacrifices, offerings, burnt offerings, and sacrifices for sin’ (offerings regularly made under the Law) and then there is added—‘See, I have come to do thy will.’ The former sacrifices are set aside to be replaced by the latter.” (Heb. 10:5-9.)

“He taketh away the first that he may establish the second” is the reading of the authorized version. With this reading the revision of 1881 entirely agrees. The Twentieth Century tentative edition paraphrases thus—“The former statement is set aside to be replaced by the latter.” Weymouth’s New Testament in Modern

Speech gives us, "He does away with the first in order to establish the second;" while Lloyd in his Corrected English New Testament places this passage before us word for word as we have already seen it in the authorized and revised versions—"He taketh away the first that he may establish the second."

Now what does this writer indicate by "the first" and "the second?" Does "the first" stand for the priestly idea of substitutionary offerings, and "the second" for the prophet's idea that the one offering and sacrifice acceptable to God is the offerer himself in all his various capacities for worship and service? Or does he mix and mingle and confuse things, so that his readers must still keep asking with which of more than a dozen theories of the atonement he stands associated? We shall see.

I refuse to devour time here in an attempt to find a safe way through the theory-permeated intricacies of the various translations which lie before me. No man can ever set forth God's truth, or anybody else's, in a translation, until that truth lies in still lake-like clearness in his own mind and heart. Nothing can be more misleading than texts which have been thrown out of all true perspective by the violence which has been quite unconsciously visited upon them by dogma-burdened translators. Our writer indicates the successive steps and processes by means of which a sinner may move up from the horrible pit and

miry clay of his iniquities into the loftiest abiding places of saint-hood. What are these steps and processes? Let us follow him as he points them out.

The first step is that of entering into the will of God as he sees Jesus himself did—in desire and purpose, first, and then as occasion and opportunity arise, in word and deed. It is by this will of God that we are purified, sanctified, set apart for a life of strength and sweetness, of powerful acts and tenderest compassions, like that of him whose followers we become the moment we enter into that will after him.

Each sinner who takes this step, takes it because he has become the subject of a process which is set up and maintained by God himself. The salvation of mankind has its place in the educational programme of the universe. Jesus Christ is the supreme object lesson in the way of a properly ordered human life. In him there were gathered up and centered all that was true and victorious in the life of men as that life ought to be, and in the principles which should govern it. The very heart of his heart was a love, which was absolutely without limit. Every sinner loves to be loved, and most of all to be loved by the holiest, not so much in spite of, as because of, the fact, which is so painfully clear to himself, that he is bad and hopelessly lost as far as self-rescue is concerned. Mother love, wife love, child love, have a certain redeeming power, but the source

of them all, as represented by God in Christ, far surpasses them in their best possible combination. The holiest love must always be the mightiest. To look upon the holiest love, and to perceive that its infinite eyes, fixed upon me, and overflowing with tears because I am not holy too, but sinful and unworthy and undone, are forever those of him whose human hands, reached down for my uplifting, I nailed to the cross, and that those same pierced hands, mightier than ever, are gripping me even now to carry me up out of all my sins and miseries; is to realize to some extent that this same holiness of love is being carved deeply upon my consciousness, as the one law which embraces all the legislation which should govern my life now and always. It was because our writer vividly realized this for himself that he was so deeply impressed by these words from Jeremiah 31:33—

“This is the Covenant that I will make with them
After those days,” says the Lord:
“I will impress my laws on their hearts
And will inscribe them on their minds.”

Now, also, because he perceived a certain sequence, hidden from the priest but clear and unmistakable to the prophet, he broke Jeremiah's word into two portions, and presented these in separation from each other. This is how he put his case—“We have also the testimony of the Holy Spirit. For, after saying—‘This is my cove-

nant, etc,' then we have—'And their sins and their iniquities I will no longer remember.' ”

Now if this language means anything at all, it means that in the opinion of this writer, the one condition upon which God forgives sins is the sinner's complete surrender and consecration to his will. And he teaches that this surrender and consecration are a human act, on the one hand, and the outcome of a divine process, on the other. The sinner surrenders and consecrates himself to God's will, because God has made that will appear the supreme thing to him. When this act of surrender and consecration has been definitely entered into, God writes his will still more definitely and deeply upon both heart and mind. And when he has by this process actually blotted out the sins of the man, then and not till then, he lifts up the light of his countenance upon him and blesses him with the peace which passes all understanding. That is to say, God never proceeds blindly in his work of saving a man, never takes anything for granted, never leaves anything undone which needs doing, never deceives himself at any point; and he never slights or deceives the man with whom he is dealing, but demands and obtains the exercise of out and out good faith both in Himself and in the sinner whom he is transforming into one of his saints. And this clear teaching alone is true to fact. All else is either mystifying or wholly false.

Forgiveness means the breaking forth of God's

smile upon the sinner and the breaking by God of the enslaving chains of his sins, when with much heartbreak or with little he has turned his back upon his wrong past to enter into the whole will of God so far as that will has become known to him. God's forgiveness is no cold legal transaction. It is glowingly personal and throbbingly heart to heart. It is a purely Thou and I act and experience. It is the Father's rapturous embrace of his son who was lost, and the joyful cry—"I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord; for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song: and he is become my salvation." (Isa. 12:1-3.)

"Free from the Law, O happy condition," etc., is a song in which the priest rejoices in the security and peace of his refuge of lies. The prophet dwelling in the place of real safety beside his Lord and Master, sings instead the very words of that Master himself as they appear in the Hebrew version of the Old Testament—

*"I delight to do thy will, O my God;
Yea, thy law is within my heart."* (Psa. 40:8.)

"My God, the spring of all my Joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days
And comfort of my nights."

“Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke; the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.”

The prophet rejoices in God and in his law, because he has been brought into the life of obedient service towards God, knows that he is co-working with God, and that through entering into his will, he has entered into Himself, where his life is hid with Christ in God. He does not live in fiction but in fact, and his holiness is not constructive or imaginary but real—the very holiness of God, translated into the terms of our ignorance and weakness, to be sure, but growingly worthy of its source.

So our author is perfectly consistent when, coming to a definite discussion of the faith which saves men, he makes no mention of their past sins or the consequences and penalties connected with them. His face is not towards the past at all, like that of the priest. He had heard his Master’s—

“Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their dead.” (Matt. 8:22.) In his view, to be a follower of Jesus was not to mourn over one’s low past and plead for an impossible remission of the penalties attached to its sins, but to break away from it utterly and at once, and, with his face towards the glowing light, join his Lord in

his heartily chosen and divinely given task. So his definition of "faith" declares it to be "the human substructure, foundation, or source of things hoped for, and a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see." (Heb. 11:1.) As he brings before us the name and deed of each of his long list of noted men of faith we gather the characteristics of this faith from the things which it wrought through them, and are prepared to say that it is (1) the vision of God as the teacher, inspirer and enabler of men in connection with the accomplishment of his vast redeeming purposes, (2) the quitting of sin and lower good for the highest life and service to which men are called, and (3) a hearty consecration to God's whole will as far as it is known. In other words, saving faith is the source of the highest devotion and the most glorious achievement—the very heart of hearts of the hero and the saint. A vast cloud of such heroes and saints of the past surrounds us, he declares, but we are to fix our gaze, not on any one of these, but on Jesus. He far surpasses them all. He is "the File-leader, the Prince Leader, the Leader and Perfect Example of, or in, our faith"—our religion of enthusiastic devotion to the whole will of God, and blessed experience of his purifying and enabling grace. So in his view that faith of Abraham, which "was regarded by God as righteousness," was so regarded because it was righteousness itself—righteousness in vision, in desire, in purpose, in consecra-

tion, in endeavor—the one human substructure or source for all possible righteousness of word and deed. So also is the faith of each truly Christian believer—each true son of Abraham. All true faith is the faith of Jesus. Abraham saw Jesus's day because he devoted himself to God's will in the same manner, though so much less perfectly; and he was glad with the gladness of one whom God, therefore, acknowledged as his friend, while Jesus rejoiced with the larger joy arising from being owned by God as his Son.

This idea of Jesus as our Leader and Perfect Example is made very prominent in this letter. Indeed, when the writer deals with the saving efficacy of the life of Jesus as that life stands related to ours, he places it in the very forefront. It is through this leadership that he is our Savior at all, and through this leadership that he is our Savior into Heaven itself. When this writer took up the unchangeableness of God's purpose and the unchangeableness of that oath which God took when he swore by himself, as an absolutely safe ground for our human hope, he declared that—

“This hope is a very anchor for our souls, secure and strong, and it ‘reaches into the Sanctuary that lies behind the Curtain,’ where Jesus, our Forerunner, has entered on our behalf.” (Chap. 6:16-20.) He says again—

“For it was not into a sanctuary made by human hands, which merely foreshadowed the

true one, that Christ entered, but into Heaven itself, that he might appear in the presence of God on our behalf." (Chap. 9:24.) And finally he says—

"Therefore, Brothers, we may enter the Sanctuary with confidence, in virtue of the blood of Jesus, by the way which he inaugurated for us—a new and living way, a way through the Sanctuary Curtain (that is, his human nature)." (Chap. 10:19, 20.)

Now what is the gist of this teaching? May it not be expressed thus? Our human nature, because of its sinfulness, existed as an excluding curtain to prevent us from entering heaven. The Son of God became Jesus, the Son of Mary, and in this manner placed the curtain of our human nature between him and heaven. But by conquering its sinfulness, by "offering himself up to God as a victim without blemish," he opened up a way, a way which no man had ever trod before, "a new and living way," the way of years of unbroken, living human devotion to the will of his Father, terribly difficult though that devotion became, and so passed into heaven "with his own blood," his life of utter consecration, not as our substitute (who wants a substitute when the problem and prospect is that of getting into heaven?) but "on our behalf" as our Fore-runner, "Our Leader," our Opener of the Way. And what is the rest of the story but that God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself,

and is reconciling the world to himself that he may lead to glory many sons, whom Jesus will not be ashamed to call his brothers, since each one of them will "by virtue of his blood"—his life of utter consecration to his Father—have passed for himself through this new and living way of utter obedience to God, which Jesus so gloriously inaugurated. This way was an absolute fact for him and only relatively so for us. But our hearts are reassured when we turn again to the words of Paul—

"God, in Christ, was (and is) reconciling the world to himself, *not reckoning men's offenses against them.*" God requires of each man only as much as through his help he can render.

A truer word was never written than this of Principal Forsyth in his *Cruciality of the Cross*—"The atonement does not procure grace, it flows from grace." It was because God loves us that Jesus died on the cross, and not because Jesus died on the cross that God loves us. This compelling, transforming, holy, reasonable and allowance-making love is the one ultimate fact. God is love.

What then is the relation borne by Jesus to the sacrificial system? The true one—the one maintained by the prophet against the priest through all the generations. No offering presented by man can ever be substitutionary, for the simple reason that God can never cheat himself out of his own rights. The continuous Creator

of sinful men makes no claim upon them for any further response to his holiness than that which he inspires and enables them to reach. By his own choice he is engaged in the age-long work of lifting them out of their sin into his own holiness, out of their iniquity into his own rectitude. Slowly he has been giving height to their moral standards; and that this slow progress may be as rapid as possible, he has given his divine Son to be our human Leader and Perfect Example. His sacrifice was an offering up of himself in a life of obedience to the utmost. He attempted no substitution on his own account but turned away from it with his whole heart and soul. He did this as our Forerunner. He did away with the first; he established the second. It was when he offered up himself as a sacrifice to God in an obedience which was unto death that he became our Prince Leader. We are true followers of his when we also enter into the whole will of God as far and as fast as it becomes known to us. True religion is no empty dream. We are members of this new yet ancient order of sacrificing priests when we completely obey Paul's exhortation—

“I entreat you then, Brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, for this is your rational worship.” (Rom. 12:1.)

In religion, as in everything else, all that is irrational is also false. The one absolutely re-

quired condition of forgiveness is acceptance of God's whole will as far as it is known. First God's law written on the heart, then God's forgiveness.

Before closing here we may, I think, get a clear glimpse of the true use and advantage of the ancient sacrificial system, and so of the unspeakable benefits arising from the sacrifice which Jesus, the Son of God, made of himself on our behalf. It has always been, and it is to-day, the intention and spirit of the offerer which determine whether his offering is to prove a blessing or a curse to him. Abel's sacrifice was accepted and Cain's rejected by God with strict reference to the thought and temper of each. So was it also with Abraham, on the one hand, and King Saul on the other. Let us seek for the difference between these worshipers.

The outstanding rule touching living offerings was that they should be perfect representatives of their kind. If the offering was a bullock, he had to be a perfect bullock; if a lamb, it had to be a perfect lamb. Each was required to represent the life of its kind at its best, and so to be fitted to suggest to the mind of the offerer, in the most lively way, the idea and duty of a perfect life before God on his own account.

Now each offerer would necessarily maintain one of three possible attitudes towards the perfect offering which he presented. The man who was a pure formalist would present his offering

with no other thought than that his act held a proper and rightful place in connection with the observances of his religion; and when he was through with his part of the ceremony he would retire with a comfortable sense of duty done. The other two would think more deeply, yet their thoughts would be the very antipodes of each other. The thought of one would be the thought of the priest, the thought of the other the thought of the prophet. The man with the priest's thought would bring his perfect offering and say—"O my God, I am imperfect and sinful and must so remain, but I have come with the perfect offering appointed by thyself. Graciously accept me as I am in view of its perfect merits, even as thou hast promised and agreed to do. Be as good as thy word, O holy Lord God!" And this man with the priest's thought in him would see nothing absurd, outrageous or blasphemous in his prayer. On the contrary it would strike him as being quite modestly and reverently orthodox!

But see! the man with the prophet's thought has come with his perfect offering. Listen! for he is in the attitude of prayer—

"Blessed be thy name, O God of my salvation, who hast heard my prayer and been merciful to me. All my help comes from thee. Thou dost strengthen me to fulfill thy word and keep thy law. Thou dost comfort me greatly, lifting up the light of thy countenance upon me. Yet my

way is not perfect before thee, and it is with earnest desire and humility that I present to thee this perfect offering, for it tells me that nothing befits me short of a like perfection. 'Teach me and guide me.' 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart all become acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my Strength and my Redeemer.'" Or, coming for the first time, he cries—"God be merciful to me a sinner, and lead me into thy whole will."

This man's perfect bullock and lamb awaken in him the cry for and the expectation of a like perfection. Neither is, or can ever be, accepted in his place. Under God's righteous rule there can be no substitutions. A beast's perfections accepted by God in the place of a man's! Yet the perfections of the beast can give to the man very convincing testimony that he should place nothing short of perfection before himself as his goal. And this was the highest office given by God to the ancient sacrificial system. It was to be a continual reminder that the God who had co-worked with the perfect beast in the attainment of its perfection, was also co-working with every man whose heart cried out after a complete human life as its chief good next to God himself. And because the perfection of the brute was too low to sufficiently inspire this desire and encourage this expectation in us, God gave us his Son to be our perfect human example and representative. And it is through inspiring and

encouraging to victory our desire for a perfect life before God, that Jesus becomes our Savior to the uttermost. (Heb. 10:14-22.) The priest has called him our substitute and has thus largely robbed him of his glory by robbing his obedience unto death of its largest and worthiest results. But the day of the Christian prophet is fast dawning. We are moving up out of the shadows into Christlike reality.

Under the Christianity of Jesus Christ, as set forth in this portion of the letter to the Hebrews, the genuine Christian is the prophet who is a priest, and the priest who is also a prophet. Peter had the same idea. Listen!—

“Come to Jesus then, as to a living stone, rejected indeed, by men, but in God’s eyes choice and precious; and, as living stones, form yourselves into a spiritual House, to be a consecrated Priesthood, for the offering of spiritual sacrifices that will be acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (I Pet. 2:4, 5.) Peter saw, too, that this new order of prophet-priests or priest-prophets was the true Israel and therefore, the very heart of the Kingdom of God upon earth. Listen again—

“But you are ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, God’s own People,’ entrusted with the proclamation of the goodness of him who called you out of Darkness into his wonderful Light.” (I Pet. 2:9.) To this also

the writer of The Revelation gives his heartiest assent—

“He made us ‘a Kingdom of Priests in the service of God,’ his Father.” (Rev. 1:6.) (See also 5:9, 10.)

Naturally the final conclusion of this second Paul is that the sacrifice which Jesus made of himself was the final representative one. The beast was too poor, but The Man left nothing further to be accomplished. He had constituted in himself all that God required him to be as a man living his own personal life. He had entered into the whole will of his Father on his own account. He had entered into it also as the Fore-runner and Prince Leader of the race. He had made it at once the duty and the privilege of each man to enter into that will after him. Growing numbers were actually doing this with their whole hearts and souls. As priests under Jesus, our “great High Priest,” each of these had made or was still making, a complete sacrifice of himself, including his body, to God. It was in view of this fact in its initial stage that God had forgiven them, and so would it be to the very end with all who would take the same path.

That loss of the sense of sin over which many are mourning to-day, is rather a fact for rejoicing. This sense of sin belongs to the priest. To him it has been a great asset and he has often cultivated it in others for his own material en-

richment. We remember Eli's arrogant sons and their flesh-hook with three prongs, which they did not always care to use. (I Sam. 2:12-17.) We recall also some more recent history. In the place of this abidingly distressing sense of sin in Christendom, there is fast waking up the genuine Christian prophet's passion for righteousness, individual and social. So men are all the time becoming more practically and, therefore, more truly the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. This fact will require the attention of a separate chapter.

Some one may say that this chapter is a plea for the moral influence theory of the atonement. How we delight to label the infinite with our pretty little tags! This chapter has been written in advocacy of the physical, intellectual, emotional, volitional, moral, spiritual, human and divine fact of the whole saving work of him who said through his prophet, and then through his Son—"I desire mercy and not sacrifice"—a glorious Christlike humanity, and nothing whatever in lieu of it. God has of his own motion been making men as they are, and he has at the same time been making them through Jesus Christ all he wishes them to be. He has been much hindered by our false notions. But the whole work is his and he will carry it to its full completion.

XIV

JESUS AND THE SENSE OF SIN

The eye of the priest is forever on each sinful past as it matures. It is on this account that he can never close his confessional, or leave his penances behind him, or consider his sacrificial rites at an end. He fancies he can make each wrong past right, or cover it up from the eyes of God, by means of the substitutionary "sacrifice oblation and satisfaction" which he offers. He may even fancy that divine forgiveness means the complete removal of sin's penalty. But deliverance from a life of conscious sinning he regards as a practical impossibility. He must always have a bad past to deal with.

The prophet knows better. Proceeding scientifically, that is to say, dismissing all arbitrary theorizing and all crooked textual interpretations, he notes the facts of life as they appear upon its very surface even, and knows that no divine forgiveness ever breaks the indissoluble bond with which God himself has joined sin and suffering for the present life at least, and therefore that the afflicting and disabling effects of each man's sins can be traced in his body, his intellect and his painfully accusing conscience,

after his forgiveness as well as before it. The prophet can also warn the forgiven sinner that some of the consequences of his sins may curse his offspring, and even some of his acquaintances and their descendants, for generations; and that his own deliverance in the same directions, so far as it is possible at all, can be reached only through the steady observance by himself of God's various laws for the health of the body, the mind and the conscience. But he knows, too, that our salvation from lives of conscious sinning is a most prominent and essential part of the redeeming work of Jesus.

The divine forgiveness of sins is first of all a deliverance from sinning. It leaves no drunkard still a slave to his cups, no debauchee in thralldom to his vices, and no sinner whatever the bondman it found him. God accomplishes this deliverance by addressing himself through the morally awakened intellect to the affections and the will. Through causing the sinner to perceive the utter badness of sin in the light of his own holy love, he changes his enjoyment of it into discomfort, and his dislike of goodness in its chief demands into such a longing for it as cannot be satisfied short of complete obedience to God. Along with this revelation of sin and holiness God shows himself in Jesus as everywhere present to "set free from the control of Sin" the sinner in whom he is at work, and cause him to "become a servant to Righteousness." (Rom. 6:18.) Thus encour-

aged by the divine inworking the sinner delivers himself over to God's will as far as he knows it through Jesus, and "recognizes the truth that his old self is crucified with Christ, in order that the body, the stronghold of Sin, may be rendered powerless, so that he may no longer be a slave to Sin." (Rom. 6:6.) Then the testimony he and his fellow believers adopt is this—

"Thank God, there is deliverance through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. . . . What the law could not do, in so far as our earthly nature weakened its action, God did, by sending his Son, with a nature resembling our sinful nature. . . . He condemned sin in that earthly nature, so that the requirements of the Law might be satisfied in us who live now in obedience, not to our earthly natures, but to the Spirit. There is, therefore, now no condemnation for those who are in union with Christ Jesus; for through our union with Christ Jesus the Law of the life-giving Spirit has set us free from the Law of Sin and Death." (Rom. 7:25; 8:1-4.)

I have placed the first verse of the eighth chapter last here to show as clearly as possible the precise nature and force of Paul's reasoning. His teaching at this point is the same as that of the tenth chapter of the letter to the Hebrews. He could not write of saving faith without serious obscurity, but he could read its holy fruits out of his own lofty experience. By its means he had been brought into "union with Christ

Jesus." By God's lovingkindness he had been saved through it. (Eph. 2:8.) "By God's lovingkindness," that is to say, he had through it been introduced to the place where he found himself constantly united with Jesus in the declaration to God himself—

"See, I have come to do thy will." (Heb. 10:9.) He had passed out of both God's condemnation and his own, because he had through Jesus passed out of his life of sinning. God's frown and his own rested upon the evil past which he had forsaken. That could never, of course, be otherwise, while he and God remained holy. Neither, while he and God remained holy, could it ever be otherwise than that they should both smile upon his present. He had ceased to belong to his past through quitting it for an ever-living present of devotion to the holy will of God. Through yielding himself up to all the requirements of this will that were known to him, he had been taken up into it, and by it had been purified, sanctified, or set apart for a life of obedient doing and suffering, like that of Jesus himself. (Heb. 10:10.) And how could God deny his approval to the character, which, as the God of salvation, it was his special work to impart? And did not God demand of him that he also should give it his approval?

I have taken pains to elaborate this point because the self-approval of Christ-like men is still viewed with grave suspicion by influential lead-

ers of Christian thought. And I cannot pass away from it without a further word. Where is there one syllable of apostolic warrant for the cultivation of a guilty self-accusing spirit? The man who answers that the seventh chapter of Romans certainly furnishes it, is a man who can believe it possible for a Christian to live in that experience and the experience of the eighth chapter at one and the same time; and not only possible but necessary. To him holiness of character may strike desire through and through, but never the dispositions or the will. He thinks that the joy of salvation arises from the conviction that some one else was holy in our place, with a holiness which on the one condition of humble trust avails for us all, because it is imputed to each believer in all its fullness. We are holy for the most part by proxy. It is ours "to exult in God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord," not because through his obedience unto death we have, by the divine spirit, been brought into the completest conscious reconciliation or harmony with God, but because he died in our place! and was raised again for our justification. God pronounces us righteous while he knows we are no such thing, but still the bond-slaves of sin and crying out in anguish, "Who shall deliver me?" So long as we are here in the flesh we can do no better than mingle our bitter cry of actual daily defeat with our pæan of triumph over a victory achieved in our human nature by one, whom it

is ours to follow only with our fullest approval, our earnest and abiding faith in his saving merits and our agonized desires; while our love towards God and our fellows must always remain cold and our wills in a constant state of partial paralysis!

All this is simply the old priestly and heathenish denial of the genuine Christian doctrine of salvation by God's loving kindness through faith. To justify may mean to pronounce righteous, but in the New Testament it never means to pronounce righteous apart from making the individual so declared righteous in himself to the precise length and breadth and depth and height that he is pronounced such. God cannot be mocked by men, and he does not mock himself. He never calls a sinner a saint. Nor does he count any saint more saintly than he actually is. God cultivates reality.

It is by bringing men into his will—into as complete a conformity to his will as they feel called to—that God relieves and gladdens their consciences. Apart from this there is no true peace of mind, though there may be a false sense of security. The New Testament is full of this teaching. It is not always clearly set forth, but the moment Paul, for instance, feels that he has placed this truth in any peril, he hastens to repair his fault. He says—

“Do we, then, use this faith to abolish Law? Heaven forbid! No, we establish law.”

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“What are we to say, then? Are we to continue in sin, in order that God’s lovingkindness may be multiplied? Heaven forbid! We became dead to sin, and how can we go on living in it?” (Rom. 3:31; 6:1, 2.) Beside this I may place a word of John:—

“You know that Christ appeared to take away our sins; and in him sin has no place. No one who maintains union with him lives in sin; no one who lives in sin has ever really seen him or learnt to know him. My children, do not let any one mislead you. He who lives righteously is righteous—as Christ is righteous. He who lives sinfully belongs to the Devil, for the Devil has sinned from the first. It was for this that the Son of God appeared, that he might undo the Devil’s work. No one who has received the New Life from God lives sinfully, because the very nature of God dwells within him; and he cannot live in sin, because he has received the new Life from God.” (I Jno. 3:5-9.) How positive and unmistakable all this is. And John goes further yet. He declares that God saves into holiness of disposition as well as into that holiness of the will which is continually represented by right words and deeds. He saves from hatred into love, and he who has not been rescued from hating his fellow-men, and introduced to the experience of loving them (enemies and all) instead, has not received the New Life from God at all, but is a child of the Devil still.

He who lives righteously in disposition as well as in desire, in volition, and in word and deed, is a child of God; and to live thus he must be made a child of God through the impartation by God, and the reception by himself, of the new Life from God, and so have the very nature of God dwelling within him. There is no salvation through imputed righteousness here. The saved sinner does not wear a Christly robe which only God can see, but one which all the world must recognize as Christly. "He who *lives* righteously is righteous—as Christ is righteous." And the very nature of God coming to dwell within him, his dispositions also are made Christly, so that he loves as Christ loves.

