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# THE REASON OF LIFE

WORKS BY

W. PORCHER DU BOSE, M.A., S.T.D.

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WILLIAM PORCHER DUBOSE, M.A., S.T.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE SOTERIOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT"

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# THE REASON OF LIFE

## I

### THE PRINCIPLE OF UNITY

#### INTRODUCTORY

REVOLUTIONS, internal or external, in thought or in action, do not come except in a time or under conditions that have been prepared and are ripe for them. We are expected and commanded to be able to read the signs of the time. It is as criminal not to seize and use beneficent opportunity at its flood, as it is futile to exploit it at its ebb. We are moving now upon a very flood tide of opportunity. The thought of the world is upon and the demand of the time is for unity. We have entered upon an era of reconciliation and cooperation.

This is evident in the most secular affairs of the world. The abolition of war may be many ages off, but there has never been anything like such a movement in the direction of it as we are now witnessing. So profound and general a raising of the question of arbitration and peace is in itself the surest prognostic of a progressive approximation to its solution such as will be at least the diminution and amelioration if not the actual extinction of war.

So no less with economic and industrial warfare. The clash of capital and labor, of organized and free employment, of privilege and equality, of special and general interests, may be sounding louder than ever, but it is because the knell of all inequitable inequalities, and inevitable consequent strife, has been struck. The movement to meet and treat the disease in its source, to abolish industrial warfare by removing its cause in patent injustice, may not mean immediate and universal equity and peace, but it does mean just as rapidly more of these as the really growing sympathy and fairness of men shall achieve.

But it is the spirit of reconciliation in a wider field — that of religion — with which I am at present concerned. Not that the field of religion is separable from or does not include all these secular questions and interests; nor that any reconciliation, any unity and cooperation, based upon the one only rock of love, of mutual service and sacrifice, is not in itself religion. On the contrary, religion is not, and will not be, either its true self or all itself, until all minds and hearts, all social relations and personal interactivities of men, have become the Kingdom of God: until all life, individual or collective, industrial, political, national and international, has been taken into and become its sphere.

Such a unity, it may be felt, is not for men but gods. But even a pagan philosophy bids us not, because we are mortal, to rest in or be satisfied with mortality, nor because we are human to ignore or neglect the manifest

divine that is in us. Neither human reason nor the human conscience can set a limit to itself short of Eternity, Infinity, and Perfection. No matter how we may conceive or define the Divine, human life has no end or meaning but in that unity and completeness which only Love is, and which we can all agree in worshipping as God. There is no impracticability in such an ideal except that of bringing ourselves to believe in and act upon it. That done, we should be quick and certain to find in it the one only principle that would make life really, perfectly, and blessedly practicable and realizable.

But I come down to the familiar conflicts and dissonances of religion as they are popularly understood — such as, for example, that between religion and science. If there be any actual conflict between these, otherwise than in our apprehensions of them, it goes down beneath the thoughts of men (which science and religion are) into the eternal nature and reality of things. The issue, we may safely assume, has passed beyond that first stage of it in which the question was whether in the new light of science there was any place left for religion at all. There is consensus now both as to the objective ground and the subjective need of religion. Controversy has narrowed down to the relation between the immanent presence and operation of God in things, which we call nature, and the transcendent presence and operation of God with and in men, which we call grace. The growing reconciliation between nature and grace is, we must admit, due more to the insistences

of science than to the wisdom or reasonableness of current religion. The latter, in its wide separation tending to the divorce of grace from nature, was in a fair way of contracting itself to final exclusion from the world of the actual. In being brought more and more to recognize the essential naturalness and orderliness of grace, it has more than gained in coming to see the co-essential supernaturalness of nature: and so to anticipate, if not yet construe and understand, the ultimate unity and identity of the two. Thus religion, rescued by science from the danger of exclusion from the earth, is enabled to turn and show itself inclusive of all the earth.

It is only an extension of the above to say a more general word upon the reconciliation of the conflicts between the counter truths of immanence and transcendence. These truths we have been brought perforce to see as not only counter but also complementary. The power which is neither nature nor ourselves, but formative and constitutive principle of both, is necessarily immanent and immanently necessary in nature — for otherwise nature would not be nature in its most essential attribute of fixed and reliable uniformity. And it is only in such an objective nature of constant invariability that we could possess or exercise our freedom. But there is no more reason why the power that is nature should not also be a power that is not nature, than that we who are in and of nature should not also be above, or transcend, nature — as we know we do. There are in fact two truths which stand or fall together:

One is God in nature and yet transcending nature; the other is human freedom and personality as part of nature, and yet, in the fact and exercise of selfhood, transcending nature. In making God's personality and our own thus dependent upon each other, in our conception of them, we are not making God's personality only what ours is: whatever be the infinite difference, His must include all that ours is.