To enter into a salvation like this is to find peace of conscience indeed. Where sins no longer exist there can be no distressing consciousness of their existence. Where the will of God is fully entered into and done instead, there must at once be realized a sense of self-approval, which, joined to the divine approval, cannot but give birth to the joy unspeakable to which some apostolic pens testify. It was this peace, this joy, that the writer of the "Hebrews" referred to in these words—

"Once purified" and "Consciences clear from sins." He saw plainly that because Jesus brought all this about in every sinner, who took him as his Savior from sinning, "there is no further need of an offering for sin." (Heb. 10:2-18.) Actual deliverance from conscious sinning is the problem

which God has worked out through Jesus for us men under our very eyes. Just one more word from Paul to show how clearly he perceived this—

“But now that you have been set free from the control of Sin, and have become servants to God, the fruit that you reap is an ever-increasing holiness, and the end Immortal Life.” (Rom. 6:22.) How could the man who wrote this have failed to write also—“Indeed, our main ground for satisfaction is this—our conscience tells us that our conduct in the world, and still more in our relations with you, was marked by a purity of motive and a sincerity that were inspired by God, and was based, not on worldly policy, but on the help of God.” (2 Cor. 1:12.) There is neither mock modesty nor unworthy silence here. He was neither afraid nor ashamed to say:

“It is through the love of God that I am what I am, and the love that he showed me has not been wasted.” (I Cor. 15:10.) Years later this same man “fixed his eyes upon the Council and began—

“‘Brothers, for my part, I have always ordered my life before God, with a clear conscience, up to this very day.’” (Acts 23:1.) There is no evidence whatever that Paul’s conscience ever convicted him of one act of unfaithfulness towards his Master from the day that he was first brought to acknowledge him as such, to the moment in which he sealed his testimony with his blood. Once, as he tells us, a certain physical ailment made his work so hard that—

“I three times entreated the Lord, praying that it might leave me. But his reply has been—‘My help is enough for you; for my strength attains its perfection in the midst of weakness.’ Most gladly, then, will I boast all the more of my weakness, so that the strength of the Christ may overshadow me. That is why I delight in weakness, ill-treatment, hardships, persecution and difficulties, when borne for Christ. For when I am weak, then it is that I am strong.” (II Cor. 12:8-10.)

This is the sense of personal righteousness to which Jesus introduced men after his life upon earth had ceased. He made their past seem unworthy and evil to them, only to give them such characters and careers as would fill their souls with holy satisfaction, and that before God. He took away the painful sense of sin so thoroughly that in some cases at least it seems to have caused distress only in connection with occasional recollections of that past, which, through his loving-kindness they had so thoroughly renounced. What is he represented as having done in this direction in the days of his flesh?

He is represented as having done the same then as later. The case of Zacchaeus and of “the woman who was an outcast in the town” prove this. There is nothing in either of these stories about the sense of sin which Jesus awakened. That this sense was awakened who can doubt who has read also the accounts of Peter’s denial and Judas’s betrayal of Jesus? Yet it receives not one word

of mention. Why? Because that was not the thing which Jesus emphasized in his dealings with sinful men and women. Jesus was a positive and not a negative reformer—a positive and not a negative Savior. He swallowed up all the negatives of the Decalogue in his three positives.

“What is the first of all the commandments?”

“The first,” answered Jesus, “is—‘Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is the one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.’ The second is this—‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thou dost love thyself.’” (Mark 12:28-31.) Jesus emptied human hearts and lives of their sins by filling them with his most passionate striving after the highest righteousness. He built upon DO, not upon DO NOT, and set men’s faces towards the light of the glowing future, instead of towards the darkness of the days they had misspent. So his Zacchaeus’s words were not those of direct confession at all, but of such a hearty and sturdy profession as led Jesus to declare before all the cavillers—

“Salvation has come to this house to-day, for even this man is a son of Abraham.” (Luke 19:9.) With the woman at his feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee it was the same. “Simon, I have something to say to you.” “Pray do so, Teacher,” Simon answered; and Jesus began: “There were two people who were in debt to a money-lender; one owed fifty pounds, and the

other five. As they were unable to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them, do you think, will love him the more?" "I suppose," answered Simon, "it will be the man to whom he forgave the greater debt." "You are right," said Jesus, and then, turning to the woman, he said to Simon—"Do you see this woman? I came into your house—you gave me no water for my feet, but she has made my feet wet with tears and dried them with her hair. You did not give me one kiss, but she, from the moment I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head even with oil, but she has anointed my head with perfume. And for this, I tell you, her sins, many as they are, have been pardoned, because she has loved greatly; but one who has little pardoned him, loves but little."

This was Jesus's way. He transmuted the deepest sense of sin into the most passionate spirit of holy service. He could not have done otherwise and been the Savior he was. The nursing of regrets is worse than idle and remorse is suicidal. It was along this path that Judas moved bearing the cord which proved as treacherous towards him as he had towards his Master; and Jesus flew from his grave to save Peter from it. It is only as our regrets lose themselves in our love for God in Christ that we become positively holy and greatly useful. Therefore this is the one way of salvation to which Jesus introduces us. A most essential portion of Paul's

motto was—"Forgetting what lies behind." Only as he continually succeeded in doing this did he find himself "straining every nerve for that which lies in front." (Phil. 3:13.) Regret gnaws away the energies and paralyzes aspiration, while grateful love catches visions of the highest possibilities, and harnesses every power for victorious achievement.

May we not listen to Jesus while he tells us how the Father deals with his sinful children? He is relating the story of the Two Sons and has reached the place where the lost young man, returning from his deep want and shame, and dragging himself painfully along in his raggedness, is met by his Father, who "saw him while he was still a long way off, was deeply moved, and ran and threw his arms round his neck and kissed him." The wretched prodigal wails out—

"I sinned against Heaven and against you; I am no longer fit to be called your son; make me one of your hired servants." But the father is so deaf to all this that he does not appear to have heard one word. What he has heard is his son's spirit of contrition, and his utter readiness and longing desire to do his whole will, even in the lowest place. So instead of taking him at his word, "the father turned to his servants and said 'Be quick and fetch a robe—the very best—and put it on him; give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for

here is my son who was dead, and is alive again, was lost, and is found.' ”

We must make him forget, we must make him forget; his bad past must be crowded out of his active memory even, by means of the high place and the holy joys we shall make his! This has always been the father's spirit towards his children who return to him from their wanderings. The Priest's provision is the humbling, painful or costly penance, the Pharisee's the place of the outcast who must never be permitted to forget, while that of the Father is all that belongs to sonship in that holy mansion, which is our own Father's house. Jesus strengthened to the utmost the spirit of self-reverence, and the conscience which does not accuse.

XV

JESUS THE BEARER AWAY OF SIN

The bearer away must first become the bearer. No load can be carried to a distance until it has first been laid upon the shoulders which are to be burdened by it for the time. This fact is most distinctly set forth in one of the symbols of Mo-saism.

There was each year a supreme day of atone-ment for the Israelitish people. Of the animals figuring in connection with the bloody and un-bloody rites of this day were two goats. Between these there was no difference either in perfection or worth, when they were taken by the Priest and set before Jehovah at the door of the tent of meeting to be chosen by lot, one for Jehovah, the other for Azazel. As soon as the lot was cast, the one that fell to Jehovah was slaughtered, and, as it poured out its life, its blood was caught in a basin and in this basin borne by the high priest through the curtain into the Holiest Place, where it was sprinkled by him seven times upon and be-fore the Mercy Seat. Borne out again it was at length mixed with the blood of the bullock, which seems to have been slain before it, and used in further acts of purification upon the places and

furniture provided for the priestly and popular worship. This done the high priest proceeded according to these specifications—

“He shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a man that is in readiness into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a solitary land: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.”

Thus the goat for Azazel—the scape-goat—became first the bearer of all Israel’s sins, and afterwards, under superior guidance and control, the bearer away of these sins.

Let us be very specific here. These goats were the means of getting Jesus placed before us first as the bearer of our sins, and then as the bearer away of our sins. The writers of the New Testament were Israelites and thought and wrote as such. They could never get away from the religious imagery of their race. Now we shall see as we proceed that, in their estimation, Jesus took the place of both goats, as well as of all the other victims and sin-bearers of the Mosaic ritual. He took the place of the first goat as well as of the second, the place of the second, as well as of the first.

Fixing our attention now upon the goat for Azazel—the scape-goat—let us note how he be-

comes the bearer of sins. He becomes such through their confession. He is neither killed nor wounded. No violence whatever is visited upon him. He is not looked upon with dislike but with favor. He is not regarded with hatred but with affection. The people gather about him and with one voice, through the lips of the High Priest, they say, and rejoice as they say it—This is our goat, our goat for Azazel, our scape-goat, our goat that is here for the express purpose of bearing and then bearing away our sins. For this goat bless we Jehovah! Here by confessing our sins we renounce them and part with them forever. Henceforth may they never burden us more! And they cannot afflict him, for our goat cannot sink under human sins, though he can bear them away, representing as he does, the salvation of our holy God, as he causes the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts to flow forth in purity and truth before him, our minds to meditate night and day upon his law and our whole lives to image forth his will.

The typical priest of Mosaism, of course, never rose to this height. He was earthly, sensual, devilish. He could not see the truth in his own system. He could not believe in the possible thing—the actual blessed deliverance of men from their sins themselves. He could only believe in the impossible thing—namely, their deliverance from all the penalties of their sins. Where faith ceases credulity always begins. The man who cannot

believe in the thing which is rational will always find a place in his creed for the thing which is irrational. The priest named the sins of Israel one after another, placing them with his own hands upon the head of the goat, and then through some mental legerdemain, gazed after it, as it was being led out of his sight by the "man in readiness," under the hazy impression that it was bearing away into the wilderness, not those sins at all, but their various penalties of broken health, intellectual weakness, and moral and spiritual disability. Or, failing even here, he saw as sin's penalty only the vengeful wrath of an infinite Shylock, who, however, might be won to mercy through the plentiful shedding of blood not human.

But the prophet in Israel, to whatever tribe he might belong, saw the truth, and rejoiced in the liberty from sinning which it continually assured him. To this prophet we owe every uplifting thing which the Old Testament contains. To him the service of God always meant an escape from his sins themselves into the holy will of God—an escape and deliverance divinely prepared and divinely effected. The rites of his religion in general, and the rites of the day of atonement in particular, all spoke to him of this great salvation. Behind them all he saw God himself so distinctly, as the God and Rock of his salvation, that again and again he felt himself in no need of any further continuance, or use, of the ap-

pointed rites. He met God in the synagogue as well as in the temple, and under the stars as well as in the synagogue, and cried—

“Whom have I in heaven but thee?

And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

My flesh, even my heart faileth;

But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.” (Psalm 73:25-26.)

Let us now look back. The goat for Azazel must forever stand associated with the goat for Jehovah. There is no confession of sin, and consequently, no “remission” or escape from sin itself, contemplated in the Mosaic ritual apart from the shedding of blood. This is because that ritual contemplated sin to the utmost, as well as salvation to the utmost. The two things absolutely must stand together. Salvation to the uttermost implies sin to the uttermost, and sin to the uttermost demands salvation to the uttermost. And sin is to the uttermost when it slays the perfect being, because it declares that, being perfect, he should be slain. Here sin represents the perversion of all right thinking, shows us conscience, in the time of its supreme test, saying in the most absolute way I ought, when the only proper word for it is an absolute I ought not; the will deciding to take life at the point where most of all it should decide to preserve it; and the whole man throwing himself into an act of murder in the very case

in which he should be giving all his powers to the work of approving, exalting and glorifying the being whom he makes his victim. And the picture drawn by Mosaism is blacker yet. Intellect, conscience, will, the whole man, must do all this in the name of God, and through God's chief priest. It was the high priest himself who slew the perfect being, Jehovah's chosen one, the goat for Jehovah; and he slew it as the people's representative. Their vote went that way. Through him they all slew it. The prophet had the true vision when at last he saw and said that each bloody offering testified to a murder, besides other outrages. (Isa. 66:3.)

First, then, under Mosaism we see an innocent and perfect representative of its kind slaughtered on this one definite ground, among others, that it was perfect. It was on account of its perfection that it was singled out and made a victim. Then, as if this victim had come to life again, we see the very men who slew it gathered about a being just like it, confessing their sins upon its head through the lips of the same high priest through whose hands they had done their deed of slaughter, and then, with him, gazing upon it as it bears their sins away from them into the wilderness, which they propose never to visit to resume them. And all this we say represents Jesus as the bearer and bearer-away of sin.

In this study of Jesus, then, we must first look upon him as the bearer of sin. He is the bearer

of sin first as the perfect man who, because of his perfect goodness, was murdered, and then as the perfect man in whose presence sinful men stand convicted of their sins, confessing and renouncing them. The lot fell to him first for Jehovah and then for Azazel. The goats were two and he is one and the same Jesus. They were two because the first could not be made to live again after being slaughtered. Jesus is one because it is his to say—

“I died, and I am alive forever and ever.” (Rev. 1:18.) Jesus on the cross as the bearer of sin was a familiar thought to the primitive Jewish Christian mind. Peter gave it expression when he wrote—“He himself carried our sins in his own body to the cross.” (I Pet. 2:24.) This bearing of human sins by Jesus was not mystical but actual. A considerable list of these sins can easily be made out. All sins came upon him there in their root principle of selfishness. Jesus had told his persecutors early that the self-seeking spirit could not but prevent their acceptance of him, and that this self-seeking was a genuine renunciation of God himself. (Jno. 5:44.) This self-seeking led these persecutors to the place where “Pilate knew that it was out of jealousy (or envy) that they had given Jesus up to him.” (Matt. 27:18.) In the Upper Room Jesus said—

“They have both seen and hated both me and my Father. And so is fulfilled what is said in

their law—"They hated me without a cause." (Jno. 15:24, 25.) At an earlier date he sternly rebuked these men in such words as these—

"You are children of your father the Devil, and you are determined to do what your father loves to do. He was a murderer from the first . . . He is a liar and the father of lying." (Jno. 8:44.) He who reads the story of the trial of Jesus in the light of such statements as these will see that Jesus bore to his cross besides selfishness—that fruitful mother of all human sins—envy, jealousy, hatred, malice, blasphemy, cowardice, lying, perjury, subornation of perjury, and wanton cruelty and murder. He went to his cross, bore it, and had it bear him, as the perfectly innocent victim of all these forms of human sin. He bore them in his body, which they slew, sin proving mightier than his physical frame and that which constituted it a living organism. Sin as death crushed out his physical life.

Thus he bore our sins. But he did not in this act bear them away. On the cross Jesus endured our sins. Neither Judas who betrayed him, nor Peter who denied him with oaths and imprecations, nor Pilate who in his cowardice gave him up to death, when he should have stood by his own verdict of acquittal, nor the crowd which voted for his crucifixion, nor the hierarchy which had at last consummated its murderous purpose, was freed from one of his sins or from an atom of his guilt, through the shedding of his blood. Only

the perverted priestly mind can believe such topsy-turvy teaching. But one moment of serious reflection was needed by any one of the whole unworthy lot to convince him that his sin and guilt alike were carried to their climax in the moment when their victim, having cried out, "It is finished," breathed out his life to God in the words—"Father, into thy hands I commit my Spirit." (Luke 23:46.) It was because the conscience of Judas was true at last, that, in view of this moment and all it meant for him, he rushed to the chief priest in a frenzied act of confession and restitution, and then in the blackness of despair went "to his proper place." How much would it have comforted him to know that his victim loved him still and was even then praying for his murderers? Is murder rendered no murder at all because a Jesus, or a Stephen after him, is god-like enough to die wishing for his slayers the mercy, instead of the vengeance, of Heaven? Nay. The vision of such innocent and surpassing love intensifies their sense of guilt. How Peter must have suffered under his crushing consciousness of ill-desert, in view of the part he played during the fatal trial, until Jesus met him in mercy after his resurrection! It was this sense of his own guilt which so distinctly fitted him to charge home to them the more awful guilt of others in such words as these—

"Jesus of Nazareth, a man whose mission from God to you was proved by miracles, wonders and

signs, which God showed among you through him, as you know full well . . . you by the hands of lawless men, nailed to a cross and put to death. But God released him from the pangs of death and raised him to life, it being impossible for death to retain its hold upon him. . . . So let the whole nation of Israel know beyond all doubt, that God has made him both Lord and Christ—this very Jesus whom you crucified.”

Were the people comforted when they heard this? Did they reason to the swift conclusion that the resurrection at least had made all things right for them, because it proved that they had simply been playing into the hands of God and helping him towards his triumph over human wickedness in general? Far as their intellectual perversion had gone, it had not gone as far as that. God's triumph thoroughly alarmed them, as well it might. “They were conscience smitten and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles—

“Brothers, what can we do?”

“Repent,” answered Peter. (Act 2:22.)

Now to get this whole matter before us from the view-point of the Mosaic Day of Atonement, it is necessary for me to proceed to another word of Peter. Addressing numbers of these same persons again shortly after the day of Pentecost itself, Peter urged home these facts—

“You, I say, disowned the Holy and Righteous

One, and asked for the release of a murderer! The very Guide to Life you put to death! But God raised him from the dead. . . . Therefore repent and turn, that your sins may be wiped away. . . . 'And it shall be that should any one among the people not listen to that Prophet he shall be utterly destroyed.' . . . For you, first, God raised up his servant, and sent him to bless you, by turning each one of you from his wicked ways." (Acts 3:14, 15, 19, 26.) The gist of all this is that the great purpose of God in sending his Son into the world was to lead Israel into blessedness by leading them out of their sins, but they had utterly rejected this purpose of God and had through their High Priest "put to death" "the very Guide to Life." Just as through that same high priest they had from year to year on their Day of Atonement slain Jehovah's goat they had now through him murdered Jehovah's "Servant," "his Holy and Righteous One." But God had not abandoned his purpose to save them. On the contrary he had raised Jesus up again by bringing him back from the dead, and now he was offered to them afresh as their bearer and bearer-away of sins. In direct view of his living perfections, his holiness and righteousness, it was theirs to look upon their own sins and recognize their utter badness, theirs to repent of them all, confessing and renouncing them, and seeing them borne away through the di-

vine forgiveness as, in symbol, they had been borne away from year to year by the goat for Azazel.

Some distinctions must be made here. From the standpoint of man's part in it the death of Jesus was the worst and most indefensible of all murders. And there is really no other standpoint from which to view it. Jesus himself had no part in it except to endure it, under tremendous protest, as I have elsewhere pointed out. His Father strengthened him for and during the ordeal, by keeping his heart unalterably set upon that testimony for the truth which it was his to utter and to live. It was a deed of unutterable wickedness, which God in his respect for the human freedom established by himself, could not avert. Every effort of Jesus himself to avert it was also an effort of his Father put forth through him. No other view whatever can be entertained without making our Father and his a partner beforehand in the most shameful crime which has ever blackened the pages of human history. There is no contradiction to all this in the words of Jesus—"I lay down my life—to receive it again. No one took it from me, but I lay it down of myself." His was not the death of the suicide, but of the martyr. These words simply represent that splendid sense of victory in defeat which arose in his mind in connection with his complete entrance into the will of his Father, and that vision of the final outcome of all with which his

Father cheered his heart. (Jno. 10:17, 18; Heb. 12:2.)

The death of Jesus, therefore, did not procure forgiveness for men. If anything could have made their forgiveness impossible, any one but Jesus himself would have said it was that. As it was, his first prayer on the cross, uttered, probably, while one of the nails was plowing its way through his flesh and bones into the wood, was—"Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing." Doubt has been thrown upon the authenticity of this prayer, but it is certainly in full harmony with all the facts of the occasion, as well as with the spirit of Jesus himself.

What, then, in the mercy of God has the death of Jesus, joined with the fact of his resurrection, accomplished for our race? This. It has done more than all the wickedness of men besides to drive home to their consciences the fact that they are sinners in need of the salvation of God. It did this at Pentecost, has done it ever since, is doing it now, and will continue to do it, until the last sin of all has stood indefensible in its presence. This also it has done, or men might have committed suicide one after another like Judas—it has revealed that love of God which endures all things that it may forgive all things, and bears with all sorts of sin, that it may save us from them all. It not only brings to conviction of sin; it brings also to repentance, that is to say,

to the confession and abandonment of sin, and to such a trust in the mercy and love of God as inspires to the largest possible acquisition of his whole mind and character. In short, the sending of Jesus into the world by his father and ours to endure the death of the cross, so commends his love to us that our love of sin breaks down before the vision, and we accept and embrace his righteousness in its stead, to find it transforming us and building itself into our whole character and life. We know that those who slew him ought to have accepted his guidance out of their sins into the righteousness of the Kingdom of God at once, and without reddening their hands with his blood. We know ourselves to be of the same race and character as they. We call their crime our own, and, fleeing from our guilt of the cross, we "draw near boldly to the Throne of Love" to find there, "the pity and love" we need. (Heb. 4:16.)

Finally, it is not the Jesus who died that is the Savior of our race. He offered himself to his people to be their Savior and through them, the Savior of all men besides. But they rejected and crucified him. It is not Jesus in our mortal flesh who is our Savior. Paul took in this fact and wrote—"If we have known Christ as a man in the flesh, yet now we do so no longer." (2 Cor. 5:16.) The Jesus who is our Savior is he who was raised from the dead and placed by his God and Father "above all Angels and Arch-

angels of every rank and above every name that can be named." (Eph. 1:20, 21.) Yet both are one. "He who went down is the same as he who went up—up beyond the highest heaven, that he might fill all things with his presence. And he it is who gave to the Church Apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastors and teachers." (Eph. 4:10, 11.)

"To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his own blood in his utmost love—and he made us 'a Kingdom of Priests in the service of God,' his Father!—to him be ascribed glory and dominion forever. Amen." (Rev. 1:5, 6.)

XVI

JESUS THE MEDIATOR AND INTERCESSOR

The mediator is the middleman in any transaction where the principals concerned do not find it convenient or possible to meet each other in person. There are various middlemen, bearing a variety of names and discharging a variety of functions in trade and commerce. Barristers and attorneys are the middlemen of the courts of law, where the principals in each case stand in the background under the name of clients. The middlemen of sovereigns and sovereign states go under such titles as plenipotentiaries and ambassadors. These are servants who have been given full authority to act on behalf of their sovereign masters.

A second sort of mediator or middleman is the arbiter or umpire, who is chosen jointly by both the parties in a given dispute, contest or competition, to say what is fair and equal between them in the case. He may have much work in bringing his principals to see and conform to the requirements of righteousness, particularly where their difference has become a quarrel, and

a dogged obstinacy has been developed on one side or both.

The office of the intercessor is quite closely akin to that of the ambassador and arbiter, and its functions are very often involved in the work of these. The intercessor pleads with one person or power on behalf of another. If he is in the place of an arbiter he may be compelled to plead with each of his clients to give due consideration to the other's claims, and to assume the place and attitude required both by the facts of the case and the entirely friendly agreement and relationship which they have in contemplation.

Either ambassador or arbiter may easily find himself in personal peril solely on account of his faithful discharge of the duties of his position. The more he pleads for the rights of the case which he is representing, the more offensive will he make himself to the party who is determined to have his own way, right or wrong. If he persists in doing his whole duty, he may even lose his life, in spite of the fact that his person is very properly considered inviolable.

According to New Testament thought Jesus holds both offices. He is a mediator, and he is an intercessor. He is God's Servant. Then he is the Servant who was sent to men with God's message. He is also represented as clothed with sovereign powers, and as being in some sense the vicegerent, as well as the ambassador, of

Heaven. This is quite natural, for the ambassador is always a vicegerent to the full extent of the work which it is his to do on behalf of his country or his sovereign. These writers tell us, too, that he pleads, as well as demands, seeking to move by persuasion and by personal influence, as well as by that awe which infinite authority is calculated to inspire.

So he speaks for God to men. He is also represented as speaking for men to God. He is, therefore, doubly an intercessor, and seems at times rather an arbiter than an ambassador pure and simple. He is as much devoted to the welfare of men as to the unfolding purpose of God.

In his illustrations of the Kingdom of Heaven Jesus represents that Kingdom as "a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid again, and then, in his delight, went and sold all that he had and bought that field; and again as a merchant in search of choice pearls, who, finding one of great value, went and sold everything that he had, and bought it." (Matt. 13: 44-46.) From the viewpoint of these he set forth "the Kingdom" as capable of becoming the personal possession of "a merchant" or "a man." If this "merchant" and "man" do not stand for Jesus himself, which is doubtful, then they represent that whole class of seekers after the highest and best, who, through all the centuries from the first, have seen in what Jesus bore with him from Heaven to earth, the richest

treasures of their kind ever brought within human reach. This interpretation harmonizes well with such words of Paul as—"God's hidden Truth, even Christ himself, in whom all treasures of wisdom and knowledge lie hidden. . . . For in Christ the Godhead in all its fullness dwells incarnate, and by your union with him, you also are filled with it." (Col. 2:2, 9.)

When Jesus wished to specify or particularize at this point he emphasized two things—truth and life. Before Pilate at the last he was the King of the truth, with everyone who was on the side of truth listening to his voice. (Jno. 18:37.) Those who were constant to his message found out the truth, and the truth made them free. (Jno. 8:32.) "His sheep listened to his voice, he knew them, and they followed him; and he gave them Immortal Life." (Jno. 10:27, 28.) It was thus that he spoke of those whom he attracted and inspired. But there was another class which he addressed in terms of rebuke and denunciation—"You refuse to come to me to have Life." (Jno. 5:40.) "It is because I speak the truth to you that you do not believe me. You are children of your Father, the Devil, and you are determined to do what your father loves to do. He was a murderer from the first, and did not stand by the truth, because there was no truth in him." (Jno: 10:44, 45.)

Coming forth from the Father he bore his message in his own person as well as upon his

lips. The demands of this message were peremptory. The truth and the life were the riches of a divinely created manhood, which was produced in every one who entered into union with him by yielding himself up to the will of God as he did. Entering thus into God's will was entering the Kingdom of God, to be made the possessor of all its blessings—all its Truth and all its Life, as these were progressively revealed. To refuse to come into union with him thus was to commit the gravest possible offense against God. It was to turn one's back upon both his authority and the richest benefits he could offer. It was to deny one's self an infinite good, and at the same time to deny the infinite love the pleasure and honor of bestowing that good.

Jesus saw this so clearly that he could not conceal his disturbance of mind in view of it. He was deeply pained by the dishonor that was thus put upon both his Father and himself, and the peril and loss of those who involved themselves in this guilt. Here lay the sin against the Holy Spirit. It was a rejection of the good and the Holy in the fullest possible recognition of their infinite value in themselves.

Jesus made a clear distinction between this and the rejection of himself personally. That he declared could be forgiven. He could be misunderstood, and so far as men refused him their confidence and support because they did not know him for what he really was, they did it innocently.

But no man could consciously turn his back upon the true and the holy, and at the same time believe himself to be in the service of God. Knowing that he had definitely chosen falsehood instead of truth, he could not but know also that he had chosen death in place of life. To do this was to reject God in himself or directly, and not simply to reject him as he could be, and was, revealed in a human life.

Jesus was God's ambassador. But because the credentials he bore had to be translated into terms of our humanity, they could be sincerely doubted. But truth and holiness, wherever they stood clearly revealed before the eyes of any man, and whatever the thing or person in whom they inhered might be, presented an authority which was wholly divine, and were rejected, therefore, at the absolute peril of the soul. (Matt. 12:32.) It was on this account that Jesus said at the last—

“They have no excuse for their sin. . . . They have both seen and hated both me and my Father. They hated me without cause” and as “the Way and the Truth and the Life.” (Jno. 15:22, 24, 25; 14:6.) They have rejected the truth which I have brought to them, knowing it to be the truth of God and they simply would not have the Life I offered them, because it could be made theirs only through their acceptance of the Truth itself, which I announced in their hearing

and lived before their eyes. Their rejection of my Father is as complete as their rejection of myself.