There is a kindred reconciliation to be effected in philosophy between the rival claims of idealism and pragmatism. Is religion an *a priori* fact or truth, to be ascertained and applied to human life? Or is it an *a posteriori* result deduced from and determined by human life? Is it *whatever* will perfect life and all its functions, as determined by experience? Or is it an antecedent and definite something, the knowledge and realization of which in human life will perfect it and its functions? Is there any reason why it may not be both? It is not a question of what religion is: both agree that it is what perfects life and all its functions. It is only the question of how what is religion is ascertained or known. And with regard to this, whatever may be the value of pragmatism, it is as useless and impossible without idealism as, for example, either deduction or induction would be without the other. We may as well speak of the conflict or contradiction between hypothesis and verification as that between idealism and pragmatism. I have long known that the final and only convincing proof of religion is the experience of what will perfect and complete human

life. But pragmatism, I should say, is not a source but only a test of the rival claims that bid for the lordship or mastery of human life. It is a fact that we are practically making truth and life as we go, by incorporating into them in experience the things that make for them. But whence do we derive the manifold material which experience tests and sifts and excludes or includes as it finds it unfit or fit? Experience tries all things and uses or disuses, but never originates or creates. Certainly in that fullest life which we call eternal, pragmatism, as experimentation and determination of values, is in need, for the source and supply of the theories or hypotheses upon which it is to pass judgments preparatory to inclusion or exclusion, of the very highest and purest idealism.

Religion is the most experimental of all sciences. Our Lord was the most thoroughgoing of pragmatists. "Do," He says, "and ye shall know." If any man will live the true life, he will know that the life he lives is the true one by its completeness and blessedness. But he must have an idea, or hypothesis, of the true life as he lives it, and where does it come from? Would it come at all if there were no idealism? We are to "set to our own seal" even to the fact that God Himself "is true" — but where do we get the idea that God is true, to which we are to give the attestation of our experience? Given idealism as a source of ideas, not only of conjecture and adventure from within, but of inspiration and revelation from without — and then pragmatism is not only in order,

but is the only true order of human truth or life. God and Christianity appeal to no other ultimate proof of themselves than the fact of their inherent and essential truth as attested by experience. The only convincing argument for God is found in the realized fact that "to know Him is to live, and to serve Him is to be free." The only credential of Jesus Christ is the fact that He is "the Way and the Truth" — the only way and the perfect truth of "Life": the life of God in man and of man in God. Religion can never cease to submit itself to the perpetual judgment of human experience; nor experience to be directly responsible and accountable for its recognition of the reality of religion. They exist for each other, and their unity is the only solution of the question of life and destiny.

There is another conflict just now being waged within the ranks and under the banner of Christianity, which can be settled only by reconciliation, and not by victory or defeat on either part. It is the question between the merely human divinity and the real deity of the person of Jesus Christ. In this controversy each side, in so far as it is honestly and sincerely Christian, is contending for the true half of a really indivisible whole; and the truth in each is included in and essential to that of the other. Christianity is nothing if it is not our identical and common humanity in the person of the man Christ Jesus coming (and come) by the necessary human process into the full realization and inheritance of its inherent divinity and divine Sonship. Nor could Christianity be this, if it were not also and

no less, on the other hand, God Himself self-realizing (and realized) in our humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, and there taking us all into a living union and unity with Himself. I can see myself and all humanity in every individual act or incident of the human life of our Lord — but also I can see all of God, and all that is divinest and best of God, in the person of Jesus Christ reconciling and uniting the world unto Himself. How shall I know Him or express Him? As deified humanity, or as humanized Deity? I believe that I can know Him as neither without knowing Him as both. The unity of two must be both and each. If I cannot find God as well as myself in Christ, I can see and know Him nowhere at all.

I might multiply indefinitely these illustrations in part of a general process of reconciliation going on among or around us, but let us go behind them to one that includes them all. The ultimate and essential unity is that of spirit. God Himself is “One, in the unity of spirit.” In the first place “God is Spirit — and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.” Spirit is something infinitely more than mere incorporeality, freedom from “body, parts, or passions.” The spirit of God or of any other being, “the spirit that one is of,” is the totality of one’s attitude or disposition towards all other being. It is in this sense that we say that the Spirit of God, or that God Himself, is Love. God as manifested to us is expressed in terms of eternal, infinite, perfect love, grace, and fellowship (or oneness with). Love is



Himself; Grace is love or Himself revealed, communicated, and imparted in Christ Jesus; Fellowship is all these received, shared, become ours in the unity of a common spirit, with God and Christ and with one another in Them.

The Kingdom of God is nothing if it is not organized and ordered unity — unity with God and unity in God, unity of spirit, of law, of life. And the Church of God is no living thing if it is not something more than human organization—the divine organism and organ of unity human and divine. Unity is absolutely the first and the one thing: what is Love but oneness with God and with all else in Him? The Church is first “One” — and then, and therefore, “Holy”; for what is holiness but the spirit of unity and love? Then, next, it is “Catholic,” for catholicity or universality is the necessary corollary of unity. And finally it is “Apostolic,” simply because that which is one, must be so in sequence or time, as well as in extension or space — from beginning to end, as well as from end to end. In no less truth than all this is the Church the Kingdom of God, the Body of Christ, or the Temple of the Holy Ghost.