Paul saw himself joined to Christ as an ambassador and perceived the double effect of his work in that capacity. As it had been with Jesus so was it with him. He was wholly devoted to God's will in the premises, and he yearned over the sinful men to whom he had been sent. He wished them saved from their rebellion and all its terrible consequences, but only on God's terms. He had no dream that these could or should be changed. It was his to present the Truth and along with it the Life. So was it also with every other apostle and evangelist whom God had associated with him in the work. The choice of accepting or rejecting the things they offered lay with those whom they addressed. And Paul saw that in many cases rejection was only too fatally easy and sure. So we find him joining his Master in quoting from Isaiah—

“Go to this nation and say—

‘You will hear with your ears without ever understanding,

And, though you have eyes, you will see without ever perceiving.’

For the mind of this nation is grown dense,

And their ears are dull of hearing,

Their eyes also have they closed;

Lest some day they should see with their eyes,

And with their ears they should hear,

And in their mind they should understand and should turn—and I should heal them.”

(Matt. 13:14, 15; Acts 28:26-27.)

We find him also voicing his vision, and his feelings thus:

“We are the fragrance of Christ ascending to God—both among those who are in the path of Salvation and among those who are in the path to Ruin. To the latter we are an odor which arises from death and tells of Death; to the former an odor which arises from life and tells of Life. But who is equal to such a task?” (II Cor. 2:15, 16.)

It is to Paul that we owe the clearest possible statement of the way in which the office of intercessor found itself linked with the work of the ambassador or mediator, in his own case. After showing how the mediatorship of Jesus had already established itself as a transforming and re-creating agency among men, and declaring of every one who had thus been brought into union with Christ, that “he is a new creation—a new being”—he continues—

“But all this is the work of God who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the Ministry of Reconciliation. . . . It is, then, on Christ’s behalf that we are acting as ambassadors, God, as it were, appealing to you through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf—Be reconciled to God.” (II Cor. 5:17, 18, 20.)

To intercede is to entreat one person or set of persons on behalf of another. Here "Christ" and "God" are the persons on behalf of whom the entreaties or intercessions are represented as being made; while the persons entreated, or interceded with, are sinful men, the end aimed at being their reconciliation to God. It was God who was appealing and imploring, and he was doing this through men whom he had already reconciled to himself. To fit these men for this work, he had brought them through their union with Christ into such active participation with his saving desire and purpose, that they had definitely joined him in his love for their unsaved fellow-men, his yearnings over them and his efforts to reconcile them in both character and life to himself. Thus Paul and his co-workers found themselves in the place of "God's fellow-workers!" (1 Cor. 3:9.) They were God's ambassadors to men and God's intercessors among men.

Here it can be seen very plainly that the office and work of the intercessor grows directly out of God's love for sinful men. Their sinfulness had made them blind so that they could not see, unless their eyes were opened; deaf, so that they could not hear, unless their ears were unstopped; and callous of heart, so that they could not feel, unless their hearts were touched in some sovereign way. Then Jesus came as the great physician—ambassador, to open blind eyes by means of a stupendous vision, to unstop deaf ears by a touch

of the divine finger, and to melt human hearts by the oxy-hydrogen flame of divine love. And Jesus the ambassador became also Jesus the intercessor, who pleaded for God with men, entreating them not to give further pain to God's heart by longer persistence in the sins which were burdening them more and more, and would bring upon them overwhelming disaster. "Come to me, all ye who toil and are burdened and I will give you rest!" (Matt. 11:28). My Father sent me to you because he loves you, and he looks upon you as his straying sons and daughters and asks you home. And Paul, as I have already shown, looked upon himself and his fellow evangelists as associate ambassadors and intercessors, who had been called upon to take the place upon the earth which Jesus had occupied while here in the flesh; so that they were doing their work "on Christ's behalf," as well as for God.

Here, then, we have God, Jesus and the apostles and evangelists of the primitive Christian Church all set forth as pleading with men to become reconciled to God by embracing the life of obedience to truth to which he has always been inviting them. To this we may add two words. The first is this. These agencies are all still at work upon the unfinished task. And the second is that another name must be added, namely, that of the Holy Spirit, who Jesus declared would come to guide into all truth, on the one hand, and to "bring conviction to the world as to Sin, and as

to Righteousness and as to Judgment" on the other. So the purely divine unites with divinely filled men in the work of interceding or pleading with men still unsaved to "be reconciled to God." Such is the work of intercession man-ward. Can we discover its nature God-ward, if, indeed, there is an intercession with God for men, as well an intercession with men for God.

That there is an authorized intercession with God on the behalf of men is a clear teaching of the New Testament. Such intercessions find their roots in human love and the divine love alike. To love is to wish well, and to wish well is to ask all besides one's self to aid in making it well with the one who is loved. The more widely, therefore, love is diffused the more intercession will move out towards universality. This is the thought which Tennyson expressed when he wrote in his "Passing of Arthur"—

"For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by golden chains about the feet of God."

And if God pleads with men why should not men plead with God? If God needs the co-operation of men and must find intercessors to secure it for him, why should we find it different on our side?

Taking up now some New Testament passages

on this subject I may begin with Paul's word to Timothy for the churches of which he had been given the oversight:

“First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving should be offered for every one, especially for kings and all who are in high positions.” (I Tim. 2: 1, 2.) Quite naturally he coupled with this the assurance—

“This will be good and acceptable in the eyes of God our Savior, whose will it is that every one should be saved, and attain to a full knowledge of the Truth.” (1 Tim. 2:3.) The God who pleads with all men to be reconciled to him must surely wish to save them, and delight to be asked to do anything towards that end.

Next I would call attention to Paul's own intercessions on behalf of the membership of the churches which he had established or was superintending. He assured the Colossians that “from the very day” on which Epaphras “told us of the love with which the Spirit has inspired you, we have never ceased praying for you, or asking that you may possess that deeper knowledge of the will of God, which comes through all spiritual wisdom and insight.” (Col. 1:8, 9.) His intercession for his Ephesian fellow-believers were most deeply spiritual:

“I kneel before the Father—from whom all ‘fatherhood’ in heaven and on earth derives its name—and pray that, in proportion to the wealth

of his glory, he will strengthen you with his power by breathing his Spirit into your inmost soul, so that the Christ, through your faith, may make his home within your hearts in love; and I pray that you, now firmly rooted and established, may, with all Christ's people, have the power to comprehend in all its width and length and height and depth and to understand—though it surpasses all understanding—the love of Christ; and so be filled to the full with God himself." (Eph. 3: 14-19.)

There is here the strongest resemblance to those intercessions of Jesus in the Upper Room, with which John has made us acquainted:

"I intercede for them. . . . Holy Father, keep them. . . . I do not ask thee to take them out of the world but to keep them from Evil. . . . It is not only for them that I am interceding, but also for those who believe on me through their Message, that they all may be one—that as thou, Father, art in union with me and I with thee, so they also may be in union with us—and so the world may believe that thou hast sent me as thy Messenger." (Jno. 17:9, 11, 15, 20, 21.) It should also be remembered here that Paul asked the prayers of his fellow-believers for himself, as did also the writer of the letter to the Hebrews. (I Thess. 5:25; II Thess. 3:1; Col. 4:3; Heb. 13:18.) The earliest of all the Christian writings which have reached us enjoins upon all believers mutual confession of sins

and mutual intercession. (Jas. 5:16.) And when Jesus was passing into his agony of supplication for himself in Gethsemane, did he not ask Peter and James and John to watch with him? And would not their praying for themselves have been at least a half-voiced praying for him? Was not this what he meant when he asked Peter chidingly—"What! could none of you watch with me for one hour?" (Matt. 26:40.)

There are some other passages touching the mediatorship of Jesus himself to which I should call attention here. They represent it as a continuous heavenly and earthly fact, and are to be found in I Timothy and Hebrews.

"There is but one God, and one Mediator between God and men—the man, Christ Jesus." (I Tim. 2:5.) It is well to note that here "Christ Jesus" is described, not as the Son of God, but as "the Man." We may be sure that this fact is not without significance.

The passages in Hebrews set before us the thing which he mediates or brings from God to man. It is "the Covenant" (8:6), "a new Covenant." (9:15; 12:24.) Nor are we left in any doubt as to the nature of this covenant. "This is the Covenant that I will make with the People of Israel—

"After those days, says the Lord
'I will impress my laws on their minds

And will inscribe them on their hearts;
And I will be their God
And they shall be my people, etc.' ”

Now to mediate this Covenant as an actual life for men the Son of God necessarily “became a man like other men,” and showed once for all that our humanity can receive God’s will in such a fashion as to be governed by it at least as far as it is known, and thus that the Sons of men may be made the Sons of God in deed and in truth. So the life which Jesus mediated was the life of the children of God. Paul and John went the full length of clearly stating this fact.

“ ‘And I will be a father to you,
And you shall be my sons and daughters,’
Says the Lord, the Ruler of all.” (2 Cor. 6:18.)

“Dear friends, we are God’s children now.” (I Jno. 3:2.) It may be added here that it was his love for his human brothers and his complete obedience to his Father, or, in other words, his unswerving faithfulness as ambassador and intercessor, with a view to the fullest possible communication of this life, that Jesus gave over his body to the death of the cross. So it is truly set down by apostolic pens that he died “on the behalf of men” and “on account of their sins.” For it was their sins which slew him, and only his faithfulness unto death could have supplied them with the object lesson which they needed, or the vision of the Life in its full expression. It is this same

human faithfulness and obedience unto death, which is represented by all that New Testament phraseology, which is used to set forth the cleansing and redeeming power of the "blood" of Jesus. It was a further vision of a similar kind which led him, who before had taken "charge of the clothes of those who were murdering Stephen," to write of personally "supplementing the afflictions endured by the Christ, for the sake of his Body, the Church"; and a later church father to declare that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." It is in this way that the bruising of Jesus was our healing. It is in this way also that "Jesus Christ, the Righteous, is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world besides." (I Jno. 2:2.) Jesus overthrows sin by that divine force of persuasion which stands forever associated with his unlimited devotion to both God and men. "If, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him by the death of his Son, much more, now that we have become reconciled, shall we be saved by virtue of his Life." (Rom. 5:10.) The end aimed at was not God's reconciliation to us, but our reconciliation to God; and when we come to the consideration of the means, we find that if the life of Jesus cannot now be rightly viewed apart from his death, it is still truer that his death cannot be properly thought of apart from his life.

Approaching from this viewpoint the subject

of intercession, I may call attention to three passages. The first is Romans 8:34: "He who died for us is Christ Jesus!—or rather it was he who was raised from the dead, and who is now at God's right hand and is even pleading on our behalf"; the second is Hebrews 7:25—"That is why he is able to save perfectly those who come to God through him, living forever, as he does, to intercede on their behalf"; while—"My children, I am writing to you to keep you from sinning; but if any one should sin, we have one who can plead for us with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous" (I Jno. 2:1)—is the third. The thing contemplated in each and all of these is complete salvation from a life of conscious sinning to one of unbroken obedience and devotion to God, even in the midst of the sorest trials and sufferings, which the malice of bad men can invent and apply; and the teaching is that the pleadings of the living Jesus are mightily helpful in this direction.

When we ask for some more precise word as to how and why, we are met by such a one as this—"So, also, the Spirit supports us in our weakness. We do not know even how to pray as we should; but the Spirit himself pleads for us in sighs that can find no utterance. Yet he who searches all our hearts knows what the Spirit's meaning is, because the pleadings of the Spirit for Christ's People are in accordance with his will." (Rom. 8:26, 27.) Are we not here taught a doctrine which modern evolutionary philosophy has begun

the serious work of propounding? Deep calls to deep in God himself, while he labors towards self-realization in all portions of his vast creation. All other loves and yearnings are but local expressions of those which in him are infinite and all pervading. The love and yearning of Jesus himself are local and human, and derive their whole saving power from that infinite source which he named "The Living Father who sent me." (Jno. 6:44, 57.)

The final word, therefore, is this. All mediation and intercession, the aim of which is the increase and absolute ultimate triumph of righteousness in every being and every relationship existing in our vast universe, moves forth from God and back to God, as a portion of that long toil which he has made his in the interests at the same time of himself and of all besides. And every being who is consciously taken up into the task may know that he is God's fellow-worker towards his own self-realization, the self-realization of his fellow men, and, through these, towards the self-realization of God himself.

"That God may be all in all" is the unceasing cry of all the ages, till "the end."

XVII

JESUS AND BIBLICAL ETHICS

What a man thinks of his Bible from the viewpoint of ethical codes must largely depend upon the theory he holds as to the main purpose of God in blessing the world with the book. If he believes that God's chief intention in the matter was to bestow upon humanity, once and for all, a complete set of rules for our guidance in every particular of every relationship of our increasingly complex lives, he will consult the book continually with the expectation of finding within it the precise directions he needs in connection with each step that he takes. If, on the other hand, he looks upon his Bible as the principal vehicle of that revelation of himself to men, as Creator, Upholder, Moral Governor, and Savior, which God saw was absolutely essential to their highest development and well-being; and as containing only such moral precepts as from time to time represented the growing needs of the people, through whose seers this revelation was given; he will, consciously or unconsciously, do these two things in his own interests: First, he will study the book principally to learn all it can tell him about God, particularly as he stands revealed in the life

and teaching of his Son, Jesus Christ. And secondly, he will gather from the book all he can find there of a nature suitable for his guidance in the affairs of his twentieth-century life; and when he sees it failing him at some scores of points, he will look into the laws of his own church and country, in the full belief that the same God who guided the Israelite is guiding individuals and peoples still, by giving them new laws suitable to their various additional requirements.

Few, if any, to-day actually hold any other position toward the Bible than the second of those which I have just described. The debates which have arisen over the question of the Bible and ethical codes have grown out of the fact that some men still think that they regard the first position I have set forth as the correct one, though they do not really so regard it at all.

First of all, then, let me say that if we could find a man who really holds that the Bible contains this complete and perfect code, we should have in our presence an individual capable of believing that all necessary original thinking on questions of moral conduct was done by a few members of one small family of mankind, before the end of the second century A.D. The Bible is a product of the Israelitish mind as divinely enlightened. This process of divine illumination on the foregoing theory came to an end with the completion of the New Testament. This means that from that date to the end of human history

there could exist no need for, and therefore no experience of, such divine illumination as was imparted to and enjoyed by the seers of the Old and New Testaments. The question does not lie here between the illumination experienced by Jesus and that enjoyed by the Church from the day of Pentecost onward, but between the illumination bestowed upon the Church from Pentecost to the end of the apostolic period, and that experienced by the same church from the end of the apostolic period to the close of the Christian era. For Jesus, according to John, distinctly informed him and his fellow apostles that he had not taught them everything, but that they would themselves enjoy illumination by the same Spirit that had made him the teacher they had found him to be. By that Spirit and not by himself, they would be guided into all they needed to know. Is there anyone who really believes that the church during this brief period actually faced and permanently settled every question with a moral aspect that would become a practical one before the end?

When one speaks of questions with a moral aspect he opens up a large field. The world of thought and action was once divided by Christian thinkers into two departments, which were designated as sacred and secular. This is no longer done with any definiteness, for a certain divine illumination has made it clear that thought and action along the "secular" lines demand the guid-

ance of conscience and the approval of God, and must, therefore, be regarded as also distinctly "sacred." God is king of the whole life, or he is no king at all.

In morals the personal equation is one of no small dimensions. It can be seen from the standpoint of the choice of one's life-work, and it is very obtrusive sometimes in connection with the questions of foods and recreations. It is generally recognized, for instance, that some men must be preachers of the gospel, or lead a life of continuous rebellion against God. It is also believed that some of these preachers must go to foreign lands with their message, or live under the same condemnation. It is held, too, that, considered as a class, each of these men knows for himself, apart from and often against the opinion and wish of his fellow-men, that he is "called" to this service. Carey is a leading example. But whence came Carey's call? From what ethical code? "Quench not the Spirit" would guide him after the call reached him. But no word of the New Testament laid upon William Carey missionary service as his life-work. God spoke to him directly, as truly as he did to the apostle Paul, or any ancient prophet.

I shall not tarry over the fact that in matters of foods and recreations the duty of abstinence is often determined by purely personal considerations, which no ethical code could by any possibility deal with in a satisfactory way. "Thou

shalt" reaches one man and "Thou shalt not" another in connection with the same act. It is a matter of tradition, if not of history, that John Wesley quit the pursuit of mathematics to avoid sinning against his own soul. The Spirit of God working through intellect and conscience, and often mysteriously instructing men, still illuminates and guides the individual. There can, in the very nature of things, be no complete ethical code for the government of any individual life. And God's plan for governing the race is, to an extent not generally recognized, that of dealing with its members individually and directly. Ethical codes, therefore, do not deal with the individual as an individual, so much as they meet him as a member of the social organism.

Is, then, the ethical code of the Bible in all its particulars fitted to govern men of every clime and age to the end of human history? And is it complete? In other words, does it provide for every phase of human activity that has called, or will call, for righteous legislative control?

The first fact calling for our attention here is that, when one is asked for the code we are now to discuss definitely, he can only reply that its various items may be found scattered through the various documents of which the Bible is composed, and that they cannot be codified, or set forth as a distinct body of laws, without the expenditure of much labor. The Bible is not an ethical code. It is something higher. It con-

tains our most glorious revelation of God. Associated with that in the volume, however, are many ethical precepts. But any man who attempts the task of codifying these will find himself compelled to do much sifting, for Christ and his apostles dealt rather freely with at least some portions of the Mosaic legislation. One of the latter, Paul, wrote of Christ that he "broke down the barrier that separated Jew and Gentile and in his human nature put an end to the cause of enmity between them—the Law with its injunctions and ordinances." (Eph. 2:15.) To this he adds in another place, "He cancelled the bond which was against us—the bond which consisted of ordinances—and which was directly hostile to us. He has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross." (Col. 2:15.)

There has been much debate as to how far Paul really went in these statements and others which might be cited. But it can scarcely be doubted that he regarded his Lord as having, by his earthly life and his law of Love, not only set aside the elaborate ritual of Mosaism, but superseded the whole moral code also, through the substitution for it of the single inclusive principle of love. Consequently we find that his own chief aim was neither to master the ethical code of the past, nor to produce a perfect one for the guidance of himself and his fellow-believers, but to build up both himself and them in the knowledge of Christ. He saw that "Christ has brought

Law to an end, so that righteousness may be obtained by every one who believes in him" (Rom. 10:4), and was a legalist no longer. He turned from the Law to the Life, to find a wealth both of information and of motive touching righteousness to which he would have otherwise been a stranger. The least we can say is that the ethical code in which he had been reared became to Paul a poor, dwarfed thing, big enough still to awe the man who loved transgression, but too unenlightened and feeble to help greatly the Christian believer in his pursuit of the holiness of his Master. (I Tim. 1:9.)

So the ethical code of the Old Testament met with disparagement at the hands of the most intellectual and voluminous of the New Testament writers. We cannot present the whole truth, however, without stating besides, that he disparaged it only when he compared it with the one positively and resplendently perfect human life. Considered in itself, he both valued and used it. His letters contain many ethical precepts, original and quoted. He knew that the church needed them. He even accepted for his Gentile converts the regulations passed by the Jerusalem council for their guidance, though soon afterwards he assured at least one of his churches that the man who ignored them with a free conscience in a certain particular showed a more vigorous and intelligent faith than they did who obeyed at this point. (1 Cor. 8:6-8.)

I should now attempt to define the term ethical code, for it is probably at this point the chief difficulty has arisen. An ethical code is a body of precepts or laws touching conduct, of such a sort that they make an appeal to the conscience. Every law which makes this appeal belongs to the ethical code of the man who receives it. The appeal arises from the recognized righteousness which the law represents. The law may deal with any phase of human life whatever—religious, political, social, sanitary, or sexual. All law that through its apparent rightness appeals to the conscience, is ethical. All legal codes are ethical codes so far forth as they represent righteousness. To hold any other ground is to introduce confusion into both thought and life. Sanitary laws, for instance, are as sacred, though not as fundamental, as religious laws. Man's original and supreme relationship is Godward, and has to do with himself as distinguished from the material body, which he now inhabits and uses as his instrument for the accomplishment of his work in this world of matter. But he owes to his body, as Paul points out, the duty before God of nourishing, cherishing, guarding, and controlling it, not only as his own abode and instrument but also as the very temple of God himself. Every human relationship is sacred and every duty moral. The Mosaic legislation in all its phases rests firmly upon the recognition of this fact. "Thus saith Jehovah" is its very keynote. It may be further said,

too, that the voice of conscience and the recognized voice of God never conflict, because the former is so constituted that of necessity it makes itself an echo of the latter. It is only when the voice of God is not recognized by it, or has not yet reached it, that conscience directs into wrong paths. The voice of conscience, therefore, whatever else it may stand for, represents all that men have learned of the will of God, and when God speaks to men at all, he wakes up their consciences to speak for him. This is true for all the ages. To forget or ignore it is to enter into darkness and pass on to disaster. Consequently all legislation which is recognized as righteous is looked upon as a gift of God to those who receive it, and for the time being at least men rest and rejoice in it.

God legislates for each time and people through the best combination of intellect and conscience then and there available. So all divine laws are at the same time human, though it is by no means true, on the other hand, that all human laws are also divine. Paul saw how other peoples besides his own were met in this matter, and provided with an illumination and guidance, which they often sadly misprized. (Rom. 1:19-21; 2:14, 15.) And one of the things we are coming to see clearly is that, as God dealt with these, so he dealt with Israel itself. "At many times and in many ways . . . by the Prophets and then by his Son" (Heb. 1:1) he brought their intellect and con-

science to the recognition and assertion of higher and wider applications of the great principles which should govern all human activities. Progress is one law of our race which never grows old, never dies, and never ceases its operations. Many a legislative enactment dies through being superseded by a better, or because men march out of sight of it, leaving it behind to perish by the wayside. Progress is the fruit of God's working in men and men's working with God.

We may now ask how the ethical code of the Bible has fared in this respect. Has it had the experience of all other codes? Or does it stand forth to-day as the one magnificent exception? It is no part of my present undertaking to deal with this question exhaustively. All I need to do is to cite one or two instances in which Israel's ethical code has been left behind. To begin with, then, our Lord dismissed the laws of Mosaism governing divorce and the requital of injuries, and also the one touching oaths. The sanitary and land laws of Israel, good as they were upon the whole, were left behind in a body by the followers of Christ, and that in spite of the fact that the first great leaders among them were Jews. Not even circumcision was allowed to survive. For a little while blood and the flesh of strangled animals, along with foods offered in sacrifice to idols, were forbidden to Christians; but almost at once, as I have already pointed out, Paul attacked the last-named regulation, and be-

fore long they all passed into oblivion, though the word in regard to them in the beginning was, "We have, therefore, decided, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit," or "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." At this point New Testament legislation has been dismissed along with that of the Old Testament. It is interesting to note, too, that instead of a "Thou shalt not enslave thy fellow-man" in the Decalogue, a law immediately follows that code permitting slavery under restrictions, that is to say, licensing it. Jesus never called up that license law for condemnation in the days of his flesh. His apostles, too, worked under it and other like legislation, with never a thought of its replacement by universal manumission, so far as we can tell. And no blame is due them because of this. License law is the beginning of prohibition, and those who censure it are simply out of patience with it, perhaps not too soon, because it is not also the end. Yet after much painful toil Christendom climbed at length to the place where, so far as she herself is concerned, she left behind and below her, not only that law itself, but also all Paul's and Peter's inspired regulations for Christian slaves and their Christian masters. Every intelligent man knows these things, and knowing them believes, whether he realizes it or not, that some portions of the ethical code of the New Testament, as well as of the Old, were never adopted to be permanent.

I may now deal with the other question which

I have undertaken to discuss. Is the ethical code of the Bible complete? In other words, does it provide for every phase of human activity that has called, or will call, for righteous legislative control?

In answering the first question I have also answered this, but not pointedly. I shall, therefore, proceed to deal with it specifically, with the aid of two illustrative instances. At the Anglican Synod in New Brunswick, recently, one of the rural deans took issue with the bishop on the question of the prohibition of the liquor traffic, grounding his argument upon the fact that this traffic comes in for no condemnation in the New Testament. We must confess that the rural dean was correct in this premise of his argument, and, as I have already pointed out, he might with perfect truthfulness have added that the New Testament is equally deficient when we come to the institution of slavery. Nevertheless the modern command, "Thou shalt not enslave thy fellow," is felt today to be quite as sacred and binding as "Thou shalt not steal" or "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Besides this, all who are even fairly read in the history of the struggle against slavery as an institution know how the Bible was used by the pro-slavery advocates in its favor. Their argument was that an institution which the Bible licensed could never be sanely regarded as marked out by God for destruction. The thing they did not know was

that God did not complete his work as lawgiver in Bible times, but was working still through the intellects and consciences of his own, toward the annihilation of every institution and habit which is opposed to the highest welfare of our race. The rural dean in Fredericton was walking in a like darkness. And when one of the lay members of the Synod retorted that he did not care whether the Scott or Canada Temperance Act was in the Bible or not, he showed his faith in the fact that God is guiding our civilization to-day as really as he guided either Israel or the Christian Church at the beginning. One need only add that when at length Christendom, as a whole, finds itself living under an ethical code, one of the most recent additions to which will be "Thou shalt sell no intoxicating beverage," all the truly enlightened will rejoice together that this command also came from God in the same general manner as those previously received by our race, and that others will follow as they are needed.

That the Bible contains all truth necessary for the salvation of the soul can be gladly accepted. It may also be affirmed with the utmost confidence, that it far surpasses all other ancient writings in the richness and variety of its ethical precepts, and that the New Testament is unique in the emphasis which it lays upon love as the great governing principle in all right conduct, and the very heart of every righteous disposition. This, however, is a very different thing from the claim that

it contains an ethical code lofty enough and complete enough for the guidance in all things of the highest Christian civilization; for this claim virtually denies God's immutable law of progress, and a host of incontestable facts besides.

In regard to those fresh additions to our ethical code, which we need from time to time to guide us in connection with the various phases of our advancing civilization, and which represent a righteousness too large to have been set forth by any seer or apostle of the older time, we need entertain no worries. God himself takes care of these, and they always come to us when the time is ripe, like the morning sun when he breaks through black thunder clouds to bless us with his beams. On the other hand, the problem how we may decide as to precisely what is permanent, and what merely temporary, in the ethical code of the book we love most, is not an easy one. Mistakes have been made and will continue to be made here. Still we have, as qualified to hearten us for this task, every divine fact which God has been able to place within the range of our limited vision. The Christ life looms larger as the years pass. Those perfect religious and moral principles, consisting of "the first of all the commandments . . . and the second," are still with us. On our lips is the word Immanuel, and, whether we realize it or not, God himself with all his righteousness, his wisdom, and his love, enswathes and possesses us, as the very life of our life.

When modern science was born some men were

pagan enough to think that it had proved that, after his work of creation, God either emptied himself out of the physical universe, to give free play to a certain set of physical laws, or stayed on only to play the poor part of an observer. Theologians helped to overthrow that notion, but some of the theologians themselves still clung to an old notion of their own that, after God had got himself seers and lawgivers from among a small, but wonderful family of Asiatics, that was, through the longer portion of the period both idolatrous and corrupt, and so blind and rebellious at its close, that it had to be scourged out of its territories and chased to the ends of the earth, he retired from his active government of men, leaving them as their sole and sufficient written guide to the end, only the ethical code given them through these same splendid old-time Asiatics. It is well for us that these Asiatics themselves entertained no such idea, and that we are beginning to understand our Christ and his apostles at this point. To be without God in the world, even when one has him in the church, is to live as a pagan, and usually as a pessimist, with no large and worthy hopes. But the new day has dawned, which is to reveal more and more clearly the fact that in Jesus Christ are hid all the further treasures of legislative wisdom and knowledge, which our race will call for in its long climb towards perfection.

A brief chapter will now be devoted to the further discussion of this one point.

XVIII

JESUS AND THE PERFECT ETHICAL CODE

I shall begin at the beginning. What is this perfect ethical code? Is it a thing of the past, present or distant future? And what relation, if any, does Jesus bear to it?

In answering these questions one may begin negatively and say that an ethical code is not a set of ethical principles, any one of which may be applied to a variety of actions without actually having been made binding in connection with any of them. Legislators sometimes proceed by way of resolution and the affirmation of great principles, as Disraeli attempted to do when he made that famous "leap in the dark," which resulted in the passage of the British Reform Bill in 1867; but they never produce even the first item of a code until they begin to make one or more of these principles binding upon men, in connection with one or more of their various activities. When a few years ago the Canadian government at Ottawa affirmed by a large majority that the prohibition of the liquor traffic was desirable for the whole Dominion, they added nothing whatever to the code of the country, and

the traffic remained as free as before. The parliamentary affirmation that no man ought to sell intoxicating drinks, must be changed into the affirmation that no man shall do it without making himself liable to certain serious penalties, before it can take its place in the ethical code of the state or church which the parliament governs.

Apart from the nature of their sanctions or penalties, there is practically no difference between a legal code and an ethical one, for each represents righteousness as righteousness is understood to apply to the various relations of human life at the time and place to which the code belongs. Such a code, therefore, may represent the authority of a state or a church, or of both acting together or supplementing each other. Any particular code of laws is ethical in reality precisely as far as it represents what is right in itself between one human being and another, and between each human being and God in their multiplied relationships. And any code to attain perfection must possess two characteristics. It must represent absolutely nothing but righteousness, on the one hand, and it must represent all of righteousness, on the other. It must contain nothing either false or evil, and it must be complete. It must condemn everything that ought to be condemned, and enjoin everything that ought to be commanded and done. As long as it is lacking in either direction it remains imperfect.

Does this mean that the perfect ethical code can be realized and applied only in connection with a perfect human society? One can suppose the existence of a person capable of producing this perfect code, long before its highest portions could be anywhere applied, but that such a person would actually produce it at such a time is extremely doubtful; for there is an economy in the moral as well as the physical government of this planet, which makes it pretty certain that no ethical instrument will be forthcoming until it represents an existing need. But, on the other hand, the moment any law is actually required, it is sure to find a framer. Our business just now, however, is not to speculate, but to look into facts. What relation then does Jesus bear to the perfect ethical code?

Our first answer is that he did not frame it, and never attempted that task. Like other wise men he simply dealt with conditions as he found them. He had no opportunity for giving laws to men as members of the state, because his fellow-citizens rejected him. Not even one city stood by him. The moment his aims were understood he was pronounced an impossibility in politics. This happened everywhere, until he was adjudged by the rulers of his nation worthy of only one place—a cross outside Jerusalem between two robbers, who also hung upon crosses. He gave no laws for the care of the body considered in itself—not one word on diet or medicine or surgery or

sanitation, though he showed a deep interest in the physical health and well-being of men. On matters connected with the training and nurture of the intellect, too, he was all but absolutely silent. He did teach that a man must consent to obey the truth which reached him, or become blind and deaf and past feeling in its presence, but he laid down no rules for school-masters and school-mistresses, or for parents interested in the intellectual development of their children. And apart from his teachings on forgiveness, he gave no hints as to what are the true methods in the treatment of criminals. Yet any human code which is to reach perfection must deal in the most thorough and exhaustive manner with all these phases of human existence.

Jesus did not even meddle with some matters which men to-day regard as of vast moral importance. Slavery and the drink habit and traffic were two of the greatest blots on the civilization of his time, but no word of his in regard to either has crossed the centuries to us. The slave we know he pitied was the bond-slave of sin. Nor did he blaze forth against political despotisms, although he counselled the twelve to avoid their spirit and cultivate instead the spirit of lowly service which he was constantly exemplifying under their gaze.

With all these facts before us it is quite clear that Jesus did not play the part of the ordinary lawgiver, but accepted the political, social and

even religious situation as he found it, and almost in its entirety. Indeed one of his definite words at the end of his career was this—"The Teachers of the Law and Pharisees now occupy the chair of Moses. Therefore, practice and lay to heart everything that they tell you." (*Matt. 23:2.*)

How is it then that Jesus has been regarded as the supreme human lawgiver by such men as Tolstoi, for instance? Because the few injunctions which he did lay upon his followers touched life in the most vital way. He was the most convinced of all believers in the principle of evolution as it applies in the realm of legislation. So he simply went to the sacred books of his nation, drew from them two sentences and declared these the one fountain of law for all time. Then he proceeded to show how obedience to these principles would mold the inward and outward life of men in a few of their phases and directions. Here again he made no mistakes, though in one or two essential particulars he went far in advance of his time. His laws forbidding every form of violence will never, because they can never, be even properly understood, until men shall at length have reached the point where they will obey them completely. Then men will also perceive the nature of his temptation to make the kingdoms of the world his own by becoming a ruler after the fashion of his own and succeeding, as well as previous, times, and honor him as the Prince of Peace

indeed. Even to-day it is confessed on every hand that he was in himself the incarnation of all the law he voiced, and more. It is also acknowledged that legislative authority resides nowhere in such strength as in the spirit and conduct of a human life. Men are so constituted that they feel their sin rebuked by righteousness itself more than by all righteous precepts, and they can never look upon it with seeing eyes, without knowing themselves called to its most earnest and devoted pursuit. The life of Jesus condemns men more sternly than his lips ever did, and woos them to the life of love more persuasively than his uttered "Follow me."

One of the laws of evolution is this. Each evolutionary process is preceded by an act or process of involution. Nothing can be drawn out that was not first put in. This is true of every great principle and every great life. Put little into a principle and you get little out of it. Put everything in and you can get everything out. The "two commandments" of Jesus represent the broadest possible generalization in the sphere of ethics, and this generalization stands incarnate in his person and conduct. Everything was put in and was there from the start, to reveal itself in its time. Part stands disclosed to-day; the rest is to follow. The relationship of Jesus, therefore, to the perfect code which we have been considering is like that of the sun to practically all the light and warmth our earth has enjoyed from

the moment it became dependent upon that orb. Out of himself and the great principles of righteousness which he enunciated all helpful legislation is slowly being evolved in Christian lands, and the process will continue until all lands are Christian and all human laws and institutions attain his own perfection.

The perfect ethical code is, therefore, not an achievement of yesterday or to-day but of all the days till the time of its predestined completion. It represents the age-long travail of the soul of Jesus, and with it He will be satisfied.

XIX

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF JESUS

The thought and activity of each age of the church of Christ are conditioned or governed by some leading idea or ideas, which must be very clearly grasped by the church historian before he can hope to place before his readers a really true account of the events and teachings with which he has to deal. This statement is quite as true when applied to the apostolic age as in connection with any other age that can be named. It would probably be quite safe to put the case much more strongly than this, for the leading minds of that first Christian age were dominated by certain words of him who spoke as no one else ever did, to an extent never since equaled. It is therefore, the clearest possible duty of the interpreter of the New Testament writings to give his first attention to this very matter.

What, then, were the large governing ideas which affected Peter and John and Paul and all the rest, while they were preaching salvation from sin to righteousness to the unsaved, and to the saved the cultivation of every Christ-like virtue?

The first of these governing ideas was the absolute assurance they had that Jesus of Nazareth

was the Christ, and that as such he had been given by God the Father himself, kingship over our whole race. They never thought of him as the great aspirant to that throne. On the contrary they saw him firmly and immovably seated upon it. They knew that his foes were many and mighty. But this made no difference. Sitting there upon his throne he was simply looking forward in his conquering might to the time when the very last of these enemies would be removed from his kingdom, and none would remain but those who gladly acknowledged his sway. He was king first of all by divine right, but this divine right was so inherent in his very character, that he would finally, and of necessity, win the suffrages of the whole race.

“The Lord said to my Master: ‘Sit on my right hand,
Till I put thy enemies as a footstool under thy feet.’

So let the whole nation of Israel know beyond all doubt, that God has made him both Lord and Christ—this very Jesus whom you crucified.” This was Peter’s word the first time he ever opened his mouth to address the public on the claims of his risen master, and it was the word that moved his audience so remarkably. “It is this Jesus whom God has exalted to his right hand, to be a guide and a Savior, to give Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins.” In these words and others like them, the fact which is given prominence is

that Jesus is a spiritual Savior, but it is not forgotten that he is exalted to God's right hand, and that men must submit to him. Paul standing in the court of Areopagus at Athens preached the need of repentance in view of our Lord's Kingly office of judge. "He has fixed a day on which he intends to 'judge the world with justice' by a man whom he has appointed—and of this he has given all men a pledge by raising that man from the dead." And Paul's first extant letter is full of this idea as it stands associated with that of our Lord's second coming. So also is the second. Both of these were written to the Thessalonians. And when four years later he wrote to the church at Corinth, he used language of the most definite sort on this point. "Then will come the end—when he surrenders the kingdom to his God and Father, having overthrown all other rule and all other authority and power. For he must reign until God 'has put all his enemies under his feet.' The last enemy to be overthrown is death; for God has placed all things under Christ's feet."

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews said: "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the very expression of his being, upholding all creation by the power of his word; and, when he had made an expiation for the sins of men, he took his seat at the right hand of God's majesty on high, having shown himself as much greater than the angels as the name that he has inherited sur-

passes theirs." This writer also heard him addressed thus:

"God is thy throne for ever and ever;
Thou, Lord in the beginning didst lay the foundation
of the earth,
And the heavens are the work of thy hands.
They shall perish but thou remainest;
As a garment they shall all grow old;
As a mantle thou wilt fold them up,
And as a garment they shall be changed,
But thou art the same, and thy years shall know no
end."

Finally, to quote no more, the author of the Apocalypse saw him gifted with all power, and bearing on his robe, and on his thigh the written words—"Kings of Kings and Lord of Lords," and followed him as he wrought out one after another his world-wide conquests.

If we wish to discover the source of this governing idea, we can easily find it in the teachings of our Lord himself. "The Father Himself does not judge any man, but has entrusted the work of judging entirely to his Son, so that all men may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. . . . And because he is the Son of Man he has also given him authority to act as judge. Do not wonder at this; for the time is coming when all that are in their graves will hear his voice, and will come out—those who have done good rising to life, and those who have lived evil lives rising for condemnation." John was responsible for this

report of Jesus's words and Matthew for the following:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Faith of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to lay to heart all the commands that I have given you; and, remember, I myself am with you every day until the close of the age.”

In direct association with this idea of Christ as actual king and judge of the race with which he had allied himself, there stood in the minds of the apostles and first believers generally, that of his very early coming to perform a stupendous work of deliverance on behalf of his own. This second idea was never very long absent from their thoughts. Indeed it may well be said to have been present there always, particularly after they became the victims of furious persecution. “Turning to God from your idols you became servants of the true and living God, and are now awaiting the return from heaven of his Son, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, our deliverer from the coming wrath,” is one of the first words Paul ever wrote to a church; and he penned it as early as the year 52. Passing over all else on the same subject, which is to be found in Paul's letters to the various churches, we may fix our attention on two writings which were produced about the time (68 or a little later) when he sealed his testimony with his blood.

I refer to the letter to the Hebrews and the Revelation of John.

Says the first writer to those whom he addresses, "You still have need of patient endurance, in order that, when you have done God's will, you may obtain the fulfillment of his promise. 'For there is indeed but a very little while ere he who is coming will have come, without delay.'" On the other hand the "Revelation of Jesus Christ" was his showing forth as ruler of the race and determiner of men's destinies. He will be speedily manifested as such, declared this writer "concerning what must shortly take place . . . for the time is near," he asserts. A part of his general message to the seven churches is—"He is coming among the clouds." Those whose eyes are open can see that the clouds now gathering such blackness are his, and that he is enthroned within them; and the time will come, when it is too late to be benefited by the sight, in which "every eye shall see him, even those who pierced him; 'and all the nations of the earth shall wail for fear of him.' So shall it be. Amen."

Carrying this thought forward into the individual messages to these churches, the writer's word to *Ephesus* was,—“I will come and remove your lamp from its place, unless you repent”; the word to *Pergamos*,—“Therefore, repent, or else I will come quickly and contend with such men (Nikolaitans, etc.) with words that will cut like a sword”; the word of *Sardis*,—“Unless you

are on the watch, I shall come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I am coming to you"; the word to *Philadelphia*,—"I will come quickly. Hold to what you have received, that no one may take your crown"; and to the church at *Laodicea*,—"All whom I love I rebuke and discipline.' Therefore be in earnest and repent. I am standing at the door and knocking, so near am I. If any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in, and will feast with him, and he shall feast with me. To him who conquers—to him I will give the right to sit beside me on my throne, as I, when I conquered, took my seat beside my Father on his throne."

One cannot but remark that here we find Peter's idea of an immediate judgment which makes its beginning at the house of God. And as this book opens so it closes. The conditions of entrance into the four-square city which John saw coming down from God out of heaven, and transforming all earthly states and surroundings, are set forth, and the things named which make admission to it impossible. But the one thing insisted upon and reiterated is that the time for the fulfillment of the prophecies is at hand. "I will come quickly," says a voice, "I bring my rewards with me, to give to each man what his actions deserve. So near am I that the wrong-doer will not have time to turn from his wrong-doing, nor the filthy-minded man from his filthiness, nor the righteous man from his righteousness, nor the holy minded

man from his holiness, before I arrive. . . . Assuredly I will come quickly" (*Rev. 22:10-12*), he repeats; and—"Amen, come, Lord Jesus," is the ready response of those whom he is addressing.

We know what the author has in mind, for he is writing in the year 68 or a little later. He is recalling the words of our Lord which Matthew recorded. He knows that his Lord is coming in connection with the destruction of the old defiled Jerusalem, to establish the holy city, New Jerusalem, and to carry on within it that rule which he has already described. His ears continually hear the words—"Assuredly I will come soon," and his heart unceasingly responds,— "Amen, come Lord Jesus," come and put thy hand publicly and openly to thy great world task, so that all mankind may see thee and bow before the greatness of thy majesty.

Every note struck by the disciple in this book was struck (in his hearing?) by the Master himself 36 or 37 years before. The world taken by surprise in the midst of its follies and excesses; the faithful servant abundantly rewarded and the unfaithful one flogged severely and allotted his place among hypocrites; the wise virgins with lamps ready and oil in their cans, and the foolish ones with no oil can at all, when the bridegroom came, are some of our Lord's pictures of the things which would occur when he came again. And as to the time of that coming, he fixed it most

definitely, with the one reservation, that about the actual day and hour, no one had at the time he was speaking, "any knowledge; not even the angels of heaven, nor yet the Son himself,—but only the Father." But he constantly taught in the most positive manner that it would take place during the life-time of some who listened to his solemn predictions concerning it.

Speaking to the twelve as he sent them forth on a tour of preaching and healing, he told them of persecutions they met with only after his resurrection and ascension, and said,—“When they persecute you in one town, escape to the next; for, I tell you, you will not have come to the end of the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.” Later when our Lord, after his transfiguration, foretold his death, and Peter rebuked him for indulging in such gloomy forebodings, he assured Peter and the rest that discipleship to him meant parting with much and suffering much, and then went on to say,—“The Son of Man is to come in his Father’s glory, with his angels, and then he ‘will give to every man what his actions deserve.’ I tell you, some of those who are standing here will not know death till they have seen the Son of Man coming into his kingdom.” We remember our Lord’s words of blistering denunciation against the leading men among his people. The ever recurring refrain of them was,—“Alas for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees, hypocrites that you are!” until at length he utters a

prediction in these words,—“You serpents and brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to the pit? That is why I send you prophets, wise men, and teachers of the law, some of whom you will crucify and kill, and some of whom you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town; in order that upon your heads may fall every drop of innocent ‘blood spilt on earth,’ from the blood of innocent Abel down to that of Zechariah, Barachiah’s son, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. All this, I tell you, will come home to the present generation.” After listening to these awful predictions of our Lord “his disciples came up to him and privately said,—‘Tell us when this will be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age.’” And sitting there upon the Mount of Olives Jesus gave them that very complete reply, which covers the whole of the 24th and 25th of Matthew, besides a part of Mark 13th and Luke 21st. Summarized, the reply was this: Before this coming of mine there will be pretended Christs; wars and warlike rumors; famines, pestilences, earthquakes; bitter persecution of you, my disciples; backslidings from me, and the preaching of my gospel throughout the world as a testimony to all nations. “Then will come the end of this age, with the foul desecration mentioned by the prophet Daniel, standing in the Holy Place (the reader must consider what this means). . . . Wherever a dead body lies, ‘there will

the vultures flock.' Immediately after the distress of those days, 'the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give her light, the stars will fall from the heavens, and the forces of the heavens will be convulsed.' Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn, when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; and he will send his angels, with a great trumpet, and they will gather his people round him from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

The disciples are listening intently, and now they break in upon him with the word,—“But when, Master? May we not know the time?” And in the same even tones of assured knowledge and full authority he continued,—“Learn the lesson taught by the fig tree. As soon as its branches are full of sap, and it is bursting into leaf, you know that summer is near. And so may you, as soon as you see all these things, know that he is at your doors. I tell you, even the present generation will not pass away, till all these things have taken place. The heavens and the earth will pass away, but my words shall never pass away.”

Nothing is clearer than the fact that the first Christians believed that our Lord's second coming, with all the power and glory and dread which he himself associated with it, would take place before that generation passed away, which listened

to his teachings and saw his mighty deeds and his mightier life.

When these disciples asked the Lord about the sign and time of his coming again, they coupled with that coming what they called "the close of the age." What did they mean by the close of the age? Unfortunately for English speaking peoples, the King James translators called this close of the age "the end of the world," and thus suggested a theme which was not in the minds of these disciples at all. What they wanted Jesus to tell them was, when the order of things then existing would give place to the new and better institutions which he had come to establish. They had very incomplete, not to say false ideas as to what the changes were to be, towards which under our Lord's tuition they had learned to look. But they were sure that he was to bring the old dying age to an end, and introduce an age which would be his own, and great and glorious like himself.

The age that was going out was to them the age of the Jew, on the one hand, and of the Gentile on the other. It was, on the one hand, the age of Mosaism with its doctrine of the divine unity, its bloody sacrifices and endless rites and ceremonies, and its sad lack of real righteousness; and on the other, of heathen idolatries, pollutions and tyrannies. To the disciples of Jesus this age was specially represented by Jewish hostility to their Master and his gospel of salva-

tion, through the attainment of a righteousness, which to these Jews seemed so impossible and foolish that they rewarded both the thing itself and Him who insisted upon it as their only hope, with the most implacable hatred. These disciples believed in Jesus most confidently, but they wanted more light as to his plans. When would he break down this Jewish opposition, attain the place of king, and successfully cope with every resistance and difficulty besides? Our Lord's answer was that he would do it at his "*coming*," and that this coming of his would take place within the life-time of the generation to which they themselves belonged.

That the apostolic church understood his words in this way is abundantly clear. Let us cite a few passages in evidence, in the order in which they were written.

"God deems it just to inflict suffering on those who are now inflicting suffering upon you, and to give relief to you who are suffering, as well as to us, at the appearing of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his mighty angels, 'in flaming fire.'" (2 Thess. 1:6, 7, A. D. 53.)

"There is no gift in which you are deficient while waiting for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God himself will strengthen you to the end, so that at the day of our Lord Jesus Christ you may be found blameless." (1 Cor. 1:7, 8, A. D. 57.)

"These things happened to them by way of

warning and were recorded as a caution to us, in whose days the ends of the ages have come." (1 Cor. 10:11, A. D. 57.)

"Our salvation is nearer now than when we accepted the faith. The night is almost gone; but the day is near." (Rom. 13:11, A. D. 58.)

It should be noted that "Salvation" in this last passage must of necessity mean a temporal deliverance of some sort. For those who were looking for it were already enjoying salvation in the spiritual sense. Between the years 65 and 68 Peter wrote "to the people of God who are living abroad, dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Roman Asia, and Bithynia . . . who, through faith, are being guarded by the power of God, awaiting a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last days. At the thought of this," he declares, "you are full of exultation. . . . It was this salvation that the prophets, who spoke long ago of the blessing intended for you, sought, and strove to comprehend; as they strove to discern what that time could be, to which the spirit of Christ within them was pointing, when foretelling the sufferings that would befall Christ, and the glories that would follow." So Peter made the same distinctions between salvations that Paul did. There was the salvation of the soul which was received as the reward of faith, and there was "a salvation that was ready to be revealed in the last days." How vividly Paul makes this great fact stand out in

his latest word on the second coming, as such—

“The state of which we are citizens is in Heaven; and it is from heaven that we are eagerly looking for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . The Lord is near.” (Phil. 3:20; 4:5, A. D. 61.)

How beautifully, too, some words of James lend their emphasis here! “Be patient then, brothers, till the coming of the Lord . . . for the Lord’s coming is near. . . . The Judge is already standing at the door.” (Jas. 5:7, 8, 9.)

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews, too, has a most helpful word, which shows us, on the one hand, that our Lord’s death took place at “the close of the age,” as the apostolic church understood the phrase, and on the other, that his second coming would be for the deliverance of those who were then eagerly looking for him. “But now, once for all, at the close of the age, he has appeared, in order to abolish sin by the sacrifice of himself . . . and the second time he will appear—but without any burden of sin—to those who are waiting for him, to bring salvation.” (Heb. 9:26, 28.)

Nothing can be clearer than the fact that all the thought and work of the apostolic church was saturated with the idea that its Lord was speedily to be revealed in awful majesty, to free them from their foes and introduce a better day. And here again let us remind ourselves that this expect-

tation was based upon our Lord's own words:

“As soon, however, as you see Jerusalem surrounded by armed camps, then you may know that the hour of her desecration is at hand. Then those of you who are in Judea must take refuge in the mountains, those who are in Jerusalem must leave at once, and those who are in the country places must not go into it. For these are to be the days of Vengeance, when all that scripture says will be fulfilled. Alas for the women that are with child, and for those that are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great suffering in the land, and anger against this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be taken prisoners to every land, and ‘Jerusalem will be under the heel of the Gentiles,’ until their day is over, as it shall be. There will be signs, too, in the sun and moon and stars, and on earth despair among the nations, in their dismay at the roaring of the sea and the surge. Men’s hearts will fail them through dread of what is coming on the world; for ‘the forces of the heavens will be convulsed.’ Then will be seen the ‘Son of man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. And when these things begin to occur, look upwards and lift your heads, for your deliverance will be at hand. . . . I tell you that even the present generation will not pass away till all has taken place. The heavens and the earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”
(Luke 21: 20-28, 32, 33.)

Here, then, in one paragraph of our Lord's teaching, is point after point of that which his disciples taught after him.

But we have not yet exhausted the language in which these apostolic Christians expressed themselves on the subject which was so dear to them in all their life of doing and suffering. On the day of Pentecost Peter spoke to his vast audience of "the last days" and "the day of the Lord—that great and awful day," and in his second letter he asserts, as taught long before by the Master himself, "the day of the Lord will come like a thief." "You see the day drawing near,"—the most awful and yet most blessed of all these last days, was a word "to the Hebrews." "You have heaped up wealth in these last days, you will find that you have heaped up fire," wrote James warningly to the silver-lovers of Jerusalem. "God has in these latter days spoken to us through his Son. . . . Beware of refusing to hear him who is speaking," is another New Testament warning.

The enthroned Christ reigning, and to reign till all acknowledge his sway; a coming of his, glorious alike in its terrors and its blessings, to take place very soon; their lives passing in connection with the close of an age, which would end so early, that their days as these dawned and faded, were to be thought of only as the last days,—such were the governing ideas, the intellectual and spiritual atmosphere in which these

first Christians lived their hours and did their striving.

But our presentation of their mental and spiritual situation is not yet quite complete. They associated the resurrection of the dead—the righteous dead at least, with the coming of their Lord at the very close of the age. This is as plain as any fact in the New Testament. It comes out most distinctly in Paul's first letter, that to the Thessalonians, written, let us repeat, about the year 52. And Paul never in the slightest degree receded from his first position, but fortified it and kept disclosing the larger facts connected with it. It was probably this common belief that the resurrection of the dead would occur in connection with the Lord's second coming which, through some process of reasoning not easy to guess now, led such men as Hymenæus and Philetus to conclude and teach that it had already taken place, and so to bring upon themselves that rebuke of Paul which we find in his second letter to Timothy.

But what warrant, if any, had the apostle Paul for teaching as he did on this subject? None at all? Was he quite mistaken? Or had he rightly interpreted his Lord at this point also?

Jesus said to Martha,—“Your brother shall rise to life.” “I know that he will,” replied Martha, “in the resurrection at the last day.” Was this the subject on which Jesus had talked with Mary when “Martha herself was distracted with the many preparations she was making?”

And did Martha catch enough of the Lord's teaching in spite of her worries to enable her to give this intelligent answer to his word about Lazarus's rising? However that may have been, Jesus had taught at least a little publicly on the great theme. "It is the will of my Father that every one who sees the Son, and believes in him, should have immortal life; and I myself will raise him up at the last day. . . . No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him to me; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . He who takes my flesh for his food, and drinks my blood, has immortal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:40, 44, 54.)

Was Paul wrong in his understanding of this teaching of our Lord? Was "the last day," after all, not at the close of the Mosaic age, but a day to be waited for till the close of this Christian era? There is certainly a lively satisfaction for a certain class of minds in being able to point out the mistakes of great men, and the finer the inspiration of the writers and teachers criticised, the keener the enjoyment of their overconfident reviewers. It may, however, be as well for us not to pronounce Paul and the apostolic church generally, in error on these points, till we have heard from them further.