Expediency, efficiency, economy, success as against failure, very existence as against threatened extinction, the last will and prayer and command of our Lord Himself, every dictate of common sense and impulse of common humanity, ought surely to furnish reasons enough and arguments enough for unity in Christianity. And these considerations have sufficed to turn all the

spirits and signs of the time in the direction of unity, and to make it the one problem and task of the age. But it is evident too that we have to go further back and deeper down than all these for the solution of the problem thus raised, for a reason cogent enough to compel and to preserve unity. We need to be brought to realize that religion and unity, that preëminently Christianity and unity, are identical things: we cannot sacrifice or surrender the one and preserve or possess the other. The Church, the Community and Communion of the Saints, the Body of Christ, the Organ of the Holy Ghost, is the unity of Christians with Christ, and with one another in Christ.

The issue is fairly raised between the necessity of Christian unity and the fact of Christian divisions. The subordinate reconciliations that have to be effected before the oneness of the spirit shall find practical and visible expression in the unity of the Body of Christ, it might be discouraging to enumerate. The old question of the one and the many, unity in diversity and diversity in unity, will have to be practically settled in this large and difficult application of it. The adjustment between objective divine claims and subjective human verification and consent, between corporate or catholic authority and personal or party rights and liberties, and many other such issues, will have to be met and dealt with in detail. The first step, which will alone make the others possible, seems to be the only one at present proposed, and may be formulated as follows:

*First.* Let unity be accepted by all as the principle

and essence of Christianity, and faith in it, hope of it, and effort for it become the duty of every Christian.

*Second.* Let each separate name or body of Christians realize and emphasize as much as possible what it has in common with the one whole Church of Christ, and efface as far as possible all divisive and individual or party elements, badges, or expressions.

*Third.* Where differences are felt to be vital or important, let them be held in trust for all and not arrogated as the possession of a few or a part.

*Fourth.* Let there be as much as possible of Christian intercourse, interchange, and cooperation; and in all conferences let there be the utmost of plain-speaking with as much as possible of mutual understanding and charity; let all the truth be spoken as each sees it, but let it be spoken in all the love of Christ.

The present volume has no practical solutions to offer for the problems touched upon in this chapter. It goes before them all, and would only prepare and propose the spirit and temper in which they should be undertaken and may be solved.

## II

### THE BEGINNING

ST. JOHN I. 1-3

THE Beginning described by St. John in the prologue to his Gospel is manifestly the absolute beginning, the origination of all being or existence in the universe in which we find ourselves. It is a logical rather than chronological conception; the "all things" included in it, in their successive "becomings," may have had no actual beginning at all in time; we cannot conceive of them as without beginning in thought, or without causal beginning. In whatever sense "Being" is eternal, it is not without ἀρχή or *principium*, without some "principle" of being. The Beginning we are to discuss is causative and constitutive, and not merely initiative.

In what we may call either creation or evolution there is, in the language of an older philosophy, "form" as well as "matter." Which of the two is prior, and is cause or beginning of the other; whether form is but the incident or accident of matter, or matter is but the visibility or sensible expression of form, may be a question. The concrete universe is to appearance what we call material; but there is in it, we cannot but see, a reason, a meaning, a purpose, which we may call its "form." Is this "form," or immanent reason, an

incidental or accidental product of matter, or is it the real ἀρχή, an ideal informing principle, manifesting itself through and as matter? In a word, is eternal Reason the cause of matter, or is reason a late by-product of eternal Matter?

What St. John has to say upon the point is as follows: That rationality is the *prius* and principle of materiality, as of all being or existence, visible and invisible. The material universe is a concrete expression of an ideal principle, which not only as first-cause gives it existence, but as final-cause gives it reason, meaning, and purpose. Indeed Final Cause or Purpose is the only first-cause or ultimate real cause at all: through it, and it alone, all things come into being and have their being. There is no origination or initiation save in reason: the reason of a thing is the sole actual cause of it. "In the beginning was Eternal Reason — intelligence, will, purpose. All things came into being through it; and without, or apart from it, nothing that exists had its being." The Reason of the universe does not work in or upon its matter as a material or stuff already in existence, or existing independently of itself. Primal Reason not only gives form to matter, but itself furnishes the matter which it informs.

Reason is in large part conceived and expressed by us in terms of the abstract and impersonal. We see reason in many a mere "thing" as something immanent in it and itself impersonal. But for the descriptive and explanatory clauses in which St. John affirms its divine personality, we might indeed so translate it in

the passage before us: "In the beginning was reason, or meaning and purpose; through it all things came into existence and have their being." From our lower point of view there is no cause why  $\delta$  λόγος should be regarded as a Person, why it should be "He" rather than "it."

What, and why, is our lower point of view? How is it that so many thinkers are ready to recognize reason in the order of the world as the principle and cause of its being as well as of its order — who nevertheless hesitate to ascribe the world-reason to a Person, or to call it God? Is not this the explanation: That from our lower plane of understanding we are accustomed to see reason in things seemingly detached and separate from its personal source; and so come to treat it as itself a mere "thing" immanent in "things"? A wise and able organizer or an inventive genius may embody in an institution, a constitution, or even in a machine, rational principles of action or motion which might then survive their author and, as we say, run themselves. Similarly, men come to recognize reason in the universe, not merely as detached from its Author and running itself, but even as independent of any personal source — itself a thing immanent in things. That what emanates from us — even the reason and order to which we have given permanent expression and form — may then go on after us and without us, should not lead to the inference that God's thought or will or purpose may likewise be detached from and go on independently of Himself. What proceeds from us is but rearrange-

ment of already existent and interacting things; what proceeds from Him is existence and interaction.