Whether, however, they were mistaken or not, their lives were certainly lived in the atmosphere of these great expectations. Their Lord reigned and was coming to deliver and gloriously uplift

his people. Then those of their number who had fallen under the power of death, and those who were yet to fall under its power before the day arrived, would all be raised from the dead; while those who would be alive when he came, would share in the deliverance, and experience a change corresponding to that of the resurrection itself. So lively were these beliefs and hopes that in Thessalonica and Corinth at least they even threatened industry and interfered with the normal life of the family—a fact which can be verified by even a hasty glance at 2nd Thess. 3:7-16 and 1 Cor. 7:29-35.

This chapter may serve as a brief introduction to a large subject. Any one wishing some adequate acquaintance with the great governing ideas of the apostolic church and the ends towards which all its preaching and living and striving and suffering were continually directed must either prepare or peruse a word on these three themes—Jesus as Deliverer from Death, Jesus and National Destiny and Jesus as Complete Savior. The three chapters which follow this will, therefore, be devoted to a discussion of these phases of New Testament teaching.

XX

JESUS THE DELIVERER FROM DEATH

The resurrection, considered by itself, is a *post mortem* deliverance of the human body from the power of disease and death. At least it is so presented in the Christian scriptures. Accordingly we have in Daniel the words: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Chapter 12:2); and in Matthew—

"The tombs opened, and the bodies of many of God's people who had fallen asleep rose, and leaving their tombs, went, after the resurrection of Jesus, into the Holy City, and appeared to many people." (Chapter 27:52, 53.) And the resurrection of our Lord himself was regarded by both Peter and Paul, as all the more a triumph over the last enemy, because his body did not even undergo corruption before its deliverance was effected. (Acts 2:31; 13, 36.)

But the New Testament writers did not long consider the resurrection as an event which could be thought of by itself. On the contrary they very early came to see that it stood in most intimate association with things which were even

greater than it was. The body of their Master had escaped corruption, but if that had been all, what would have been the advantage? For flesh and blood, as they knew them, and as we know them, there is no escape from corruption that can be considered permanent. To rescue the body from death is only to see it fall under the power of death again, unless you can have its flesh and blood changed into something superior. So they came to see that, not the resurrection of the body, but its transmutation from the perishable to the imperishable, from the disfigured to the beautiful, from the frail to the strong—in a word from an animal body to a spiritual body, was the great event which had taken place in the case of their Master, and that a like change was the thing which they were to anticipate for themselves. And, as we know, they learned to look forward to it with eager longing and expectancy.

“This I say, Brothers—Flesh and blood can have no share in the kingdom of God, nor can the perishable share the imperishable. Listen, I will tell you God’s secret purpose. We shall not all have passed to our rest, but we shall all undergo a change—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet call; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will rise immortal and we, also, shall undergo a change. For this perishable body of ours must put on an imperishable form, and this dying body a deathless form.” (“Undergo a change” is from the tentative

edition and is most expressive.) *1 Cor. 50-53.*

“And we, also, shall undergo a change,” became a favorite text with Paul, and he made it, through the Holy Spirit’s enlightenment, a subject of much fruitful thought. “And we, also, shall undergo a change”—we who are still living in the flesh when the Lord comes again—and we shall not need a resurrection from the dead: the change will take its place so far as we are concerned—such¹ was the burden of the apostle’s musing.

Now if we allow ourselves to ponder for a moment, we shall see what large possibilities stand connected with this idea. All we have to do is to hold in our minds the fact that Paul and the Church generally, whether right or wrong, believed that our Lord was coming in judgment, for the destruction of his foes and the deliverance of his own, while some of themselves were still living; and that the resurrection of the dead would take place and this change be introduced in connection with that coming; to see how far his reflection might bear him along. The race was to live on, the generations were to follow each other as before, and a change was to be effected in the living, which would make them possessors of spiritual bodies, like those which would be bestowed upon the dead, in connection with their resurrection at the coming of the Judge. How far would this change be carried during the progress of the coming ages? Would it go so far that at length no believer’s body would see

corruption any more than that of the Master did? Might it not even be carried to the point of saving men from disease and death altogether?

Paul seems to have gone to this utmost length in his study of the matter, or, as we would perhaps better say, in his enlightenment by the Holy Spirit in relation to the subject. Fortunately we know the order in which his books or letters were written, and can follow the current of his thinking. And this we shall now proceed to do.

About sixteen years after Jesus of Nazareth had revealed himself to Saul of Tarsus, the Jewish arch-persecutor of his followers, as the risen and glorified Messiah; and about four years subsequent to the definite entrance of the new apostle upon his great life-work, as a missionary to other peoples besides his own; Paul wrote the earliest of those letters of his which have come down to us—the first to the Thessalonians. One of the things which this letter most clearly reveals is, that these Christian converts of a year or less needed further instruction touching the resurrection than they had received, and that Paul recognized the fact. It would seem that one or more of their number had already died, and that they were troubled by the fear that these and others who might yet fall under the power of disease and death, before that glorious coming of the Master, in which their evangelizer had taught them to believe, would be shut off from every possibility of sharing in the great deliver-

ance which he was to effect for his own when he came. Paul's answer to this fear of theirs was a very graphic description of the events which would attend the coming.

"We do not wish you to remain in ignorance, Brothers, with regard to those who have passed to their rest, that your grief may not be like that of others who have no hope. For as we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring, with Jesus, those who through him have passed to their rest. This we tell you on the authority of the Lord—that those of us who are still living at the coming of the Lord will not anticipate those who have passed to their rest. For, with a loud summons, with the shout of an arch-angel, and with the trumpet call of God, the Lord himself will come down from Heaven. Then, those who died in union with Christ shall rise first; and afterwards we who are still living shall be caught up in the clouds, with them, to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall be forever with the Lord. . . . For God destined us not for wrath but to win salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for us that, whether we are still watching or have fallen asleep, we may live with him." (I Thess. 4:13-17; 5:9.)

His teaching here was certainly that the resurrection of believers would be the first earthly response to a glorious coming of Christ, which some of these Thessalonians would in all prob-

ability witness before many years had passed. The precise time of the events no one could tell, but that made them none the less certain. The exact hour of birth-pangs or of the coming of a burglar cannot be predicted, he went on to argue, but birth-pangs and burglaries occur, nevertheless, and men know that they must not live in utter forgetfulness of them. Nor could any one of that time afford to ignore these stupendous events, for they would not be long delayed.

It will probably be best for us to defer the general discussion of the resurrection, in its relation to the coming of our Lord till we have taken up in their historic order all Paul's words upon it. But before going any further, we must note his assertion here, that after those who died in Christ will arise, "we who are still living shall be caught up into the clouds with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall be forever with the Lord."

In Revelation we read of the two Christian witnesses who were persecuted and slain that "after three days and a half the lifegiving breath of God entered into these men, and they stood up upon their feet and a great terror took possession of those who were watching them. The two men heard a loud voice from heaven which said to them—'Come up here,' and they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them." (Rev. 11:11.)

Here was an escape of God's people from their

persecutors, and reading on we find that it was succeeded by awful judgments upon these persecutors themselves, and these judgments again by the pæan of triumph—

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11:15); and—

“We thank thee, O Lord our God, the Almighty who art and who wast, that thou hast assumed thy great power and reigned. The nations were enraged and thy wrath fell upon them; the time came for the dead to be judged, and for thee to give the reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the people of Christ and to those who reverence thy name—the high and the low alike—and to destroy those that are destroying the earth.” (Rev. 11:17, 18.)

Again we have the vision of “the Dragon standing in front of the woman who is about to give birth to the child, so that he may devour it as soon as it is born. The woman gave birth to a son, a male child, who is destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was at once caught up to God upon his throne; while the woman fled into the wilderness where there is a place prepared for her by God, to be tended there for twelve hundred and sixty days.” (Rev. 12:4-6.)

Being caught up for safety is the idea common to all these passages, and in the last one the wilderness is linked with the divine throne as a

place of refuge. They all refer to the same event. The woman is the apostolic church. So, too, are the two witnesses. Or, at the very least, they must be taken as representing that church in its Judaic section. In the woman's escape to the wilderness we read the story of the Church's escape from Jerusalem before that doomed city went down in fire and blood. Its escape was so complete that it might well be figured forth by the bringing back to life and bearing up to heaven in a cloud, of two witnesses for Christ, who represented the whole people as in Zechariah's vision did "the two sons of oil that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." In the account of these two witnesses, too, we have both of the leading ideas of the word of Paul which we have been considering—the rising to life on the one hand, and the being caught up in the clouds on the other. Living believers borne into safety (along with those who have been raised from the dead) and afterwards restored to their proper activities here, was the idea Paul had in his mind when he wrote his word about their being "caught up in the clouds . . . to meet the Lord in the air," as he descended in judgment. This is the only interpretation which will harmonize with Paul's more fully developed teachings on the general subject, as we shall see. Nor is his reason for using such apocalyptic terms hard to guess. The persecutor was near and threatening.

The resurrection of the dead and deliverance and refuge for the living believer, are the two ideas, then, with which Paul first meets us. His next word on the subject is found in the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians—

“We shall not all have passed to our rest, but we shall all undergo a change—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet-call; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will rise immortal, and we also shall undergo a change.” (I Cor. 15:51, 52.)

We have already noted the fact that the apostle here brings forward in the most confident way, the assertion that those believers who would themselves be alive in the flesh at the time their brethren who had gone to their rest would be raised from the dead, would find no resurrection awaiting them, but would become the subjects of “a change,” such as would make them possessors of imperishable bodies like those of their resurrected brethren. And to pave the way for this new idea, he entered into quite an elaborate discussion of the resurrection itself. In doing so, he declared that the resurrection would be no mere resuscitation—that in point of fact the old body of flesh and blood would not rise at all.

“Some one, however, may ask, ‘How do the dead rise?’ and ‘in what body will they come?’ You foolish man, the seed you yourself sow does not come to life unless it dies! And when you sow,

you sow not the body that will be, but a mere grain—perhaps of wheat or something else. God gives it the body that he pleases—to each seed its special body. . . .”

Thus Paul suggested that it was the living germ that mattered most. For the vegetable form which results from the sowing of a seed is derived to only a slight extent from the seed itself. The form which we are to have is built up almost wholly of outside materials which the living organism has the power of seizing upon and assimilating to itself. What is the germ in man? Paul does not answer further than to assure us that it is very largely, at least, independent of flesh and blood. It is not the animal life, for it does not build up an animal body. On the other hand he declares that the body it builds up is a spiritual one, and thus shuts us up to the conclusion that it is spiritual in its nature. His teaching, therefore, regarding the change which was to be effected in the living, and which was to take the place of the work wrought in the case of the dead, in connection with their resurrection, would clearly seem to be that the life which made them spiritual entities would build for itself a spiritual body, while it still remained in connection with the old body of flesh and blood; and that this new order of things would be established simultaneously with the occurrence of the resurrection itself. (Vrs. 53, 54 N. T. in *M. S.*)

That this is really what he had in his mind is

made clearer still by words contained in his next letter to the Corinthians—

“We are not fixing our attention on what is seen, but on what is unseen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is enduring.”

Having stated this he went on to tell these believers that it was the seen body and the unseen body that he was contrasting with each other.

“For we know that if our tent—that earthly body which is now our home is taken down, we have a house of God’s building, a home not made by hands, imperishable, in Heaven. Even while we are in our present body we sigh, longing to put over it our heavenly dwelling, sure that, when we have put it on, we shall never be found without bodies!¹ For we who are in this ‘tent’ sigh under our burden, unwilling to take it off, yet wishing to put our heavenly body over it, so that all that is mortal may be absorbed in Life. And He who has prepared us for this change is God, who has also given us his Spirit as the pledge of it.” (2nd Cor. 5:1-5.)

“We shall never be found without bodies,” when once the resurrection is past and the new order set up. “For we who are in this ‘tent’ sigh under our burden, unwilling to take it off, yet wishing to put our heavenly body over it, so that all that is mortal may be absorbed in Life.”

¹ “Without bodies” is from the tentative edition. Why obsolete, ugly, misleading, “discarnate” was dragged forth to take its place in the revision, who shall say?

The mortal absorbed in Life—absorbed, taken up, caused to disappear—the seen body swallowed up by the unseen body—we shall find other words of his on this point in his letter to the Romans. In the meantime let us note what he further says here:

“And he who has prepared us for this change is God, who has also given us his spirit as a pledge of it.”

We have now before us in Paul's teaching an unseen body enveloping and interpenetrating the seen body of flesh and blood, and the vision of his joy in view of the possibility of that condition entering into the actual experience of himself and those to whom he was writing. Then the “tent” of flesh and blood will not matter so much, he exults. It will no longer be possible to render us bodiless when that time comes. So far Paul; but John's vision of the souls crying under the altar is another proof of the existence of this faith and this yearning in the apostolic church. (Rev. 6:9-11.) With the coming of the Judge and Deliverer they would reach their full felicity, through the attainment of their spiritual bodies. So the living and the dead joined each other in the one great cry. And the souls under the altar “were each given a white robe, and they were told to rest yet a little longer, till the number of their fellow servants and of their Brothers who were about to be put to death, as they had been, should be complete.” The wide-spread extent of this

yearning is one of the startling revelations of Romans 8:18-25. In this passage Paul tells us that "All Nature awaits with eager expectation the appearing of the Sons of God. For Nature was made subject to imperfection—not by its own choice—but owing to him who made it so—yet not without the hope that some day Nature also will be set free from enslavement to decay and will attain to the freedom which will mark the glory of the children of God." (Rom. 8:19-21.)

And when we ask what the glory of God's son is to be, Paul answers that it will reach its height in the realization or attainment of "our full adoption as sons—the redemption of our bodies." (Rom. 8:23.)

Now the redemption of the body, in the case of those who had died was to be accomplished by means of the resurrection. But what of those who were alive in the flesh? Paul's answer was that they, also, were to be freed from that enslavement to decay, or to disease and death under which there had been such long inward groaning; and that Nature was waiting with eager expectation to receive its share of this felicity. Whether by "nature" he described the animal creation, or the animal and vegetable creation both, or more, he opens up a vast field here, and wonderfully enlarges our view of Christ's saving purposes.

But enlarging the field and multiplying the difficulties to the utmost possible limit only served

to exalt Paul's Savior in the thoughts of his bond-slave. He knew that his Lord would not fail nor be discouraged till all his work was done. Accordingly, his final word on the subject, written as late as the year 68 probably, and found in second Timothy says of our Lord—

“He has made an end of death, and has brought life and immortality to light” (2nd Tim. 1:10); from which we can see that the departing apostle had lost sight of the steps and processes by means of which the goal had to be reached, and stood in the very presence of the consummation itself, with his whole personality bathed in its surpassing glory. But the steps were there still, and it is in order for us now to review them carefully.

Our next duty, then, is that of getting before our minds in definite shape the various facts connected with the resurrection, which our present study of the scriptures has brought to our attention. It will be remembered that we started out by stating that the resurrection, considered by itself, was a *post mortem* deliverance of the human body from the power of disease and death. We then found that the New Testament writers very soon saw that to make this deliverance permanent, there must necessarily be associated with it a replacing of our coarse clay with some substance out of which a body imperishable and spiritual could be built up. They learned at the same time to associate with this resurrectional change in the

bodies of the dead, a corresponding change in the bodies of those believers in Christ who would be alive in the flesh when the resurrection of the dead took place. This is made clear by what we call Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, which was written in the year 57. In his next letter to this same people he shows us that he had come to entertain an even larger expectation and hope. It had been given him to see that a time would speedily come, when the change in which he believed would involve for the living child of God, the putting on or building up of the imperishable spiritual body "over" the body of flesh and blood; and that at some time in the developing history of the race's redemption this spiritual body would absorb or entirely replace the body of flesh and blood, and so do away with death altogether, swallowing it up in victory. He declared to the Romans about the same time that, not only God's children but nature also was groaning for introduction to this final "freedom from enslavement to corruption," this "redemption of our bodies." And when he wrote his last letter to Timothy, his one reference to the matter as we have just seen, is that in which writing of the "appearance of our Savior Christ Jesus," he asserts that "He has made an end of death, and has brought life and immortality to light by means of the Good News."

Now all this teaching is very clear, but how shall we bring it into touch with the facts of his-

tory and of life about us? Certainly the last enemy has not yet been wholly destroyed. The words of the letter to the Hebrews touching our Lord's triumphs is still applicable. He is reigning and judging and punishing and rewarding:

“As yet, however, we do not see everything placed under man. What our eyes do see is Jesus, who was made for a while lower than angels, now because of his sufferings and death, crowned with glory and honor; so that his tasting the bitterness of death should, in God's loving kindness, be on behalf of all mankind. It was indeed, fitting that God for whom and through whom all things exist, should when leading many sons to glory, make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who purifies, and those whom he purifies all spring from One; and therefore he is not ashamed to call them ‘Brothers.’” He says—

“I will tell of thy name to my Brothers,

“In the midst of the congregation I will sing thy praise,” and again:

“As for me I will put my trust in God.”

And yet again:—

“See here am I and the children whom God gave me.”

“Therefore, since human nature is the common heritage of ‘the Children’ Jesus also shared it in order that by his death he might render powerless him whose power lies in death—that is, the Devil—and so might deliver all those who, from

fear of death, had all their lives been living in slavery." (Heb. 2:8-15.)

Such was the apostolic church's faith in Christ. They believed that he had become a man in order that by dying himself he might abolish death and render the Devil, as author of death, powerless upon this planet. But they saw what we still see to-day, namely, that up to the present this mighty undertaking of his has been only partially accomplished. How far has the work gone? Anything like a definite twentieth century answer is perhaps impossible, just as it is impossible for us to fix the date at which death will be finally chased from our planet, along with him whose power lies in it. But if we believe on the testimony of these scriptures, that this latter time will certainly arrive, we must also accept their message regarding the steps which they reveal as preparatory to it. They are our sole source of information.

We may prepare the way for what still remains to be stated by a word, which will perhaps prove as startling as it is self-evident. If the resurrection still remained to take place and were to occur to-day, we would not necessarily know anything about it. Our bodily ears were not constructed to catch the notes of spiritual trumpets, the voices of archangels, or the shout of spiritual hosts; nor our bodily eyes to see that which is not matter. We can hear physical sounds themselves only within a certain range and volume.

All the rest are lost upon us. We cannot see the ether though it is all pervasive, nor even the particles of water which moisten the air about us. The military guard never reported that they saw our Lord leave Joseph's tomb. His body was visible to his disciples only when he made it so. That history has no record of the resurrection foretold and described by Paul is, therefore, no proof that it did not occur when he said it would, that is to say, within the life-time of the majority of those to whom he wrote, and in connection with that coming in judgment of our Lord, which he himself continually affirmed would take place before the generation which He addressed had wholly passed away. The alternative to believing that it occurred then, is that we shall assert that Paul made a mistake in the matter, which he never really saw or confessed; and this is to impugn the accuracy, on a very important point, of the one inspired writer to whom we owe almost all the particular information which we have received upon the subject. His word in second Thessalonians, second chapter, was written to correct a possible, if not actual, mistake on *their* part and not on his. He hints that they were in danger of being deceived by men who might not stop even at forgery in their attempts to figure as teachers. But he nowhere says that he himself was mistaken when he gave them to understand that the day was comparatively near. On the contrary he supplied them with two land-

marks by which they might judge of its distance in time, one of which at least could not have done otherwise than convince them further of its nearness.

Whether Farrar and others have been correct or not in teaching that "the Man of Sin" or "Incarnation of Wickedness" was Nero, or the deified Julii, with Nero as their crown of blasphemy, there seems to be no real room for doubt that "the Great Apostasy," cited here and elsewhere in the New Testament, was the one prophesied by our Lord himself. Among various other signs of his coming and of the close of the age Jesus had given this one:—

"And then many will fall away, and will betray one another, and hate one another. Many false prophets also will appear and lead many astray, and owing to the increase of wickedness the love of most will grow cold. . . . I tell you even the present generation will not pass away, till all these things have taken place. The heavens and the earth will pass away, but my words shall never pass away." (Matt. 24:10-12, 34, 35.)

The thing Paul was teaching these Thessalonians was that the resurrection which was to take place at the coming of the Lord, would not occur before "the Great Apostasy" which the Lord had declared would precede it; though Jesus himself had also foretold that the Apostasy, as well as the Coming, would happen within the life-time of the generation to which he was uttering his

prophecies. They would have to wait for all the events in the order in which the Lord had placed them in his predictions.

Now unless we can afford to set ourselves up as wiser than Paul himself, to whom we owe about all we possess regarding the nature and time of the resurrection, we must believe that it occurred in connection with that coming of our Lord. But if it did take place then, the statement that "the resurrection is past already," ceased to be a heresy only a short time after that statement was first written. And this ought to seem to us perfectly natural, for as we have already observed, it was the very nearness of the event which led some to believe and teach that it had already happened. Ever since that time the real heresy has been the denial that the resurrection of God's children took place as predicted by the New Testament writers.

But if the resurrection took place so long ago as the year 68 or 70 of our era, what of those who have died in the Lord since? it will be asked. Paul has furnished us with a full answer. When their "tents" of flesh and blood were taken down they were not found without bodies, for they had already put on their imperishable spiritual bodies, while they were still using the others. And this work or "change" is wrought in each possessor of the new life in Christ. As to the precise substance out of which these "celestial" bodies are built up, the scripture gives us no information. But the author of *"The Evolution of Immortal-*

ity” has indulged in some very suggestive conjectures touching the subject, which it may be well for me to quote:

“The most remarkable feat which modern science has accomplished has been to establish the existence of that strange substance known as the luminiferous or instellar ether, the medium through which the ‘X Ray’ and wireless telegraphy perform their work. Its existence has long been suspected—now it is known. Sir Isaac Newton closes his ‘Principia’ with this prophetic paragraph:

“‘And now we might add something concerning a most subtle spirit which pervades and lies hid in all gross bodies; by the force and action of which spirit the particles of bodies mutually attract one another at near distances and cohere if contiguous; and electric bodies separate, and light is emitted, reflected and heats bodies; and all sensation is excited, and the members of animal bodies move at the command of the will, namely by vibrations of this spirit mutually propagative along the solid filaments of the nerves from the outward organs of sense to the brain, and from the brain to the muscles. But these things cannot be explained in a few words, nor are we furnished with that sufficiency of experiments which is necessary to an accurate determination and demonstration of the laws by which this elastic spirit operates.’

“Now this ‘subtle spirit’ of Sir Isaac has been shown to be not spirit at all but a material medium which fills all space and interpenetrates all that

we call matter. The 'sufficiency of experiments' which Newton lacked have been made by Struve, Helmholtz, Lord Kelvin, Dolbear, Teslar, Rontgen¹ and a hundred other mathematicians and physicists. The result has been to compel a new definition of matter. Extension, ponderability, form, dimensions, and such qualities can no longer be thought sufficient to define matter. 'Empty' space can no longer be spoken of, for no portion of space is empty. It can no longer be said that 'no two portions of matter can occupy the same space at the same time,' for they do so constantly. Indeed, it seems to be a very condition of the existence of matter which we see that it should lie bathed in a matter which we do not see. For the universal ether is matter. As Lord Kelvin has demonstrated it shows in some ways the phenomena of a highly tenuous fluid, in others that of an infinitely dense solid, and in still others the properties of a jelly. It is the medium through which light moves by waves of an ascertained length, electric energy by waves of a different length, heat by still a third, and the energy which we call gravitation by some means not yet ascertained. It has been weighed and measured. A sphere of it the size of the earth would, if compressed to the density of the earth, be in size somewhere between a marble and an orange. It is the medium in the opaque flesh through which the invisible rays of light pass to form an X ray photograph. Its waves flow through so dense

a mass of matter as a block of glass, as water flows through a sieve. It is the medium in which the elemental energies of heat, light, electricity and possibly chemical energy do their work. May not vital energy be concerned with it as well?

“I venture to say in parenthesis that it is not easy to understand why the physicists are so reluctant to admit the existence of such an objective fact as ‘Vital energy.’ Surely there are abundant phenomena which cannot be forced to come under any other form of energy known. Suppose the phrase is but a name for a set of phenomena whose essential nature is not understood, that much may be said of all the other categories of energy.

“It is now more than twenty years since two distinguished English men of science, Professors Balfour Stewart and P. G. Tait, put forth hesitatingly a theory of a physical basis of a future life. Starting from the evident double truth that all physical activity is associated with molecular activity in the matter of the brain and nerves, while at the same time physical and psychical phenomena are evidently different things, they suggest that there may well be a *tertium quid*, a third something, which serves as a nexus between them, and that ethereal matter may be such a thing.

“Each thought we think, each emotion we feel, is accompanied by certain molecular movements

and rearrangements in the brain. The psychical activity actually builds up a physical fabric for itself. But the material fabric is every moment disintegrating, and at death falls into ruin. Now suppose that before that ruin befalls, the soul shall have been able to build up, as it were, a brain within a brain, a body within a body, something like that which the Orientals have for ages spoken of as the 'Astral Body.' Then when the body of flesh shall crumble away, there would be left a body, material to be sure, but compacted of a kind of matter which behaves quite differently from that which our sense perceptions deal with. It is a material which, so far as science has anything to say, is essentially indestructible. It moves freely amongst and through ordinary matter without let or hindrance. It is not difficult at any rate to form a picture of a life based upon its organization. From the individual spirits of just men made perfect, this present 'muddy vesture of decay' has dropped away, leaving them 'not unclothed but clothed upon.' They are still men. They have rational souls with material bodies fit to sustain and to express their psychical life. The matter of their bodies is obedient to the laws of matter and life, but to the laws of *that kind* of life and matter. 'There are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial,' and each has its own mode of action. Such ethereal bodies compacted with living souls would of necessity inhabit a universe of their

own, even though that universe should occupy the same space that this one does. Neither earth, nor fire, nor water could in the least impede their movement. In frost and flame they would be equally at home. With the swiftness of light or gravitation they could speed from where old Bootes leads his leash to where Sagittarius draws his bow in the South. With bodies of such firm stuff compounded, and so plastic to the uses of the Spirit, their knowledge would expand until nature's secrets should lie open to their eyes."

As already indicated, all this is extremely suggestive as well as instructive. But it is doubtful if this idea of an "Ethereal" body quite coincides with Paul's idea of an imperishable spiritual one. However, in this region one cannot speak with certainty. And happily we do not need to know either the how or the why of some of the divine operations.

But Paul's vision of the wonders of this "change" reveals a crowning glory. All along the Christian ages the body of flesh and blood has been the cause of much groaning because it has been the victim of disease and death. The apostle, however, discloses a larger hope. The body, too, is to be redeemed in the case of God's sons, and nature is to have its share in that felicity. Then there will no longer be any "enslavement to decay" but "all that is mortal will be absorbed in life"; and health, energy, activity and enjoyment will be the lot of the body of flesh and

blood, until it is "absorbed" by the spiritual body, which will be "over" it, covering and interpenetrating it; and nature also will at last have come fully under the reign of life.

To what age will God's children in that coming time attain before this absorption of their mortal bodies will free them for full entrance upon the larger possibilities which naturally belong to bodies celestial? Who shall say? All we can do now is to wonder and adore in the presence of our God who has made his Son such an uttermost deliverer from death.

The resurrection of the wicked does not come within the scope of our theme and has, therefore, not been touched upon. That there is to be such a resurrection is more than once affirmed in the Scriptures, and among others by our Lord Himself. The distinction between it and that of God's children is probably the one which is so definitely drawn in Revelation 20:4-6. But it is not for us to deal with it now.

There is, however, one more word of Paul's which claims our notice. It is that confession from the heart which we find in his letter to the Philippians—

"Then indeed I shall know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and all that it means to share his sufferings, in the hope that if I become like him in his death, I may possibly attain to the resurrection from the dead." (Phil. 3: 10, 11.)

Those commentators have been on the true path of interpretation who have claimed that the resurrection which the apostle coveted was one of an unusual sort. If anyone could have considered himself assured of the resurrection which was to be the common experience of the vast body of believers, surely he could have done so. But he was not content simply to look forward to that. That he expected to die before the Coming of the Lord at the time he wrote this letter, is probably clear, though he anticipated release from prison and an opportunity of paying the Philippian church another visit. And his ambition was so to increase in the knowledge of Christ, during the intervening months or years, so to drink in the power of his resurrection, and so to share his sufferings, and then at the last, so to resemble him in his death, that he might be lifted completely above the great body of imperfect believers and be granted a resurrection, not like theirs, but like his Lord's. It was not a selfish wish, it was rather the opposite of that, for it meant unusual self-denial, cross-bearing and service; and his straining of every nerve would not hinder any other believer, but would, on the contrary, make him an example and inspiration for them all.

But what was the difference between the two resurrections? The bodies of believers generally would undergo corruption. The Lord's did not, and Paul wished the same exemption from decay.

At least one seems shut up to this very natural interpretation of his words, for no other appears possible. He had visions of the glorious possibilities, or rather of the growing wealth of blessing which was wrapped up in Christ's resurrection for the generations of men that were to succeed each other after the Coming, and especially in the far future of the Church's maturity, and he longed to attain to all that was possible in his own early day. He seems to have concluded that he could not hope to escape death itself. It was too soon in the history of the Redeemer's work for that. But he did venture to indulge in the yearning desire that it might be with him as it had been with the Lord himself, who, though he could not avoid death, did wholly escape corruption. To get the full sense of this declaration, therefore, we have but to add to it three words, thus:—"Then indeed I shall know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and all that it means to share his sufferings, in the hope that if I become like him in his death, I may possibly attain to the resurrection from the dead," which was His.

How strikingly this yearning ambition of Paul's harmonizes with all that teaching of his which we have been reviewing! And this chapter cannot close better than with these words of his to those same Philippians:

"The State of which we are citizens is in Heaven; and it is from Heaven we are eagerly

looking for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the exercise of his power to bring everything into subjection to himself, will change this body that we have in our humiliation, until it is of the same nature as the body which he has in his glory.”¹ (Phil. 3:20-21.)

To Paul in his Roman prison, the coming or revelation of the Savior from Heaven as Judge was an eager expectation. To us in this twentieth century, it is an event long past, the blessed fruits of which are ours in part. And we know that nothing of all that was pledged in connection with it will fail to arrive in its time.

¹ This final clause and the one preceding it are from the tentative version of the T. C. N. T.

XXI

JESUS AND NATIONAL DESTINY

The apostles of Christ believed in rewards and punishments for the individual man under the reign of their Lord. They held also, and with equal tenacity, to the doctrine of a judgment for their own people as a nation, and for all the other peoples of the earth, under that same rule. They knew that it was to a people their Lord came at the time of his incarnation.

“He came to his own—

Yet his own did not receive him.”

This failure to receive him was fatal. Our Lord taught the Jews this, when he told them the story of the tenants of a certain vineyard, who refused the owner his rightful share of the produce, beat or killed or stoned each servant he sent to demand it, and finally, when he sent his Son and heir, killed him also, in the hope that they would thus secure the vineyard for themselves; adding—

“And that, I tell you, is why the kingdom of God will be taken from you, and given to a nation that does produce the fruit of the Kingdom.” He had already asked: “Have you never read in the scriptures—

“The very stone which the builders despised

“ ‘Has’ now itself become the corner stone ;
 “ ‘This corner stone has come from the Lord,
 “ ‘And is marvelous in our eyes?’

“Yes, and he who falls on this stone will be dashed to pieces, while any one on whom it falls—it will scatter him as dust.”

Our Lord’s teaching regarding his disposal as judge, of all other peoples right down to the end of human history, was very explicit. That teaching we find in Matthew 25:31—

“When the Son of Man has come in his glory and all the angels with him, then he ‘will take his seat on his glory;’ and all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people—just as a shepherd separates sheep from goats—placing the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, enter upon possession of the kingdom prepared for you ever since the beginning of the world. For when I was hungry, you gave me food; when I was thirsty, you gave me drink; when I was a stranger, you took me to your homes; when I was naked, you clothed me; when I fell ill, you visited me; and when I was in prison, you came to me. . . . I tell you, as often as you did it to one of these my brothers, however lowly, you did it to me.’”

It is unnecessary to quote further from this illustrative story of our Lord, its language is so familiar. He was here teaching that the

peoples that would receive him in the persons of his humblest followers, were the peoples that would rise, and flourish and continue; while those peoples that rejected him in the persons of these followers of his, would simply perish from the earth.

This interpretation is likely to be opposed as depriving us of what has so long been considered as our most vivid description of a final literal day of judgment. There is no need for arguing the matter here at any length. It will be sufficient merely to indicate two considerations which would seem to be decisive.

In the first place, then, when men come before the bar of God as individuals, each must appear as belonging to one of two classes, whereas there are here three classes—those on the right hand, those on the left hand, and “these my brothers”; and the first and second classes are each appointed to a destiny in view of its treatment of the third. In the second place, the standard applied is not one by means of which it can be judged whether or not a man or woman has received Christ spiritually. It was, however, the very test which was brought to bear upon the peoples of the earth, the moment the gospel began to be preached to them, “with the help of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.” The Jewish people went down under its application almost at once, and that in spite of the fact that they were the very people whom it was intended most to exalt. And one of the great

outstanding facts of the Christian ages is that power and prosperity of every sort have come most largely to those peoples who have assisted the lowly brethren of Jesus to the greatest extent; while those which have lacked in hospitality and generosity towards them have been forced to listen to the awful words of condemnation uttered against them by "the King." Look at Great Britain and the United States, and afterwards at Spain, for instance. Surely the King has set those peoples in two classes. Two he has placed on the right hand of his power, the other he has sent to his left. Two have heard, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, enter upon possession of the Kingdom prepared for you ever since the beginning of the world." The other has as surely heard the words, "Go from my presence, accursed, into the aeonian fire (the consuming fire of my disapproval) which has been prepared for the Devil and his angels." There can be no reasonable doubt, either, that their opposite treatment of Christ's brothers is the thing in view of which they have been rewarded and punished.

In studying this whole subject from the apostolic standpoint, it may be said, first of all, that at the time of our Lord's ascension, two things remained to be accomplished. First, his kingdom had to be definitely inaugurated. That kingdom was to be primarily spiritual, and, as such, it was not yet properly established in the hearts of even his leading disciples, to say nothing of

Judaism or the world as a whole; but it was meant for all alike. In the second place, the deadly hostility to that kingdom which had crucified him, and was even then attempting to cover up the fact of his resurrection with a lie, had to be removed, through the conversion of these Jewish enemies to loyal subjects of his, or failing that, through their utter overthrow as an organized power. Pentecost witnessed the establishment of his kingdom in the hearts of the one hundred and twenty who were in the upper room waiting for the fulfillment of his promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit, and that Kingdom's introduction through their testimony to thousands of other hearts. Then there followed the steady persistent effort to convert all opposers into supporters—an effort which at one time seemed to those engaged in it far from hopeless; for "God's message spread, and the number of the disciples continued to increase rapidly in Jerusalem, and a large body of the priests accepted the faith."

In connection with this effort we have two very illuminating words. These were both spoken by Peter on the occasion of the healing^d of the cripple "at the gate of the temple called 'the Beautiful Gate.'" For their proper understanding in our times the second should be read first. It is this—

"You yourselves are the heirs of the prophets, and heirs, too, of the Covenant which God made with your ancestors, when he said to Abraham, 'In your descendants will all the nations of the

earth be blessed.' For you, first, God raised up his Servant, and sent him to bless you, by turning each one of you from his wicked ways."

The words "raised up" here, mean caused to stand or established, and must almost of necessity be understood as describing that act of God, by means of which he brought back his Son from the dead "and exalted him to his right hand to be a Guide and a Savior, to give Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins." By his resurrection and by it alone was our Lord caused to stand immovably as the chosen Servant of God. But for that his incarnation and whole earthly career would have proved fruitless. Upon this point Paul in particular insists most strongly. And it was this resurrection-vindicated Servant of God that Peter told the people had been sent with blessings for them.

Here then is a second coming of our Lord. It was a coming in the Spirit for a specific object, namely, the Salvation, first of all, of the Jewish people. Does this sound strange? But how could he have fulfilled the promise made to his disciples, "I shall myself be always with you," without coming again and in a spiritual manner?

Pentecost witnessed our Lord's second coming as a Spiritual Savior, according to Peter.

But Peter has another word—

"Therefore, repent and turn, that your sins may be wiped away; so that happier times may come from the Lord himself, and that he may

send you, in Jesus, your long-appointed Christ. But heaven must be his home, until the days of the Universal Restoration, of which God has spoken by the lips of his holy prophets from the very first." Did Peter, then, think of Jesus as here, and, at the same time, as not here, but still to come? Yes; he regarded him as having been definitely revealed in his office of Savior from sin, and as still to be shown forth as restorer of the outward fortunes of his people. This is the order which has always been observed. Spiritual salvation first, then, as a sure result of the steadfast, unalterable choice of Christ, material, social, political salvation—sins wiped away and afterwards "happier times" for those who have experienced the cleansing and for all with whom they are vitally associated. We may, therefore, put Peter's word to his people thus—"You must first accept Jesus as your Savior from sin. He has already come again to you in that office; and until he has been received by you as such, he cannot come again as the restorer of your outward fortunes as a people."

But Israel rejected this gospel of her deliverance, and when Jesus did come in his office of Universal Restorer at the very end of the Mosaic age, he was compelled in strictest accord with his own predictions, to send his angels to gather them from his kingdom because they were a hindrance to men, and a people that could not be drawn from its life of sin. (Matt. 13:41.) And

to-day it is only permitted us to ask with grieved hearts, what Israel's happier days, coming direct from the Lord, would have been for that people itself and the world at large, had she received Christ as her Savior from sin instead of rejecting him in all his offices. In the meantime our examination of Peter's gospel to the Jew has served to show us more clearly *the nature of our Lord's second coming. It was his revelation in his different offices, and not some instantaneous spectacular display in the region of the bodily senses.*

There is one more word in "The Acts" to which attention may well be called here. It is the message which was delivered by the angels at the time of our Lord's ascension—

"Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the heavens? This very Jesus, who has been taken from you into the heavens, will come in the very way in which you have seen him go into the heavens." (Acts 1:11.) In what manner, then, did he go into the heavens? Invisibly. "He was caught up before their eyes, and a cloud received him from their sight." (Acts 1:9.) This is the apostolic record. They could not, with their bodily eyes, see him go into the heavens. Neither were they, with their bodily eyes, to see him return to the earth. Yet he was to come in power and great glory. There is a power and a glory concerning which our bodily eyes have brought us no information, but we are

such confirmed materialists that we can scarcely believe it. Coming in clouds, or invisibly and spiritually, is ever the word that greets us. The exceptions are only seeming. And so, according to apostolic teaching, *our Lord came again, and is here both as Savior and Judge.*

If it were worth while, we could bring forward here testimony from the Latin and Greek authors of the first century, including those of the New Testament, to show that all the events mentioned by our Lord as signs of his coming or revelation in his office of Judge, and of the end of the age in which he lived and labored and died and rose again, not excepting the preaching of his gospel "in all creation under heaven," came to pass as predicted by him. (Col. 1:23, R. V.) It is sufficient for us to say that the world of Mosaism came to a very definite end with the destruction of its great city and temple, and the wholesale slaughter and carrying away into captivity of the Jewish people. Then the priesthood and the daily sacrifice went out no more to return. And why did they disappear? That he might come into full view who, "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, which should serve for all time, 'took his seat at the right hand of God.'" (Heb. 10:12.) They disappeared because our Lord came then as Judge and removed them, as the writer of "Hebrews" said he would, on account of their unfitness to bear the test to which he was subjecting them. (Heb. 12:26, 27.)

To define our Lord's second coming in agreement with apostolic teaching, we may say that *it was his revelation to men, first as spiritual Savior and then as Judge, within the life time of the generation that had seen him in the flesh.*

And here we may use the word inauguration in addition to the word revelation, and say that Jesus was publicly inaugurated *as Savior*, when on the day of Pentecost he was so gloriously heralded as such, that three thousand persons acknowledged him at once; and that his inauguration *as Judge*, in connection with the overthrow of worn-out and corrupted Mosaism, is perhaps the most awe-inspiring event of history. The Savior was saving and the King was reigning and judging before Pentecost came, or the destruction of Jerusalem took place, but the fact was not made strikingly apparent before these events or inaugurations. Then, however, the greatness of the glorified Man of Nazareth, both as Savior and Royal Judge, was marvelously disclosed.

He is still carrying on the work of both his offices. It is constantly the day of Salvation, and constantly, also, the day of judgment. Those peoples which receive him as Savior and King are by him appointed to careers of progress and growing power and prosperity; while those who do not so receive him, find themselves in the slippery places of disaster and ruin. And all this is just as he himself foretold it. Moreover,

temporal salvation and temporal disaster or ruin are often to be seen in the same event. Everything depends upon the standpoint from which the event is viewed. The destruction of the Spanish Armada was a disaster for Spain, but to the English it meant salvation. The destruction of Napoleon I, as Emperor of the French, was the deliverance of Europe; just as the defeat of the Saracens by Charles Martel in 732, and again in 738; and the overthrow of the Turks under the walls of Vienna, by John Sobieski in 1683, had been its salvation before. And each work of destruction and deliverance which abases the worse and exalts the better, is done in the furtherance of his will.

In the overthrow of his foes and the deliverance of his own our Lord uses a variety of instruments, including armed men and the forces of nature. But the apostolic church saw that his greatest engine of destruction as well as of salvation, is his truth. Accordingly Paul wrote to the Thesalonians—

“Wickedness indeed is already at work in secret; but only until he who at present restrains it is removed out of the way. Then will ‘Wickedness Incarnate’ appear, but the Lord Jesus will destroy him with the breath of his lips, and annihilate him with the splendor of his coming.” (2nd Thess. 2:7, 8.) Probably Paul had the deification of the Roman emperors, and their growingly blasphemous claims to divine honors

in mind when he wrote these words. But whatever the thing or person may have been which he described as "Wickedness Incarnate," there can be no doubt that, by the breath of our Lord's lips and the splendor of his coming, which were to destroy him, he meant his word, or the truth spoken by him, on the one hand, and standing inherent and resplendent in his character, on the other.

This destroying might of the word of Christ was constantly present in the mind of John when he penned the book of "The Revelation." In describing his glorified Lord as he appeared to him on Patmos, he writes—

"From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword." (Rev. 1:16.) The opening words to the angel of the church at Pergamus are—"These are the words of him who holds the sharp two-edged sword." (Rev. 2:12.) And the warning to the Nicolaitans of that Church was—"Repent, therefore, or else I will come quickly and contend with such men with words that will cut like a sword." (Rev. 2:16.) Exceedingly striking, too, from this standpoint, are some later words of this same book—

"Then I saw that heaven lay open. There appears a white horse; its rider is called 'Faithful' and 'True'; righteously does he judge and make war. His eyes are flaming fires; on his head are many diadems, and he bears a name, written, which no one knows but himself; he has been

clothed in a garment sprinkled with blood; and the name by which he is called is 'The Word of God.' The armies of heaven followed him, mounted on white horses and clothed in fine linen, white and pure. *From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which 'to smite the nations; and he will rule them with an iron rod.'* He 'treads the grapes in the press' of the maddening wine of the wrath of Almighty God; and on his robe and on his thigh he has the name written—'KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.' Then I saw an angel standing on the sun. He cried in a loud voice to all the birds that fly in mid-heaven—'Gather and come to the great feast of God, to eat the flesh of Kings, and the flesh of commanders, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all freemen and slaves, and of high and low.'

"Then I saw the Beast and the Kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to fight with him who sat on the horse and with his army. The Beast was captured, and with him was taken the false Prophet, who performed the marvels before the eyes of the Beast, with which he deceived those who had received the brand of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Alive, they were thrown, both of them, into the fiery lake 'of burning sulphur.' *The rest were killed by the sword which came out of the mouth of him who rode upon the horse; and all the birds fed upon their flesh.*" (Rev. 19:11-21.)

This is how John saw the events of the year of our Lord 68, or a few months later. The Great King was dealing with the nations. Jerusalem was not yet destroyed, but the wrath which was to the uttermost was already being visited upon the Jewish people. And as John gazed upon the scene, the element of time was eliminated from his thoughts, and all the Christ rejecting nations of the coming years, with all their hideous tyrannies, their falsehoods and their blasphemies, as already so definitely represented by Rome herself, became one vast host, that had to be met and overcome by the armies of heaven, and their Commander-in-chief, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The battle was joined, and there was red carnage enough, no doubt. But it was not the slaughter of any physical battlefield that impressed John. He saw greater triumphs than have ever been won thus. He saw the very *spirit* of tyranny and the very spirit of lying error, borne down, taken as prisoners and "thrown alive, both of them, into the fiery lake of burning sulphur." And the only slaughter that he describes was done "by the sword which came out of the mouth of him who rode upon the horse"; that is, by our Lord Jesus Christ as "The Truth."

And all this is quite in agreement with things as we know them. War serves a purpose. It often tests the quality of the men whom it brings face to face in deadly conflict, in such a way as

to make it clear which sort of spiritual nurture produces the sturdiest manhood. It turned Cromwell and his Ironsides into standing proofs for all time, of the fact that conscious personal intercourse with God, without the intervention of any priest, makes men invincible against soldiers of every other type. And the recent Spanish-American war served to show that liberty, learning and an open Bible are apt to produce better navies, than are priesthoods that frown upon all three. Above all, war emphasizes the fact that men are essentially noble, because they are capable of such devotion to a cause as to look upon their property and their bodily lives, only as things that can be staked and, if need be, lost in its interests. There can be no doubt, either, that some good things have been reached and some evils abated by means of the bloody struggles of the past. Yet no one would think for one moment of righting every human wrong, much less of attaining to every human excellence and good, by means of the sword.

War inflicts many wrongs always, and that often without actually removing one. And where it comes as a real cure for some great ill, it is only a little less frightful than the malady itself. The sword of truth alone, as it comes from Christ's mouth to smite iniquity and falsehood, wages war without doing real harm to any. What John saw was that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords can inflict wrong upon none. He

knew that when he was here in the flesh, he rejected the physical conquest of the nations as a temptation of the Devil. And probably the true doctrine is that he has employed human wars in the interests of his truth at any time, only as he used for the furtherance of his aims, the malice of the Jewish rulers, the treachery of Judas and the sinful weakness of Pilate, which brought about his crucifixion on Calvary. He is far beyond our power of comprehending his greatness, and he can triumph even by means of his crucifixion. We may take it for granted that physical wars will wholly cease, and come to be regarded as one of the frightful features of a past barbarism, long before all the wrongs of our earth are righted. Might can never make right and, as James has assured us, "Anger in man does not produce the righteousness required by God."

It was because John had a vision of the things our Lord was really to bring about, that he gave to the church these pictures. Even now the Parliament, the court, the school, and perhaps, above all, the pulpit which proclaims truth and righteousness as the richest gifts God has to bestow upon men, are doing nearly all that is being accomplished, outside the family, towards human deliverance, uplifting and enjoyment. And John tells us in the twentieth chapter of his Revelation the story of his king's victories up to the very last of them.

Everything he saw here was in the region of

spiritual forces and facts. "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, with the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He seized the dragon, the primeval serpent (who is the 'Devil' or 'Satan') and bound him in chains for a thousand years. He flung him into the bottomless pit and locked it, and set his seal upon it; that he should not deceive the nations any more until the thousand years are ended. After that he must be let loose for a while.

"Then I saw thrones, and to those who took their seats upon them authority was given to act as judges. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony to Jesus and because of the message of God, for they had refused to worship the beast or its image and had not received the brand on their foreheads and on their hands. They were restored to life, and they reigned with the Christ a thousand years."

For our present purpose we need not pretend to know precisely what this restoration to life stood for in the mind of John, nor need we venture a guess as to the exact time of the beginning or end of the period here set forth as a thousand years; but the vision conveys to us at least the message that our Lord's conquest was to be signal, and that those who had been serving him best in the struggle, would live again in the triumph of the truth for which they had laid down their lives.

But the kinoscope continues to throw its moving pictures upon the screen before John's eyes. He sees the thousand years ended, and Satan at liberty once more, and deceiving "the nations that live in 'the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog.' He will come to gather them together for battle; and their number will be as great as the sand upon the sea-shore. They went up over the breadth of the whole earth, and surrounded the camp of Christ's people and the beloved city. Then *fire fell from the heavens and consumed them*; and the devil, their deceiver, was hurled into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the Beast and the false prophet already were, and they will be tortured day and night forever." (Rev. 20.)

This whole vision belongs to the world of thought and spiritual reality. The fire from heaven is the truth of God all aflame and consuming every false thing that it touches, till the Father of Lies finds himself in his retreat before it, hurled forever from the world of men that he has no longer any power to deceive. The conquests of Christ are those of truth and holiness, and they are in the New Testament represented as continuing till the last vestiges of error and moral pollution have been chased from our earth.

We must remember, however, that all this is but the negative side of the saving work of our Lord. He is the great expeller and demolisher of evil, but he is much more besides. He is the great builder and restorer. He roots out and

burns up the thorns and briers of the wilderness, that he may plant the cedar, the pine, the box, and the myrtle. He sends his streams of refreshing into the desert places where nothing would grow, that they may rejoice and blossom as the rose. He pulls down the strongholds of evil that he may build in their places the impregnable fortresses of righteousness. He shakes the old earth and heaven to pieces, that a heaven and earth that cannot be shaken may appear in their stead, and abide to his eternal glory and praise.

XXII

JESUS THE COMPLETE SAVIOR

The wish of those Greek visitors to Jerusalem to see Jesus is still what it was at the time of Philip and Andrew, an event of striking significance. But more striking and significant yet are the things which Jesus said on that occasion, and particularly the word he spoke last.

“Now this world is on its trial. Now the spirit that is ruling^d this world shall be driven out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth shall draw all men to myself. By these words he indicated what death he was to die.” (*Jno. 12: 31, 32.*)

Could language be more arresting or more explicit than this? Undoubtedly our Lord was here anticipating and foretelling the character and extent of his conquests upon this earth. And so far was his cross from appearing to him an obstacle to be surmounted, which to some extent it really was at the start, that he boldly put it forward as his throne of universal judgment, on the one hand, and the instrument, by means of which, on the other hand, he would win the homage and fealty of the whole human family. The condemnation and final expulsion from this world,

not only of sin, but also of the very principle or being who introduced it and has fostered it here, is one part of our Lord's work which these words describe. This work is destructive in its nature. But it is the pulling down of old plague-infested structures that a palace may be erected in their place, or the clearing and draining of the fever-breeding fen, that in its stead there may appear one after another smiling fields and pastures for flocks. The work of destruction is put first, because in the very nature of the case it must go first. But it is only a preparatory work after all. Our Lord's greatest work is constructive. The thing he is producing greatly surpasses the things he is destroying, and he will be magnified at last as the maker of new heavens and a new earth, and adored not so much for what he has saved our race from, as for what he has saved it to. It is on this account that we read in the fifth chapter of Revelation—

“And when he had taken the book, the four Creatures and the twenty-four Councilors prostrated themselves before the Lamb, each of them holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense. (These are the prayers of Christ's People.) And they are singing a new song—

“Thou art worthy to take the book and break its seals, for thou wast sacrificed, and with thy blood thou didst buy for God men of every tribe and language and people and nation, and didst

make them a kingdom of Priests for our God and they are reigning on the earth.' ”

The Old Testament prophets were granted visions of this far off yet coming glory. Micah wrote—

“But in the latter days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge between great peoples, and shall decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it.” (Micah 4:1-4.)

The thing pictured here is no less than the universal reign, first in righteousness and afterwards in settled peace, of the God of Israel over the nations of mankind, both small and great.

The splendors of this world-wide glory are continually bursting upon us from the pages of the

later Isaiah, in connection with his story of struggle and suffering and disappointed hopes and apparently unrequited toils—

“But I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my recompense with my God. And now saith the Lord that formed thee from the womb to be his servant, . . . It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth.” (Isa. 49:4-6.)

The suffering servant of the fifty-third chapter is bruised and grieved and slain and buried, but he is at the same time the victorious and prosperous one who sees his seed, prolongs his days, makes many righteous and is exalted to the heights of power. In connection with his administration a new day dawns for the people, God's promise of which is couched in such terms as these:

“For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: and I will also make thy officers peace, and thy task-masters righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, desolation nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation and thy gates praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give

light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever." (Isa. 60:17-21.)

To think of all this as just so much poetic hyperbole from the ancient East will scarcely do. Poetic it is and boldly figurative, and we can all agree with Peter that the prophets who wrote it could only keep "searching to find out what they could about the time to which the Spirit of Christ within them was pointing, when foretelling the sufferings which would befall Christ and the glories which would follow; but the things which it brings into view are things such as we see about and above us now in their earlier unfoldings, and things which the coming generations of men will know in their fuller and fullest developments. "For the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord." (Isa. 66:22.)