The reason that is before all things, and is the formal and formative principle of all, St. John neither leaves in the air nor ascribes to the things themselves. Reason appertains to personality and is inseparable from it; they are distinguishable the one from the other only as personality is the necessary subject of reason, and reason the proper function of personality. The only excusable agnosticism is that which too much distrusts its own reason: which sees in the Subject of the eternal reason One who cannot be bounded by a concept or expressed by a name. St. John does not hesitate to ascribe the reason that is before all and is cause of all to a Person and call Him God. In ascribing our own personality to God, and so investing Him with the most and the best that we are ourselves, we may be, and are, designating Him by what is infinitely less than Himself; we are certainly not ascribing to Him anything more than Himself, or anything that He is not.

St. John identifies the reason of the world with God, just as the reason of a man is identical with his personality and inseparable from his personality or himself. But there is a sense and a respect in which, as has been suggested, a man's reason is separable from himself. When I have put myself into a work, or have put my mind into a written argument, which are to survive me and even be potent when I no longer am in existence, what I have put into these is certainly I, and yet as

certainly not I. I say, It is not I but my mind, my thought, my will; but are not all these myself? Now when I have so uttered or outered myself, the utterance may, as we see, be so detached from me as to be independent of even my continued existence. So likewise, with a momentous difference, the world is God's utterance or outerance of Himself. The ideal, formal, formative principle in it, which we see so struggling, and often seemingly so ineffectually struggling, for adequate and full expression through it, is nevertheless His Logos, or Reason, or Word — which is Himself. But, for manifold reasons manifest to thought when carried out to its just conclusions, it is as essential to distinguish the reason or word of God as ideal and formative principle of the world, and immanent in it, from God Himself, as it is to identify it with Him. It might be said that the failure to properly distinguish is pantheism, the failure to properly identify is deism; while the proper adjustment of distinction and identification is a true theism. The problem involved is the reconciliation of the counter truths of the immanence and transcendence of God. The difficulty may be primarily a metaphysical one, but it ends also in a moral one.

The law of evolution in its later and higher workings begins to reveal its reason and meaning. All processes are best read and understood in their highest reaches: it is the end that interprets and explains all things. Science and religion will finally meet in a common truth which will fully justify them both. The principle of



religion is that God is source and cause of all. The principle of science, which is wholly evolutionary, is that all things make themselves, become what they are by causes and processes immanent in themselves, and that *are* themselves. One law or method of being and becoming does indeed run through all, and holds or obtains from beginning to end; but, in the end, it becomes possible, not merely to read the meaning of the law, but to discover the reason for its immanence. It may take inconceivably long to do so, but in the end it grows increasingly clear why and how, with equal truth and reason, religion is able to say, on the one hand, "Final Cause is principle and cause of all"; and, on the other hand, science can assert, "All things come of themselves and by laws of their own from which all semblance of purpose or final cause must be rigorously excluded."

The solution begins to appear when in the highest stage of evolution, involving the higher meaning and destiny of man, the antinomy takes such a form, for example, as the following: "Only the grace of God, through Word and Spirit, can compass the proper destination of man"; "Only man himself, by his own will and in the exercise of his own freedom, can accomplish his own destiny." How can these apparently contradictory propositions be both justified and reconciled? Yet they are equally necessary truths. All along the seemingly beginningless and endless procession of evolution there confront each other the rival and exclusive claims of transcendent meaning and

purpose, as against immanent independence of extraneous interference. Through and out of the long reign of necessity there emerges at last, without miracle, the seeming miracle of freedom and personality; and still, in higher and higher form, one law runs on through all: persons like things must make themselves through their own proper reactions upon outward circumstances and conditions: creation works through evolution, and only fitness survives.

All transitions from lower to higher — from inorganic to organic, or from non-life to life, from unreason to reason, from necessity to freedom, from natural to spiritual — are mysterious and inexplicable to us; but there is no occasion to doubt that God's processes of creation, natural and spiritual, are continuous and unbroken. The unity of the law may be expressed in the fact that all things, from atom to man, assume their form and become themselves through an immanent principle of self-adjustment to external conditions: the successfully adjusted survive, and the unadjusted perish. The fact that in the lower order of things the so-called self-adjustment is a mechanical reaction, while in the higher activity of persons it is an exercise of reason and freedom, is only one of the mysteries of evolution which remain unrevealed to us and unexplained by us. We see the reason of the principle that "things are made to make themselves," to make or mar themselves by acquired fitness or unfitness — only there where the reason of things becomes truly apparent in its most evolved and highest working, in the des-

tiny of man to be rational and free and personal. For the essence of rationality, freedom, and personality is selfhood, and that comes only through the evolution of the self through progressive self-action. Man is made through being made to make himself.

We begin in this way to see why the reason of things, of creation, of evolution — while in fact it is the Reason of God, and so is God—nevertheless needs to be distinguished from God. Reason in God comes from Itself, and is the principle, the effective beginning and constitutive cause of all processes of creation or evolution. Reason in the world comes only *to* itself, in the end, and after long processes of evolution. Thus that which was for God the beginning, for the world is the end: reason in God is eternally complete and perfect; reason in the world is incomplete, imperfect, and progressive: it has to make and remake itself through deaths and births; to become itself through a thousand self-contradictions which have to be survived and overcome. There is a deity immanent in the world which is God, and yet is not God: which as God cannot be thwarted or defeated, and yet which, unlike God, is constantly thwarted and defeated, is resisted, grieved, quenched in ourselves, blasphemed and contradicted in the world without us. It is *θεός*, because as the mind or the will or the honor of God, it is inseparable from Himself and is therefore He; but it is not *ὁ θεός*, because that which is immanent in, and therefore wholly contained by, the incomplete and imperfect, cannot be God who is perfect and complete. The Logos in God

and the logos or reason that is the immanent, ideal, formative principle in the world are one and the same; and that One, therefore, is capable of being at once perfect and first in God, and yet imperfect and last in the world, while still God in both. But what may be said of God as predicate — as *θεός* — cannot be said of Him as subject — as *ὁ θεός*. It is true that the Logos is God; it may be true that that which is incomplete and imperfect is God: there is that of divine reason and meaning and purpose in ourselves which, however inchoate and partial, is still God. But it is not true even to say that God is the Logos; and of course infinitely less true to say that He is incomplete or imperfect. If it be still asked, How can the Logos who is God be incomplete or imperfect? I answer that He is so in the world, as its growing and self-revealing reason and meaning and end or purpose; but God's reason in and of the world is not other than His Reason in and of Himself. These may be difficult thoughts, but they are none the less necessary thoughts: the immanence and the transcendence of God are equal and correlative necessities of thought. Immanence is an absurdity and impossibility in and by itself. Reason "coming-to-itself" at the end of a process of self-evolution is explicable or possible only as coming *from* Itself at the beginning of the process. The time is not quite yet to attempt to explain why not only must divine reason pass through human or creature unreason in order in it too to fulfil itself, but divine right and good must pass through the ordeal of human

wrong and evil in order to become human as well as divine, ours as well as God's.

It is well to observe how St. John, in the passage which furnishes our present text, while ascribing all becoming or coming-into-being to the Word of God, and incidentally discriminating between the eternal *εἶναι* and the temporal *γενέσθαι* — yet tacitly describes all beginning or origination as a becoming, rather than as a new creation. Things are born and grow by an immanent law and process of their own; they are not made and added or inserted by transcendent act from without. The world, as we are being reminded, is not a manufacture or mechanism like a watch; it is an organic birth and growth like a flower. Things are made to make themselves. I repeat that the highest working and the fullest reason of the law appears, when the highest thing, as man, is made consciously and freely to make himself, and by so knowing and having life in himself to become what he is, finite spirit and person. The transition is accomplished in the appearance of self-consciousness and self determination, in the birth of the relatively independent and responsible self.

Thus Reason, Spirit, Life, while eternally with God and themselves God, were nevertheless born and made to become themselves anew in the time-process of the world. Creation, in man as its head, was through the world-movement of evolution to return to its Source and at-one itself with God in the person of the God-man. It is not going too far to say that God, who is

eternally Himself in His transcendence, in His immanence "comes to" or becomes Himself, in the perfection of His relation to the world, only by the act and in the person of Jesus Christ.

God in the world was prior to and part of the fuller truth of God in the flesh: He was in the world as Logos before He was born into and lived in humanity as Son. Neither of these involved a *kenosis* in the objectionable and impossible sense which has been attached to the term. The reason, meaning, or purpose which so inchoately and imperfectly is working itself out in the slow unfolding of the universe — is none the less God. The Sonship which is determining man to and is to constitute his destiny — is of God, and is God. The Spirit which so incompletely and imperfectly manifests itself in and as our spirit — is, for all that, God's Spirit, and is God. The Life of God which as our life is so weak and poor — is still God's Life, and so is God Himself in us. God will not be in us, or in the Church, or in the world, any more or otherwise than as we or the world will be in Him. Because the whole reason and meaning and aim is not so much that He shall come to Himself in us, as that He shall do so through our coming to ourselves — and so bringing Him to Himself — in us. Creation, evolution, Incarnation, civilization, human progress, human destiny — are all our work as well as God's. It is only as they are ours, that we are we: the potentiality, and responsibility, and necessity of ourselves becoming and being ourselves and making our world, is all that develops us into and

makes us persons. We could not become ourselves if God were not in us, and did not determine us in accordance with His will and purpose; but if we too did not, by our own act and activity, become ourselves — then God would not and could not be in us, for there would be no “we” or ourselves in which He could be.