Passing by the words of Amos, which were quoted before the Jerusalem Council, to show that the purpose of God was to build up a Christian Church which would be all-embracing; and Daniel's vision of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which continued rolling till it filled the whole earth, and thus represented or sym-

bolized the kingdom which the Lord God was to set up and maintain forever; we may glance at a passage in second Peter which is suggested by the words quoted from the closing sentences in Isaiah—

“The day of the Lord will come like a thief. And on that day the heavens will pass away with a crash, the elements will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and all that is in it will be disclosed. Now since all these things are in the process of dissolution, think what you yourselves ought to be,—what holy and pious lives you ought to lead, while you await and hasten the coming of the Day of God. At its coming the heavens will be dissolved in fire and the elements melted by heat, but we look for ‘new heavens and a new earth,’ where righteousness shall have its home, in fulfillment of the promise of God.” (2nd Peter 3:10-13.)

By “heavens” in this passage we understand the religious conditions, and by “earth” the social and political conditions of the time, near the year of our Lord 70, when it was written, particularly as these existed in connection with Judaism. Already they were “in the process of dissolution” and the Christians scattered everywhere were “helping forward the coming of the Day of God” by preaching Christ to all nations as their coming King,—the Day of God which would end this “process” and bring these “heavens” and this “earth” to an end “with a crash,” and with such

a fire as would reduce the whole political and religious situation to its original elements. Peter's interest in this destructive process was intense, for he had the promise of his God in the last chapter of Isaiah that he would make out of the elements of the old heavens and old earth "new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness shall have its home." The "fire" of the passage is, of course, figurative fire. The thing which the passage describes is the breaking up and melting of the peoples of the earth, beginning with the Jews, preparatory to their being taken up, all of them, into the world-wide religious, social and political institutions of Christianity. The burning of Rome, which Peter perhaps witnessed, may have suggested the figure, or it may have come to him through his reading of the Old Testament prophets. It is interesting to note, as Farrar does, that a little later, both the temple of Capitoline Jupiter, in Rome, representing the heathen heavens, and the temple at Jerusalem, representing the heavens of the Jew, were burned to ashes to make room for the new.

The Twenty-first chapter of Revelation presents the case from the same standpoint. Going on through it and into the next, we find ourselves in the midst of imagery supplied by Isaiah and Ezekiel and used by them to describe a state of earthly blessedness which they foresaw. And when we look closely into John's words for his meaning, the only possible conclusion we can ar-

rive at, consistent at once with literary principles and common sense, is that he is setting forth, not the glories of heaven itself, but the glories of those heavenly conditions which are to be established here through the descent of the divine into our human affairs. The things John saw were new heavens and a new earth—a new earth as well as new heavens. In other words he had a vision of new religious and social (including political) conditions. And to keep us from making any mistake at this point, he goes on to say that he saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God *out of heaven*, to be itself both the new heavens and the new earth; and he heard a great voice, not out of the New Jerusalem, but out of the same heaven from which the New Jerusalem itself was descending, saying with undoubted reference to that city—

“The tabernacle of God is set up *among men*.”

And when we have reached the close of John's description of the great four-square city, with its twelve gates of pearl that are never shut, we read—“The nations walk by the light of it; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. . . . And men will bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.”

The story is that of the coming of God through Christ into touch with us men and our affairs, and the glorious results which are eventually to be brought about by means of that coming. The work being accomplished is heavenly

and divine, but the scene is earthly and lies in the midst of our religious and social conditions.

And so, losing sight now of Judaism, the fraction, and finding under our eyes, instead, the whole vast world of our humanity, the one true thing for us to say is this: "The former heavens and the former earth" are gradually passing away, and "the new heavens" and "the new earth" are gradually taking their places, and by and by the old heavens and earth will all be gone, and everything here will be new. Or, viewing the great transformation from the standpoint of John's figure of the New Jerusalem, the day is coming when all earth's peoples shall at length find themselves within its gates and living its life of full and glad obedience to the one great King of all. It is here upon the earth that such conditions are to be established as will forbid the entrance of "any unhallowed thing," and of "those whose lives are shameful and false," and will bring it about that this planet will be peopled "only by those whose names have been written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

It is in this very home of disease and death and weeping and mourning that God shall wipe away all tears. It is here that "there shall be no more death, nor will there be any more grief or crying or pain."

And John's further description of this glorious city of his vision is in full harmony with this view—

“And the angel showed me ‘a river of the water of Life,’ as clear as crystal issuing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of the street of the city. On each side of the river was a tree of life which bore twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ‘Everything that is accursed will cease to be.’ The throne of God and of the Lamb will be within it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. Night will cease to be. They will have no heed of the light of a lamp, nor have they the light of the sun, for the ‘Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.’” (Rev. 22:1-5.)

Perfect obedience, unhindered vision of God, the full assurance of faith, complete spiritual illumination, and the abiding possession of all the fruits of the finished triumphs of all the redeeming years,—this is the final picture of John’s painting. No wonder that after the vision of coming facts, which enabled him to do the painting, had passed, the angel said to him: “Blessed will he be who lays to heart the words of the prophecy contained in this book,” which you are writing, for it is at once the most glorious and most blessed prophecy that human lips can utter, or pen of man set down.

This constructive work of our Lord, like the destructive, is the task and toil of the redeeming

ages. Only as the wrong disappears can the right take its place. On the other hand, the right is always waiting for the wrong to make way for it. It is true, too, that as there is a gradual cleansing, enlightenment and upbuilding of the individual believer, so also is there of the church as a whole; for her progress towards maturity of creed and life is one of slow stages.

This gradual development of the kingdom of God was set forth by our Lord himself on more than one occasion. "First the blade, then the ear and then the full grain in the ear," are words of his. So also are the parables of the mustard seed, and of the "yeast which a woman took and covered up in three pecks of flour, until the whole had risen." (Matt. 13:33.) Paul, too, had it definitely in mind when, writing to the Ephesians, he said—

"He who went down is the same as he who went up—up beyond the highest heaven, that he might fill all things with his presence. And he it is who gave to the Church apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastors and teachers to fit his people for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of the Christ. And this shall continue, until we all attain to that unity which is given by faith and by a fuller knowledge of the Son of God; until we reach the ideal man—the full standard of the perfection of the Christ. Then we shall no longer be like infants, tossed

backwards and forwards, blown about by every breath of human teaching, through the trickery and craftiness of men, towards the snares of error; but holding the truth in a spirit of love, we shall grow into complete union with him who is our head—Christ Himself.” (Eph. 4:10-15.)

How definite this prophecy is, and how long the vista down which it looks so bravely! How very much, too, still remains to be effected before its finished fulfillment can be announced! But is not one of the blessed movements of our own times directed towards the healing of the divisions which have all along existed among Christians, and the attainment of “that unity which is given by faith and a fuller knowledge of the Son of God.” And have we not in this the pledge that the whole church will eventually be built into one grand body, “and reach the ideal man—the full standard of the perfection of the Christ.”

If we really need any further assurances of prophecy, Paul himself gives them to us in this same letter—

“The Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for her, to make her holy, after purifying her by the Washing with the Water, according to his promise; so that he might himself bring the Church, in all her beauty, into his own presence, with no spot or wrinkle or blemish of any kind, but that she might be holy and faultless.” (Eph. 5:26, 27.)

Paul was like John. He had the vision of a

Church perfected and rendered faultless by her Savior here upon the earth.

Associated most closely with this idea of the Church's perfection is that of her universality. And our study of the New Testament regarding the utter extinction of evil-doers, and the final banishment of Satan himself from the earth, has already made this universality a necessity of thought for us. When all the enemies of "the camp of Christ's people and the beloved city" have been either consumed or banished, the Church must in the very nature of things find herself in full possession. Consequently Paul has furnished us with a picture of things as they will appear when the redemption of our race is at length an accomplished fact. The picture is not complete, but it portrays a scene which is to characterize our Lord's final, as distinguished from his second coming—his coming at the close of the Christian age as distinguished from that coming of his at the close of the Mosaic era, to which we have already given attention.

The resurrection of those who were his has taken place. God has at long last, as we would say, put all his enemies under his feet, including the last enemy, death. "And, when everything has been placed under him, the Son will place himself under God who placed everything under him, that God may be all in all."

The scene which this picture represents is one of such infinite dimensions that we cannot hope to

take it all in, but this much at least may be clearly made out. Christ became man for the special work of bringing our race back to God, and when that work is fully done, he will in his humanity retire from view and leave the race to enjoy God as pure spirit, apart from every thought of his human mediation, excepting as that mediation must be forever held in the adoring memory of all those who shall have called him Savior.

Let us again ask what the two pictures were which the Holy Spirit hung in the gallery of Paul's sanctified intellect and imagination, to represent the earthly condition of our race as redeemed, and which he in turn hung in the gallery of New Testament literature for the grateful believing study of all the generations that were to succeed him. We may first look at them separately, and afterwards in combination.

Here is the first. Christ having done his whole work hands over the kingdom of mankind to God, who becomes "all in all,"—Lawgiver, Teacher, Satisfier of every need of his children. †

And here is the second. Let us examine it carefully. It is not a picture of man freed from his association with nature, or nature freed from its association with man, because that association could never be made mutually helpful to them in the highest way. On the contrary, this picture is that of nature rejoicing in the presence of man, and man rejoicing in the presence of nature, be-

cause they have together been delivered from the very last consequences of sin, including their long "enslavement to decay," and been placed, each of them, upon the highway leading to its own true goal.

And what do these two pictures, placed side by side, show us? Man at home in the bosom of God, and, at the same time, at home in a blissful and blissgiving headship of nature, is their splendid revelation. Man was made for God, and nature was made for man, and when Christ's redeeming work is done, both God and man will be found gloriously possessed of their full rights.

In fine, the divinely inspired apostles who dealt with this theme, regarded the full development and manifestation of God's children as the

—" . . . one far off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

To their minds the race when fully redeemed, was not to be represented so much by those who were soon to be raised from the dead and introduced to the full glories of heaven, as by those who were to have their home here, and were eventually to be lifted above the power of sin, and disease and death; every man, woman and child of them thereafter walking with God perfectly, and each in turn passing through that experience, corresponding to the resurrection which Paul described by the word "*change*."

This final age of human history will be that

of the divine Father and his children, and will endure, like those which preceded it, throughout the whole period assigned from the beginning by the wisdom and will of the loving Father Himself.

In bringing this chapter to a close we may remark that we are still living in the presence of the Judge of all the nations and the Savior of all men, who with his human lips proclaimed—

“Now this world is on its trial. Now the spirit that is ruling this world shall be driven out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men to myself.”

We are in his presence who taught his followers that the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple would be the token that he had entered into human affairs, to remove every hindrance to the right worship of God, and the highest service men owe to each other.

We find ourselves here again after such an examination of the scriptures as makes it easier for us to understand the holy joy with which this awful catastrophe was hailed by the very choicest saints of human history, up to that time at least. They rejoiced because it was given them to see that the casting away of impenitent Israel was the reconciling of the world; that the shaking to pieces of the old faulty heavens and earth was to make room for a new heaven and a new earth; that nothing could shatter; or that the breaking up and melting of the old heavens and earth was for the purpose of having the resultant liquid mass

crystalized into "new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness shall have its home." They rejoiced, in short, because they were divinely assured that the utter breaking up of the Jewish people as opposers of Christ, would be a very distinct clearing of the ground for our Lord's great work of redeeming the race. And they rejoiced *greatly* because they saw that this redemption would be complete, that the race would in reality, as well as in the divine purpose, be bought back from all its sins and sufferings, and raised to all the heights of holiness and happiness possible here upon the earth.

They saw that before the work was accomplished, every foe of goodness, including the "primeval Serpent" himself, would be finally banished from our earth, thus leaving "Christ's People" in sole possession. They saw Christ's people themselves led up to "that unity which is given by faith and by a fuller knowledge of the Son of God, and the perfection of manhood and that degree of development of which the ideal to be found in Christ is the standard." In other words, they saw Christ "bring the Church, in all her beauty, into his own presence with no spot or wrinkle or blemish of any kind, but that she might be holy and faultless."

When they viewed mankind in the fullness of the new Life, they saw the "holy city" and the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, as its temple and its illuminators. And as they gazed

they saw the nations walk by the light of it, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it, accompanied by the glory and honor of the nations themselves. And as they looked forward with the individual and social life of the race in mind, they exclaimed—

“There will be no more death, neither will there be any more grief or crying or pain. The old order has passed away.”

And they knew that this very planet, on which the first Adam fell and the second Adam triumphed, was to be the scene of all this glorious transformation.

Did they believe that all they described would be literally brought about? We may at least be sure that they believed in Eden, and its sinless unsuffering condition, and in Christ as the triumphant Savior, who would make all as well with the race here, as it would have been if Adam had not fallen at the first. What that is painful would the race unfallen have escaped? From all that they believed it would be completely rescued. What that is holy and high would it have attained here? Into all that they believed their Lord would fully save it.

Does this seem impossible? The true answer is that God's long processes have never yet miscarried in their execution. Peter declared that to the Lord a thousand years are like one day. This being so we may consider ourselves, from the apostolic point of view, as only near the close

of the second day of his year of grace. And he has accomplished much already. What then may he not effect in the remaining three hundred and sixty-three days of that year?

XXIII

CONCLUSION

We have now reviewed the Christian scheme of redemption as it unfolded itself before the apostolic mind. From beginning to end it is an eschatology—a science of the last things. These apostolic Christians had witnessed and were witnessing the inauguration of the final instrumentalities and processes connected with the divine redemption of our race. The patriarchal dispensation had given way to the ethnic religions, and these were now to be gloriously fulfilled in a religion as wide as mankind and great and perfect like the heart of God himself.

The instrumentalities were equal to the task proposed. First among them was the Second Person in the Trinity, who had become a perfect man, and, as such, had gone to the cross in proof of that infinite love which had sent and brought him to earth, and for the purpose of drawing all men to himself. To Him, on this account, had been given “the name which stands above all other names, so that in adoration of the name of Jesus every knee should bend in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should acknowledge *Jesus Christ as Lord* to the glory

of God the Father." (Phil. 2:10, 11.) He had been clothed with all authority as King and Judge, that he might condemn, overthrow and drive out all his opposers. He had also been made the perfect High Priest of the race, that he might be "able to save perfectly those who come to God through him, living forever, as he does, to intercede on their behalf." (Heb. 7:25.) He was perfect as a lawgiver, perfect as an example, perfect as an inspiration, perfect as a deliverer, and perfect as a restorer and upbuilder; and they believed he would, therefore, certainly "make all things new." (Rev. 21:5.)

Associated with him were angels, and "are not all the angels spirits in the service of God, sent out to minister for the sake of those who are to obtain Salvation?" (Heb. 1:14.) Joined with him, also, as his servants in his work, were his people, to whom he had entrusted various powers and duties, making them, like himself, "God's fellow-workers." (2 Cor. 6:1.) Associated with him, too, was the Third Person in the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, now to be known as the "Spirit of Christ" as well as the Spirit of God. (1 Pet. 1:11.) The bringer of "conviction to the world as to Sin and as to Righteousness, and as to Judgment" (Jno. 16:8, 13; 14:25, 26), he was also "the Spirit of Truth" who was to "guide into all truth," and be "the Helper" of Christ's people in all things.

Finally, the apostles knew "the God and Father

of all—the God who is over all, pervades all and is in all.” (Eph. 4:6.) They knew the great redemptive purpose, plan and undertaking to be pre-eminently His, and that He had determined to bring our Race to its highest possible perfection under the rule of His Son, as “The First-born from the dead” (Col. 1:18) and his own “appointed heir of all things.” (Heb. 1:2.)

They were satisfied that the great work in which they were privileged to engage was moral and spiritual in its nature, and that its aims were wide enough to take in every proper human activity. They did not look for the spectacular or the material excepting as these were supplied in connection with wars and political overthrows that would necessarily be looked upon as representing their Lord’s coming “from heaven with his mighty angels ‘in flaming fire’ to inflict punishment upon those who refuse to know God and upon those who turn a deaf ear to the Good News of Jesus, our Lord” (2 Thess. 1:7-8); and they confidently expected that the displays of this sort, which they themselves were looking for, would take place, as their Lord had taught, before some of their number would be called to their rest.

They had not forgotten the words of their instructor—“The kingdom of God does not come in a way that admits of observation, nor will people say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ for, mark me, the kingdom of God is already

among you" (Luke 17:20, 21); and wherever the king is with his loyal subjects there is the kingdom. You might therefore turn about at this moment and look upon it if you would. So said Jesus to the Pharisees. And he told them very plainly what they would find the kingdom like, as the time passed and the King went on with his work of judging men—and particularly his work of judging them. The events would be spectacular enough, and as full of deliverance and holy triumph for all faithful subjects and servants of his, as of disaster and woe for those of them who proved rebellious. It would be soon seen that all peoples were under his scepter, and that as he had dealt with the one to which he first came, so he would deal with all the rest, till his laws were everywhere welcomed and obeyed, and his person regarded with the deepest reverence and love wherever men were found. An era would pass before all was done, but that generation would not pass before it would become most strikingly evident that he was the very Judge of men he had declared himself to be. This revelation of himself he called "the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24:27, 37, 39), and remarked to Peter about John with reference to it at the time of that very memorable meeting by the Galilean Sea after his resurrection—"If it is my will that he should wait till I come, what has that to do with you?" (Jno. 21:22, 23.) As usual the disciples, not yet spiritually enlight-

ened, began to talk of John as having been promised exemption from death; in view of which John himself very naively wrote—"Jesus did not say that that disciple was not to die, but said, if it is my will that he should wait till I come, what has that to do with you?" In point of fact, all took place as Jesus had indicated. Peter's "tent" was put away as his Master Himself had assured him it would be, and John waited till the "coming" and long afterwards, loving and serving. (Jno. 21:18; 2 Pet. 1:13, 14.) How touching in the light of this is his "Amen, come Lord Jesus," which we have already pointed out as almost the last word of Revelation—the book he wrote when his Lord was in the very act of manifesting himself as the Judge of men.

It will not be contended by many that the apostles of our Lord and the spiritually minded members of the churches in their day, did not entertain these great hopes and expectations. What has been claimed is that those men were mistaken, and that Paul, in particular, perceived his early blunder and corrected it. We have seen, however, that so far was this from having been really the case, that Paul actually fortified his first position, and proceeded to the development and elaboration of his doctrine of the resurrection, until he viewed that initial event as the opening of such a door to life as must in the end make it the complete annihilator of disease and death on this planet, not on the behalf of man

alone, but also of all "nature" besides. And if we take the ground that these inspired writers of the New Testament were mistaken in regard to these matters, whether they ever came to know it or not, we must be prepared to go even further and claim that Jesus himself taught in such a manner as made it impossible for them to reach any other conclusions than those which they advanced with such perfect confidence. We must remember, too, that it was not the men of leaden intellect and low and groveling desires, nor the dreamy, impracticable visionaries of the period, whose most cherished anticipations we have been dealing with. Paul and John and James and Peter were men of great acumen. They were also men of action, who touched life at almost every point in the most practical fashion. Next to Christ Himself they were the very creators of the church, and thus, in the long run, the molders of the thought and life of our whole race.

It is certainly time we parted forever with the ambition to pose as the wise correctors of Christ and his apostles. Our inspiration is too poor for a task of such dimensions. Our highest place here is that of humble interpreters who tremblingly desire sufficient insight to perceive clearly the precise contents of the revelation which God gave to the world by means of these men, and powers of expression sufficiently ample to enable us to set forth what we are thus

given to see, in such a way that we shall not darken the divine counsel with our poor human speech.

There are, however, several quite legitimate questions which are likely to be asked in view of all that has been put forth in the preceding pages. The first of them is this. If Paul really believed in all these things,—if he really believed that our Lord was coming as Judge in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem, that the resurrection of the righteous dead, at least, would take place then, and that all the righteous then living, and their successors through generation after generation, would put on spiritual bodies while they were still living in the flesh, till at length a painless and blissful absorption of the “animal” by the “spiritual” would, in a world that will have become wholly righteous at last, bring to an end the long and horrible reign of disease and death; how did it come to pass that practically no trace of this creed of his is to be found in Christian literature outside of the New Testament itself?

To ask still another question, why is it that in the first letter of John we find what looks like a virtual denial of the doctrine that Christ came as Judge at the destruction of Jerusalem? For was not this letter written after that event? And does not John state that many anti-Christ had risen already, and that the days in which he was writing were “the last days,” or the days im-

mediately preceding the revelation of the Judge?
(1 Jno. 2:18.)

Dealing now with the latter question first, we may say at once that no one knows when the first letter of John was written. Some favor the year 85 or later as the probable date, but there is certainly nothing very definite about such a claim as that. The Twentieth Century revisers say—"It is probable that it was written after the fall of Jerusalem and at a time when the second coming of Christ appeared to be imminent." They further say that "it was probably written at Ephesus after 70 A. D." And they cite the passage to which I have referred in proof of their view. In their version the passage reads thus:—

"My children, these are the last days. You were told that anti-Christ was coming and many anti-Christ's have already arisen. By that we know that these are the last days."

In what way these words support the contention that the letter was written "after 70 A. D.," rather than *during* 70, let us say, they do not even hint. Did our Lord's prediction that there would be false Christs before the destruction of Jerusalem find no fulfillment? Or was it his prediction of his own coming in connection with that event that our revisers doubted the fulfillment of? As to the latter we have seen how definitely our Lord came both as Savior and Judge within the life-time of the generation to which he himself

had ministered while in the flesh, and how he came to abide till his work was done.

In point of fact the New Testament presents three of these "Comings" of Christ. For besides his coming as spiritual Savior and his coming as Royal Judge, which we have already looked into with as much care as we could, there is still another referred to by John in the third chapter of his first letter, where he writes of being like Christ through seeing "him as he really is." (1 Jno. 3:2.) Each coming, must, as we have seen, be considered as a revelation, and this coming is our Lord's revelation of Himself as the Exemplar and Transformer of his people. Their supreme difficulty is that of comprehending him in his moral and spiritual perfections, and this is at the same time their supreme spiritual necessity. They are changed into his image from glory to glory, not all at once, nor all in one or even a hundred generations, but only as they can intelligently grasp and appreciate the things of which that glory is made up. He is revealed to them, or comes to them, only gradually and slowly, therefore, as exemplar and transformer or renewer. And this is just as true of his other comings or revelations. He only began to be revealed as the spiritual Savior of men at Pentecost, and as Royal Judge in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem. He cannot stand out with perfect clearness in any respect before men's eyes till all his work is done. Their eyes will

not be fully purged till then, nor will he himself be all disclosed. This was well understood by Paul, for he wrote of seeing "the glory of the Lord" only "as if reflected in a mirror." He had written before—

"As yet we see in a mirror dimly, but then—face to face. As yet my knowledge is incomplete, but then I shall know in full, as I have been fully known." (1 Cor. 13:12.) And years afterwards, he wrote again, "My aim is to get to know Christ" (Phil. 3:10, Tentative version T. C. N. T.) till he stands sufficiently revealed before my eyes to make it possible for me to "grow like him in his death," and "attain to the resurrection from the dead" which was his.

Those will do well to remember these facts, who, in view of the teaching of this volume, have begun to wonder if Paul would not now look upon the Lord's Supper as an out-of-date institution, since according to his own word it was a proclaiming of "the Lord's death—till He comes."

John saw the New Jerusalem *coming* down from God out of Heaven. It had not all come, nor has it all come yet. We see it coming still. Our Lord's comings or revelations continue, and will do so till all his holy life has entered into our humanity and made it, also, both holy and deathless.

On the matter of the Antichrists, on the other hand, we can do no better, perhaps, than quote some exceedingly sane words from Farrar's

“*Early Days of Christianity*”—“The word antichrist, which St. John alone uses, may mean either ‘*Rivals of Christ*—i. e., pseudo-Christ (Matt. 24:5, 11), or enemies of Christ’; either those who try to pass themselves off as Christ or those who set themselves in open array against him. An Antichrist may take the semblance of a Nero or of a Simon Magus, of a Priest or of a Voltaire. St. John enters into no details because his readers had already heard that antichrist cometh. This must refer to his own oral teachings, or those of other apostles, for he tells us afterwards that by ‘Antichrists’ he means those who deny the incarnation (4:3) or who deny the Father and the Son (2:22). This form of Antichrist is not described either by Daniel, or by St. Paul in his Man of Sin. If, in 2 Thess. 3:4, the expression of St. Paul may admit of some sort of analogous interpretation, it certainly could not have been assumed by St. Paul that the brief letter to a Macedonian Church would have already pervaded the whole of Asia.

“Nevertheless, the prevalence of these Antichrists, of whom St. John had orally spoken, was the direct fulfillment of the weeping prophecy of St. Paul in his farewell to the Ephesian Elders, ‘that after his departure grievous wolves would enter among them, not sparing the flock, and that *from among their own selves* men would arise speaking perverted things to drag away disciples after them.’ The very danger to the Church

lay in the fact that this Antichristian teaching arose out of her own bosom. The Antichrists did not openly apostatize from the Christian body; they corrupted it from within. They still *called* themselves Christians; had they really been so, they would have continued to be so. But their present apostasy was a manifestation of the fact that they never had been true Christians, and that not all who called themselves Christians, are such in reality."

It may be noted, too, that the words, "these are the last days," are by no means a literal translation. They only represent what the revisers believed to be the true sense. Such departures from literal renderings must often be made if the sense is to be clearly stated for the reader of English, but they represent, at the same time, a kind of work in which every prepossession will obtrude itself, and in which translations are only too apt to degenerate into mere glosses. Let us take an instance which will illustrate this fact.

When these revisers changed the literal "baptized into Christ" and "baptized into Moses" so as to make them read, in one case, "baptized into union with Christ," and in the other, "underwent baptism as followers of Moses," it is very doubtful whether they did not wholly miss the idea which was in the apostle's mind. (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3 and 1 Cor. 10:2.) Indeed it seems perfectly clear that they did. For in their tenta-

tive version, they rendered the one passage which sets forth that idea unmistakably, so as to cover it up altogether. We refer to 2 Cor. 12:13, which they translated, or rather, paraphrased thus:—"It was through one spirit, and to form one Body, that we were all baptized, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free men." Now if they had given it to us literally (they have almost done it in their final version) they would have made it plain that Paul had in mind the Church as the body of Christ, and was teaching that by a spiritual baptism both Jews and Gentiles were being made members of that body. "Baptism into Christ" was his way of setting forth that change which, after Jesus and John and Peter and James, we call regeneration and conversion.

Paul thought of the Israelites as so brought under the personality of Moses, by means of their night's experience in the Red Sea, that they became, as it were, members of his body. On the Egyptian side of the sea they had been faithless, rebellious, ready to renounce his will and leadership altogether; but by means of their passage on dry ground through the midst of that Sea, which he had been instrumental in securing for them, they lost their will in his, so far forth as that will had to do with the journey upon which they had set out. Just so, too, the believer in Christ, "whether Jew or Greek, slave or free man," was conceived of by Paul as having

parted with his old self-centered individuality and come into the very body of Christ to know his will and that alone; and he taught that this change was effected by a baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was, of course, this spiritual transformation in its ideal perfection, rather than as it actually stood revealed in the individual believer that Paul had in his mind when he produced these passages, but it is scarcely open to doubt that the image which was present to his thinking all the while, was the one we have indicated. But if so, no paraphrase of any sort can do anything but mislead. "Baptized into one body, into Christ, into Moses," are words which present the very image of the thing as no other words can.