### III

## THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF LIFE

WHERE in the process of creation does life begin? What is the continuity and connection between its lowest and its highest forms or manifestations, between life in vegetable or animal and life in man, between life in man and life in God? If we are to trace the course of life in the world, must we not begin even further back than its animal and vegetable forms? Creation or evolution, we are told, is *ab initio* not a mechanism but an organism: it was not manufactured like a watch but grew as a flower. And the organic is living, organism is the product and expression of life. What else than life can differentiate its unity into the wonderful diversity of organs and functions, and then integrate that diversity into a yet more wonderful unity again? To say that our universe is an organism, that it was not made but grew, is in itself to say that it was the product and not the cause of life: life is logically and causatively prior to its organs and functions.

It must be said of the life as was said of the reason of the world, that it was in the beginning, and that it was the beginning. It was the ἀρχή causally if not temporally, the principle of all becoming and being, of all birth and growth in the universe. "In the Logos was life"



— “was,” not became, eternally not temporally: life belongs to the category of that which was — prior to all phenomenal appearing or becoming. And as the Logos, so the Life, as St. John also tells us elsewhere, “was with God,” and was God.

It is no more to say that all life is God than to say that all reason is God. Life in the world does indeed begin very low in the scale; but so does reason; all evolutionary beginnings are the barest potencies and promises of what are to be; they wait upon their ends to determine and reveal what they are. If life in the world is one from beginning to end, and continuous through all its stages of growth and change, then it must be characterized and defined by what it ultimately becomes, not by what it was in the beginning or in the course of its becoming. At every human birth we say that “a man is born into the world;” but the thing born is a man only potentially — and very far from actually, if reason and freedom and character are what constitute a man. Moreover, life like reason in the world is liable to perversion from the proper line of its evolution. The possibility of this, of deterioration and degradation as well as of normal growth and advance, of sin and death instead of holiness and righteousness and life, is the condition, the *sine qua non*, of that relative independence, that both formal and ultimately real freedom through which and in which divine reason and life come to themselves in the world. To say that reason as such, and life as such, are God, is very far from saying that all the failures and perversions and contradictions of

these, which the fact of creature freedom renders possible, are God also.

The point is that, whatever the obscurity of its origin, the lowliness of its birth, the humiliations of its infancy and growth, the perversions, contradictions, and degradations it has undergone, as a matter of fact life in this world has attained the high dignity of manhood, and looks forward with assurance to the higher and highest attainment and inheritance of Godhead. And that which it is to become thus in the end, it was in principle and in essence in the beginning. What if in its inception, or conception in the womb from which it is to be born, the germ of man is indistinguishable from that of vegetable or brute — if in the end it is to become a man! Having his entire earthly career in view, we characterize and call him from the beginning by his highest that is to be; and in a world of universal becoming we see nothing strange in the process by which he so gradually and painfully attains to himself. It has been with life in the race as it is in the individual: if there too it has passed, in the eons, through stages no higher than vegetable or animal, what of it — if in the end it has become human, and is to become divine! The point, I repeat, is that the life which in the end comes to itself in God, in the beginning came from Itself in God.

Life in its highest earthly form, as finite spirit, or human personality, is that to which God has given birth from Himself, and given to have life in itself. If its severance and relative independence, its conscious-

ness and possession of itself, its freedom and selfhood, have not been instantaneous creations, but very gradual evolutions, we may begin to see how and why it could not have been otherwise. Finite personality is the end and goal of all creation: all evolution is and acts for the sake and to the end of it, and may be characterized as simply the successive stages and final production of it. Only in and through a process of self-being and self-acting, rising at last into self-consciousness and self-determination, could personality come into existence, or be at all. The transition from the immanent and physical so-called self-origination of the forces, laws, and operations of nature, through the gathering reason and meaning of vegetable and animal life, up to self-consciousness and freedom in man, we can never more than merely trace and chronicle. Description is not explanation, and the more scientific observation and description resolve the process of cosmic life into a continuous evolution from an unknown and unknowable beginning — that is, exclude from their province the question of ἀρχή, of initial or causative principle and origin — the more are we not only entitled, but compelled, to fall back upon the truth that life, like reason, is not merely the end and product of the cosmic process we call evolution, but was also its antecedent principle, its formal and formative cause, its substance and subject. All reason is but the reason of Life: that is the only reason, the sole meaning and purpose, of all that is. The Incarnate Word is the Word of Life. Eternal, Encosmic Reason has spoken, has manifested

or expressed itself to us from the beginning — that we might see and know and have Life. All evolution is the coming of Life: it is the divine process by which the Transcendent becomes immanent — the Eternal in the temporal, the Infinite in the finite, the Perfect in the imperfect, God in the world.

God immanent or encosmic is but the antecedent, the earlier stage of God Incarnate. The distinction between them is simply that between God in things and God in persons — God in things through laws made automatic, and God in persons through laws, not automatic, but subject in part, and in highest part, to the self-conscious and free wills of the persons. God in things is, so far as they are concerned, purely immanent: He is simply the principle and law of their being and action. A merely immanent God is indistinguishable from the bare facts of experience and the law of evolution. God in persons is immanent also; but He is also transcendent. Through the twin miracles of consciousness and freedom — which are facts, whatever their inexplicability or natural impossibility — God is to us not only within but without. His being is without us, an objective fact to us; His laws are without us, to be known or not, to be revered or not, to be obeyed or not. We ourselves are not only within but without us, as end and purpose to us, to be realized and fulfilled or not, to be made or marred by our own acts. Reason is without us, to be followed and conformed to, or to be disregarded, denied, and darkened; Life itself is an

end without us, to be sought and won, or else to be despoiled and lost.

God Incarnate is the divine Logos, the eternal Reason and Life, which in creation God would share with the manifold not-Himself which He has inscrutably differentiated and separated from Himself, endows with selfhood of its own, and gives to have these gifts, of reason and life, in itself. At the same time, the reason and life which God imparts, by whatever process of creature participation, never ceases to be His own and Himself: they are always God, though God is always more than they — transcendent as well as immanent and incarnate. The outward expression of our reason or extension of our life, as we have seen, may be detached from and cease to be ourselves; but wherever God's Mind or Life is, no matter how inchoately, it is not there without Himself; He is with and in it, and it is He. As immanent in His world, as ideal principle, beginning and end, first and final cause, rational process and evolving life of the world, God to us seems all too slowly and painfully and ineffectually to find Himself, to "come to" or "become" Himself, in the world. But let us remember that God is not in the world to find Himself, but to find Himself *in the world* — and in us, through whom alone the world is to find itself through finding Him in it. And the length and inefficiency of the process — as indeed the process itself — is not in Him but in us. God cannot become Himself-in-us in a moment, only because we are so infinitely incapable of becoming ourselves-in-Him, of being what He is, in

a moment. The process from creature unreason and non-life to divine reason and life is one for which all the eons are not too long. And there is nothing in the constitution, conditions, or operation of all the intervening eons, that is not fitted and needful to bring the creature infinitesimal of immanent reason and life up to the fulness of participation in the divine infinitude.

In coming back again to St. John's few words, so full of endless suggestion and implication, let me say that I do not pretend to be interpreting them literally. I give not the exegesis but the epegesis, not just what the Apostle says or wishes to say or even means by what he says, but what I believe to be the postulates or presuppositions of what he says. When he says, "In Him (the Logos) was life," the principal truth I find in the words, or underlying the words, is this: Life did not originate as one of the changes, accidents, or effects in evolution, but existed before and was the subject of evolution. The Apostle, no doubt, was unconscious or ignorant of any law of the eonic gradations of life, and certainly has not these in his mind. He no sooner mentions the general fact of life, as inherent in the Logos, as the subject matter and principle of creation, as the heart and soul of God's self-communication in the universe, than he passes instantly to its highest manifestation in the life of man. All before is only the coming or becoming of that self-knowing, self-determining, personal reason and freedom — until which life is not yet life indeed, and in which it comes to itself in the birth of the finite spirit, or self, or person.

Only in self-conscious reason is there that life-in-itself to which alone God objectifies Himself, into which He may be born from without and from above, and which so can become, through itself, child and image of God.

To know ourselves and in ourselves to know life: to have a life of our own wherein we may know what life is, and so may know all life and God Himself, who alone is Life — this is what is expressed in the words, “and the life was the light of men.” It is only the eye of reason, the eye of man, that can see that light: only to him can the injunction come, “Know thyself, and in knowing thyself know God.” For what is God but the Infinite and Eternal of ourselves, and what are ourselves, our true and real selves, but the finite image and expression of God? We cannot too often or too profoundly utter the prayer, “*Noverim te, Domine, noverim me: noverim me, noverim te!*”

What is human reason but the faculty or power of vision, the eye to see the things that are real but are invisible to the eye of sense? Reason in man is that by which he apprehends, and more and more comprehends, the reason that is in things — above all, in the highest of things, himself. “Right reason” is that to which things are what they are, to which nothing “seems” other than it is. Right reason is to know God as the eternal reason, meaning, and purpose of all things, as of ourselves: and so to know God is for us eternal life. It is in itself eternal life in us, because it is the eternal of ourselves, eternal true and real, eternal right, eternal good.

“The life was the light of men:” and it is “a light that lighteth every man.” The light that is the light of all men, potentially lighteth every man—but only potentially, not actually, for not every man is lightened. Just as the sun is a light for all, but not all see the sun;—just as, and yet with a great difference; for the vision of sense is mechanical and involuntary, while that of reason, and especially that of the moral and spiritual reason, is free and depends in the most essential respect upon ourselves.

We say that man—which means all men—is a rational being: it is given to him alone in our world of experience to see light, to know life: and in fact the knowledge of life is the one object, in many forms, and from every possible point of view, of human observation, investigation, and speculation. The natural scientist, the physiologist and psychologist, the social philosopher, the moralist, the legislator and statesman, the historian, the poet, the prophet, and the priest, are all, in their several parts and places, investigators, students, interpreters of life. And for all that, “the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.”

Just why and what the darkness—is too deep a sea of speculation to embark upon here. The fact of the darkness, at every stage and in every aspect of the subject of life, life natural, moral, spiritual; darkness in the manifold forms of ignorance, error, sin, sorrow, death—is too universal and patent to need either proof or description.