The unhappy looseness of these renderings of the Twentieth Century revisers probably represents a failure on their part to perceive that the Pauline doctrine of baptismal regeneration is regeneration by the Holy Spirit, considered entirely apart from water baptism. No New Testament writer ever described water baptism as baptism into a body or person. The apostles baptized by water, not "into Jesus Christ," but "into the Name or Faith of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16, 19:5; Matt. 28:19), as the Master Himself had told them they should. They knew that its effect was only that of entitling the person baptized to bear the Christian name and share in the Christian privileges and responsibilities of the time; that its effect was churchly as distinguished from

spiritual, outward and ritual and not inward and heart-transforming. It was in view of this fact that Paul was inspired to represent the Holy Spirit's regenerating work as a baptism "into Jesus Christ,"—a baptism of Jews and heathens of every class "into one body." And thus, as the writer of Hebrews shows us, there came to be a doctrine, not of baptism but "of baptisms" (Heb. 6:2), which was too high and difficult for the average member of the apostolic church, and which he felt compelled on that account to pass by. Another doctrine, however, speedily arose in its place, from which the church, as a whole, has never yet been able to free herself.

Nothing, however, even in theology, has been really settled, that has not been settled logically and scientifically, that is to say, in view of the actual facts. For after all has been said, it will be found that the human mind was not built in two sections, one of which was indissolubly linked with the reasoning faculty, while the other was not. The difference between a baptized child and an unbaptized one, as shown by their later development, is appreciable only to those who have the dogma of regeneration through baptism by water to maintain, and have, therefore, passed judgment upon the matter beforehand, leaving no room for any real examination into it. To say this, however, is not to deny that infant baptism is desirable, but only to assert that baptism by water is not the heaven-appointed

means for bringing us, either in our infancy or our later years, into saving relations with the atonement of Christ. Baptism by water is the sign and seal of the fact that those to whom it is administered, whether infants or adults, have been definitely acknowledged by the Church as belonging to Christendom, and as therefore entitled to the church's special care, instruction and discipline. Whether such a baptized individual, infant or adult, is spiritually regenerated or not, is a question that must be determined by spiritual and not ritual tests, as the whole church of Christ will acknowledge the moment she has in her entirety abandoned irrational dogma for sound doctrine, which, while it may transcend present definite knowledge, never flatly contradicts either reason or fact. The genuinely Christian position is that all infants possess spiritual life through Christ, as the Second Adam, at birth, and that this life may be lost by them, and also restored by the original giver during the years of personal responsibility which come later; and that all our Lord's saving work is accomplished spiritually and not ritually. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are teaching ordinances, and they are greatly helpful in that way but in no other.

The point we have been preparing to make is this. If the prepossessions of the Twentieth Century revisers led them away from Paul's idea every time they touched his doctrine of spiritual

baptism, we may be pardoned for fancying that they made a like blunder when they came to deal with that word of John which we have had under our notice. They represent him as having twice declared "these are the last days," whereas the literal thing he said twice was "this is the last hour." May it not have been that the letter was written during the year 70 just before the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the apostle who so loved to dwell upon the fact of his Lord's coming, and so earnestly prayed for it, saw when he wrote, that it was indeed the church's "last hour" of waiting for that event, and also the last hour of respite for her Jewish foes. At least his manner of statement is graphic enough and solemn enough for that.

If on the other hand, however, the date of this letter should ever be definitely proved to have been later than the year 70, it will not then be forgotten that the word "hour," like the word "day," can be used to represent an era or time-period, and it will be understood that John was teaching in this passage that the presence of so many Antichrists in the world was a strong proof that Christ Himself was here to be opposed, that he had come and was present among men to carry on to its completion every undertaking connected with his great work of redeeming our race; and because he could not fail in any respect as those who were before him had done, there would be nothing for another to un-

dertake when he had finished. He was the Christ, the King crowned by God for the whole race, and the whole race, recognizing him as supreme in character, would eventually unite to crown Him on its own account.

Therefore, wrote John, this is the final era of human redemption, it is the very last hour that will be needed.

The first question still remains to be dealt with. It is this:—If Paul really believed in all these things, and entertained these lively expectations; if he believed that our Lord was coming as Judge in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem; that the resurrection of the righteous dead at least would take place then; and that all the righteous then living and their successors through generation after generation would put on spiritual bodies while they were still living in the flesh, till at length a painless and blissful absorption of the “animal” by the “spiritual,” would, in a world that had become wholly righteous at last, bring to a final end the long and horrible reign of disease and death: if he really believed and taught all these things and was joined in part at least by the other New Testament writers, how did it come to pass that practically no trace of this creed of his is to be found in Christian literature outside of the New Testament itself? This question can be answered with perfect frankness, and in such a manner as to satisfy every reasonable mind.

That a given thing has not been grasped or fully understood is no proof that it has never been clearly offered as a matter of definite instruction to any responsible body of men. To readers of the New Testament this should seem like a very ordinary statement. Jesus knew how to present an idea accurately; how to state a fact plainly. Yet there were two things at least, which he failed to make his immediate disciples comprehend—that he was actually to go to the cross and rise again from the dead; and that his kingdom was not immediately to assume a political form, with Himself as its visible king. He so many times assured them that he would be crucified, that Matthew introduces the subject with the remark that “at this time Jesus Christ *began* to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and undergo much suffering at the hands of the Councilors, and Chief Priests, and teachers of the law, and be put to death, and rise on the third day.” (Matt. 16:21.) And Matthew goes on to say that these words were so well understood by the disciples that Peter at once went so far as to deny their accuracy to the Master’s very face, and was by our Lord addressed as “Satan” for his perverse attempt to shut out the truth and hinder in a wrongful way the coming to pass of the stupendous event itself. But Peter’s perversity of intellect continued in spite of the severity of Jesus’ rebuke. And he was no worse than the rest, for they were all

equally deaf and blind, as the whole of the later story proves.

Perhaps our Lord's word about Mary, the sister of Lazarus, keeping or having kept that box of spikenard which she opened at the feast which was given in his honor a week before his death, for the day of his burial, indicates that she had become convinced that he was really to die. (Jno. 12:7, 8.) But if so, she stands out as the one solitary exception to the general failure to accept his teaching on the subject as literally true. And so persistent was their incapacity for taking in the real nature of the kingdom he was to set up, that "on one occasion when the apostles had met together," after his resurrection and just prior to his ascension, "they asked Jesus this question,—'Master, is this the time when you intend to reëstablish the kingdom for Israel?'" And he, in pity for their blindness, withheld the direct answer, which would have proved a stumbling-block to them, and gave them one which guided their thoughts heavenward and prepared them for a more complete entrance into his kingdom on their own behalf.

This power of his to comprehend and adapt Himself to their limitations stands revealed in these last wonderful words of his to them just before he led them to Gethsemane,—"I have still much to say to you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he,—the Spirit of Truth—comes, he

will guide you into all Truth; for he will not speak on his own authority but will speak all that he hears; and he will tell you of the things that are to come. He will honor me; because he will take of what is mine, and will tell it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; that is why I said that he takes of what is mine, and will tell it to you." (Jno. 16:12-15.)

But as Jesus had to adapt his teachings to the comprehension of his followers; and even then failed to get into their minds some of the things which he taught, so was it also with the apostles after the promised Holy Spirit had made them in their turn the divinely inspired instructors of their fellowmen.

Paul writes to the Corinthians: "But I, Brothers, could not speak to you as men with spiritual insight but only as worldly minded—mere infants in the Faith of Christ. I fed you with milk, not with solid food, for you were not then able to take it." (1 Cor. 3:1-2.)

In writing to Titus he declared: "There are indeed, many unruly persons, great talkers who deceive themselves. . . . It was a Cretan—one of their own teachers—who said: 'Cretans are always liars, base brutes, and gluttonous idlers'; and his statement is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they may be sound in the faith."

And this inability to receive truth readily and hold it purely was omnipresent in the church,

just as one might have anticipated; for how could these Jews and heathens have got rid all at once of the whole vast mass of puerilities and superstitious absurdities, which had made up, as one might say, the very warp and woof of their thinking; and have risen out of the debasing materialism in which for ages they had been steeped, to enter immediately into the full comprehension of all the spiritual facts pertaining to Christianity? The thing was impossible.

The letter of Jude is largely a description of and warning against "certain godless people" who had "crept" into the church, and become a peril to its very existence; who "malign whatever they do not understand; while they use such things as they know by instinct (like the animals that have no reason) for their own corruption." (Jude 4, 10.) The reason these people were such a peril to the church, was that the body, taken as a whole, was so ignorant and unspiritual. Consequently the writer of our New Testament letter to the Hebrews, declared to those whom he addressed—

"Now on this subject I have much to say, but it is difficult to explain it to you, because you have shown yourselves so slow to learn. For, while considering the time that has elapsed, you ought to be teaching others; you still need someone to teach you the very alphabet of the divine revelation, and need again to be fed with 'milk' instead of with 'solid food'. . . . For every one who

still has to take 'milk' knows nothing of the Teaching of Righteousness; he is a mere infant. But 'solid food' is for Christians of mature faith—those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish right from wrong. Therefore, let us leave behind the elementary teaching about the Christ and press on to perfection, not always laying over again a foundation of repentance for a lifeless formality, of faith in God—teaching concerning baptisms and the laying on of hands, *the resurrection of the dead and a final judgment*. Yes, and with God's help, so we will." (Heb. 5:11-6:3.)

How clearly these words reveal the fact that upon these very subjects with which we have been dealing, the apostolic leaders of thought found it most difficult to produce accurate impressions. So impossible had the task become in his time that this writer tells those whom he had set out to instruct, that for the present at least he must simply avoid "teaching concerning baptisms and the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and a final judgment."

Peter very plainly tells us the reason. Paul, he says, had undertaken the task with such poor results, that it was about as well to let the subject drop till the church grew wiser and more spiritual. If in addition to all this it should, contrary to much learned expectation, turn out in the end that the author of "Hebrews" was no less a personage than Paul himself, his refraining

from these subjects which were so familiar and so dear to him, will appear still more significant; for it would then be seen that the church had proved herself so incapable of understanding them, that their very chiefest exponent had to abandon them in his public teaching.

But let us see just how Peter makes his point touching Paul's failure here—

“The day of the Lord will come like a thief; and on that day the heavens will pass away with a crash—the elements will be burnt up and dissolved, and the earth and all that is in it will be disclosed. Now, since all these things are in the process of dissolution, think what you yourselves ought to be—what holy and pious lives you should lead, while you await and hasten the Day of God. At its coming the heavens will be dissolved in fire, and the elements melted by heat, but we look for ‘new heavens and a new earth,’ where righteousness shall have its home, in fulfillment of the promise of God.

“Therefore, dear friends, in expectation of these things, make every effort to be found by him spotless, blameless, and at peace. Regard our Lord's forbearance as your only hope of Salvation. This is what our dear Brother Paul wrote to you, with the wisdom that God gave him. It is the same in all his letters, when he speaks in them about these subjects. There are some things in them difficult to understand, which untaught and weak people distort, just as they

do all other writings, to their own Ruin." (2 Pet. 3:10-16.)

It would almost seem that this confession of Peter that some of the things Paul advanced on these themes were "difficult to understand," must be taken to prove that he himself was unable to spell his way completely through them. And this need not disturb us. There is what we may call an economy about God's way of revealing the great facts of human redemption. And it may well have been that in that economy Paul was the only man who was inspired to see all the way along the divine processes to their very end.

If a man stands alone in his inspiration, his inspiration is greater, not less, because of that. Failure to get one's message understood may prove the same thing. It requires no inspiration at all to tell the things everybody knows. And the farther one goes beyond his fellows in the things he is given to see, the fewer there will be who will be able to follow him at all.

The question,—Was he understood? is important historically, but not exegetically. The same may be said of the question,—*How* was he understood? The one inquiry that really matters from the standpoint of interpretation is—What was it precisely that he set out to teach? And this is the question which we have been asking in the presence of our Lord, and of the New Testament writers, throughout our present undertaking.

We may now note afresh some of the things which have come within our view during the progress of this discussion. We have seen our Lord Jesus Christ as Royal Judge condemning and overthrowing all the opposers of his kingdom, until none remained to hinder, and his people filled the whole earth. We have looked upon his march as deliverer from death, and seen him raising the dead and changing the living, till at length what was mortal in men no longer fell into decay but was, on the contrary, "absorbed in Life" (II Cor. 5:4), and even "nature" itself escaped "from its enslavement to decay and attained to the freedom which will mark the glory of the children of God." (Rom. 8:21.) He has also appeared before us as a complete Savior, and we have seen him leading his people up to the heights of knowledge and holiness "until they reached the ideal man—the full standard of the perfection of the Christ"; and every activity of theirs, social, political, and churchly, harmonized with the divine requirements.

The story is that of an evolution—an evolution through Christ. He came as the Creator of a new order, or, if anyone prefers it, as the restorer and upbuilder of the original order, which the fall of our race arrested at its very inception. He came as the Father of an age, and of an order in which the spiritual was at length to absorb or swallow up the animal, and even the material as we commonly use the term.

He took upon him our animal nature, but without fulfilling its chief function—that of begetting others to succeed him. His life belonged to the realm of the spiritual, and because it was lived on that plane with a perfect persistence, all of him that was material and mortal was lifted to the same height. Then he proceeded to draw up the race of mankind after him—slowly, as became the author of those patient processes in nature, which we have learned to call by the name of evolution, but surely and triumphantly. According to the New Testament, this process is to move along all the lines of our nature and its activities, till his words that are “spirit” and “life” have by their might transmuted and transformed all things into their own nature and likeness.

How full of significance in view of all this are those words which our Lord addressed to Martha, when he said—

“I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in me shall live though he die; and he who lives and believes in me shall never die.” Jesus was guilty here of no poor play on words. He was not juggling with our human speech. On the contrary, he was revealing by means of it more than Martha or anyone who listened to him then was prepared to take in. Later John, at least, took in enough of their significance to record them for the church’s instruction and benefit.

“The life” is much more than “the resurrection,” and to die and rise again is to enjoy a poor victory compared with theirs who “will never die at all” because Christ’s spirit and life will have made them immortal. Our Lord opened up before Martha the whole long vista of the redeeming years, that she might look upon their crowning triumph.

We may also read the fourteenth chapter of John in the light of this revelation. “My Father’s Home”—What is that but the place where all his children are? So it must be here as well as yonder. It was to men who were to stay here and do and suffer, that he brought forward the facts concerning it as a source of present comfort and inspiration. His words were to the eleven disciples, and to us only after them, and the things he promised were to be realized by them very early, there in Jerusalem largely, and not elsewhere at the close of unnumbered millenniums.

“In my Father’s home there are many dwellings”—many dwellings. You are in one of them now, but it is a very poor one comparatively. I live in a much better one, and I shall introduce you to it.

“I am going to prepare a place for you.” I am going to the Father and when I return and take you to be with me, you will know that I am in union with the Father, that you are with me and I with you there, and, therefore, that here

and yonder are not places separated from each other but are really one place, one Father's home with many dwellings. I am speaking to you of spiritual things. You are as yet unspiritual, and cannot fully understand the things I am saying to you. It is first of all a matter of spiritual revealings which cannot be detected by the bodily senses. The Holy Spirit will come. The Father will send him, and he will bring it all to pass. Your love for me will be so fully awakened that you will do or dare anything that I wish you to undertake or face. Then the Father and I myself will stand revealed in your consciousness, and you will be most definitely aware of our presence with you and all about you, and will rejoice as never before, and that even when you are experiencing hardships and perils. The Holy Spirit, too, will reveal himself to you in his own personality, and you will find that you have indeed been taken to dwell where I am, that is, in the Father Himself, as the primary source of all life and joy.

"I shall return." When was this word fulfilled? After his resurrection visibly; at Pentecost invisibly and spiritually, but more gloriously than before; at the destruction of Jerusalem triumphantly against persecuting Judaism and to raise from the dead those who had fallen asleep in Him before that time, to introduce all true believers then living to that change which corresponds to the resurrection, and thencefor-

ward to carry on his work till all was done.

“In truth I tell you, he who believes in me will himself do the work I am doing; and he will do greater work still, because I am going to the Father.”

The ages of redemption with all their wealth of achievement and blessing for the race, as these were anticipated by the apostles, were before Jesus when he uttered these words; and they alone could justify them. But it will be seen when all has been accomplished, that Jesus had to take a somewhat lowly place as a worker in the interests of our humanity, when he was here in the flesh. He could cure disease then, but he could not banish it. He could raise the dead, but he could not deliver men from the necessity of dying, nor provide them with spiritual bodies in which to quit their animal ones. He could not even escape death Himself. Neither could He, on the other hand, lift the veil of ignorance and lead men on to perfect knowledge. Nor could he transform the social and political conditions in the midst of which he lived. All these greater things were left to be accomplished by, or, rather, through those who should believe on Him during the long series of generations which was to follow, and which has probably even now been only well begun. But these greater things were all to be done, and will yet all be worked out in the manner which the Holy Spirit has indicated in the New Testament, where he has according to

the Lord's further promise, told us "of the things that are to come."

Have any of these things actually arrived? They certainly have. And they continue to come with comparative rapidity. The old tyrannies and human slavery which Jesus could not touch at all, excepting from a distance, by means of his great principles of the brotherhood of man and the true law of service, have been directly faced and fought by his followers, till they are now all but exterminated. Great strides have been made in the application of the divine law touching the marriage relation and family life. Commerce has been vastly improved. War has been largely stripped of its horrors, and has itself become so abhorrent to the Christian consciousness that it cannot survive through many centuries more. The vice of drunkenness is now being combated with a full knowledge of the physiological, as well as the intellectual and spiritual effects produced by alcohol, so that it is at last clearly doomed. Philanthropies have multiplied and are multiplying, and among the most striking of them are the philanthropies of war. The churches are everywhere moving along the lines indicated by our Lord in his prayer that all his followers might be one. Christendom carries what remains of the heathen world upon its heart. "The white man's burden" has assumed huge dimensions, for it is really the burden of Christ—poorly borne by the white man often,

yet Christ's burden nevertheless. Disease and death have more than met their match in the skill of the Christian physician and surgeon, and are being steadily beaten back. The average life-time of a generation in Christian lands is longer by years than it was a century ago. Deeds of healing are done daily as a mere matter of course, which in the time of Christ and his apostles would have been looked upon as miracles; and the only end to it all which one can foresee is that which our Lord Himself foretold and made not only possible but certain.

Finally we find ourselves living to-day in the presence of the invisible, the intangible and the incomprehensible, and compelled to regard them as at once the mightiest and the most abiding.

One may say with some confidence that the true story of the material universe, and of our own planet in particular, is simply that of the evolution of Life. The atom lives as really as the glorified Christ. The difference between them may be set forth in two ways and regarded as either a difference in kind or a difference in degree. Perhaps the theologian will prefer the former alternative, but the scientist will choose the latter. The first manifestations of Life are possibly still with us in the unorganized particles of ether. Is there somewhere a connecting link between these and the whirling, dancing electrons which have given their allegiance to the center of control in the atom? Just what, materially con-

sidered, is the center of control itself? One asks also by what means such variety was attained in the composition of atoms to form the elements, and the union of these again to produce the multiplied chemical combinations in their varying forms. Whatever the answers to these questions may be when they reach us, they cannot in the least alter the fact that all these steps quite clearly belong to the same upward march which we follow when later we find ourselves in the company of the plasma-cells of the whole vegetable and animal series. The first processes are as intimately related to the second as they were absolutely essential to their beginning and maintenance. The self-conscious, too, found its stepping stone and permanent foundation in the conscious, and the moral sense, or individual conscience, in the community sense. The moral sense is the highest and most precious development of common sense. The unflinching conscience of Jesus, too, was but the logical outcome of the whole process in that direction, just as the human intelligence fully informed for all terrestrial requirements, will be seen to be the logical, the natural and the necessary outcome of the evolution of intellect upon our planet, the moment the day of even one such gloriously equipped intellect arrives in connection with the ever growing division of labor and care for each other among men. So also a body enduringly worthy of Life at its best in men and permanently desirable, because readily

adaptable to all the uses they may have for it, will be looked upon as the one and only suitable crown or culmination of the whole evolutionary progress along the line of sentient organisms. For, given perfect housing and complete equipment, Life, as it appears in men, can have no bounds to its lofty possibilities. And Life at its highest in self-conscious individual intellects and consciences, duly developed and furnished, must know and dwell in harmony with that which is above, as well as with that which is about and beneath it. But that which transcends Life, as it appears in men, is that Life's Source in God himself. Thus all Life is seen to be the one Life in various phases and stages of manifestation. Science passes into Theology and Theology back again into Science, so that from whichever side of things we view all, we see the God who "himself gives to all life and breath and all things," and know that "in him we live and move and are." (Acts 17:25, 28.)

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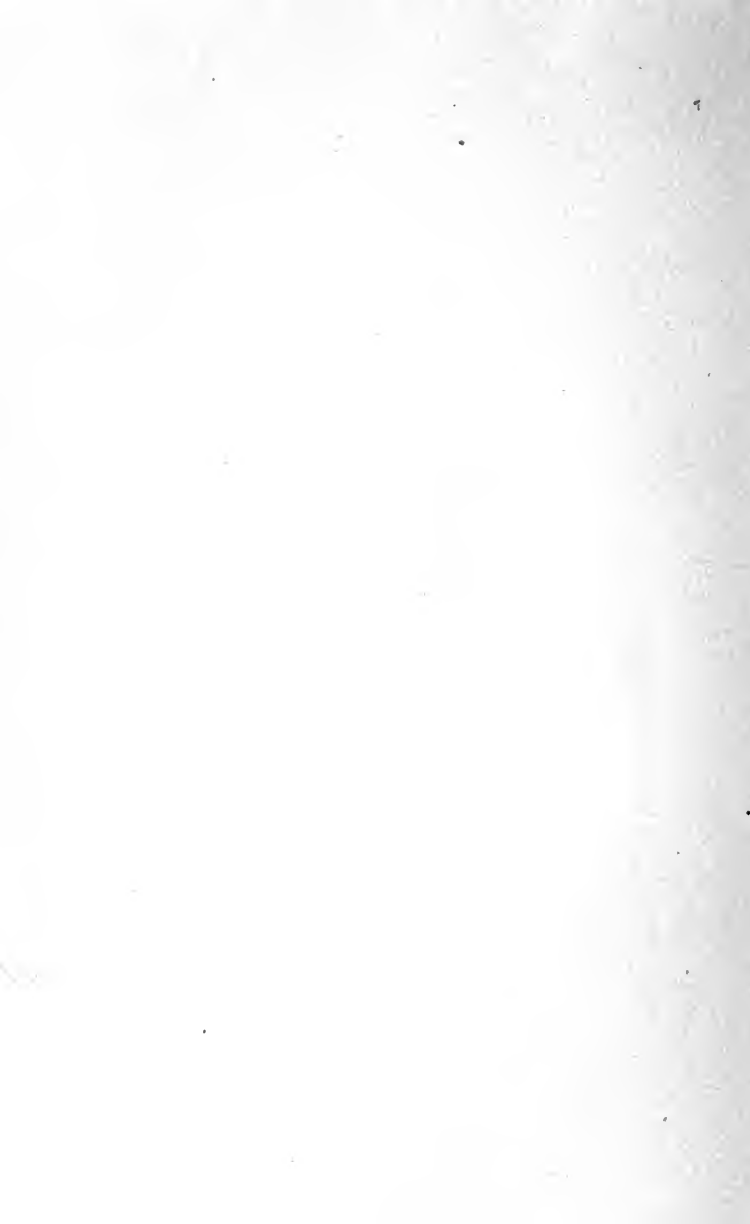
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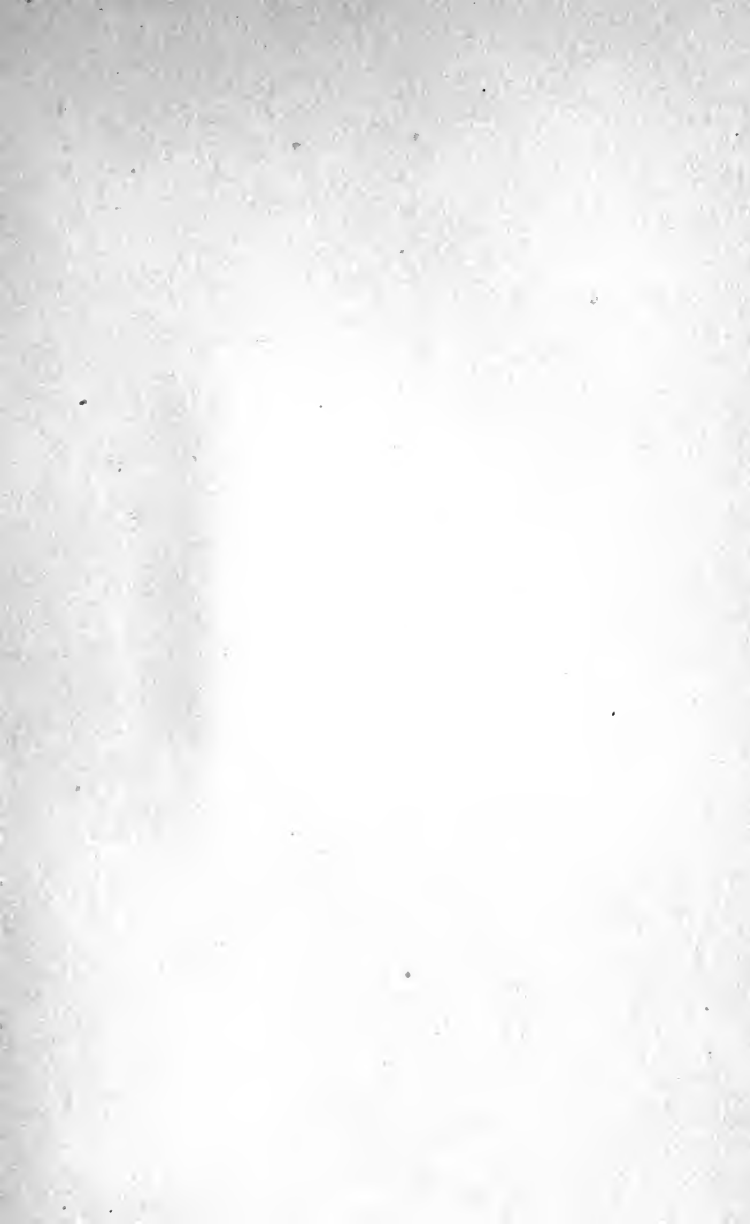
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