It was never the patient explorer or investigator, the laborious and learned historian, the speculative philosopher, the practical legislator, or the wise moralist — all-important as their several services are — who, as such, was the one to see the light eye to eye, to meet and know the life face to face, and to bear personal witness to it in all the world. It has ever been the prophet — Moses returned from his long exile, or come down from the mountain top in Arabia, Elijah in the desert, or John the Baptist crying in the wilderness of Judea. “There came a man from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.” What is it in us that apprehends the light, that sees and knows the life: that enables us to say with Jesus, “I speak that I do know, and testify that which I have seen?” John the Baptist was the chosen and typical witness of light and life, because he was the representative of that which is the precondition of these, that which is the sole efficacious preparation and qualification of them — the repentance that has known darkness and death, the faith that out of these sees and lays hold upon light and life. The repentance and faith which John practised and preached, and which was embodied in his baptism, contained in germ all the truth that was to be realized in its fulness in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was no premature and impossible anticipation which enabled him even then to see in Jesus, the baptized and Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, “the Lamb of God that taketh away

the sin of the world.” But our interest as yet is with the redeeming Person rather than with the redemptive Work of Jesus.

“He (John) was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light, even the light that lighteth every man, coming into the world.” We come thus upon a distinction which runs through the entire mind of the New Testament, in various modes of expression and illustration. It appears here as the distinction between the light that lightens, and the light that is lightened, the life that quickens and the life quickened. There is mystery and apparent paradox in the fact that the distinction — and also the reconciliation and identification — of these two aspects runs through the person and work of Jesus Christ Himself. Unquestionably Jesus Christ appears as the baptized as well as the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, the anointed as well as Anointer from above. He was in the passive and human sense, as well as in the divine and active sense, the regeneration and sanctification of humanity — the birth and life of man in God. He was indeed humanity in God, and recapitulated in His human life the whole true experience, history, and destiny of man in his at-onement and oneness with God. But the distinctive thing in Him is, that He was man in God, or humanity in God, because He was first God in humanity.

The difference between the Light that lighteth and the light that is lighted, the light in Itself, or in God, and the light in us, is never lost sight of. John the

Baptist was a burning and a shining "lamp"; he was not the Light Itself, of which the lamp is but the recipient and vehicle. In Jesus Christ the true light, the Light Itself, was coming into the world. This side of divine originality and underivedness — at least in relation with creation and humanity — is consistently preserved in all representations of our Lord. He is "The Full," of whose "fulness" we all receive: we are His *pleroma*, "the fulness of Him who filleth all in all." He is full of truth and grace; none other is "full," but at the most only "filled." If Jesus Christ was The Word — although He was so in both senses, yet primarily and essentially He was Word Speaking, not word spoken, the divine expressing, and not mere expression, of humanity. He was in the world before He came into it: He who was its beginning, not only temporal or initial, but causal and principial, was in the world, immanent in it from its beginning; but "the world knew Him not."

Whatever of human origin, human nature and consequent limitation, human experience, human truth and meaning, human identity with ourselves, Jesus Christ may have had, and most certainly did have, Christianity can never surrender or let go its hold upon the conviction, its knowledge, that in the very fullest, completest, and most final sense, He was and is "God manifest in the flesh."

## IV

### LIFE ENCOSMIC AND INCARNATE

I HAVE spoken of all life as one — one from lowest to highest, if we are tracing its process in natural evolution; from highest to lowest, if we are considering its ante-mundane or supernatural source and essential nature. I have ventured to describe its phenomenal appearance or creature-form in terms of evolution, because that is the current science, and because the general fact or truth of evolution — with which alone, apart from its methods or laws in detail, I presume to deal — can scarcely now be questioned. It may be well in passing to say, for popular apprehension, that the evolution of the highest earthly life from the lowest, and through progressive forms or stages of itself, does not involve its evolution from or out of other forms than its own. The straight upward trunk and summit of the tree has not passed through or come out of any of the lower branches; so the life that has at last culminated in rational, free, and ultimately divine humanity, has not come through any of the deflections or ramifications of life into other or lower animals than men. There is manifest interconnection and interrelation running through all life — as, in the narrower field, through all men: “we are all of one blood,” which

means, of one life. But that no more means the descent, or ascent, of man from any lower animal, or any other than the lower states and stages of himself, than it means the descent of the Caucasian from or through or out of the African.

Life begins, evolutionally, to come to itself with the coming of the "self," or the birth of reason, whose first function is self-consciousness. That may be called the "apprehending (*καταλάβειν*) of the light"; life conceiving itself, conscious of itself, is light; "know thyself," is the law and duty of reason: "Know thyself, take possession of thyself, determine, become, be thyself," at once expresses and enjoins the process by which selfhood comes into being, by which the life becomes the light of men, and man, with the life of God so born into conscious, free, personal oneness and fellowship with him, becomes Son and Image of God, and heir of Eternity.

But neither reason nor, consequently, life is born like Pallas, full-formed and full-armed — whether in the individual or in the race. It is long true, and still true, that "the light that lighteth every man" "shineth in the darkness." Potential light is still very far off from its fulfilment in actual light. That God has endowed us by nature with the faculty and capacity for light; that He Himself in the world as its life is, as such, its light; — does not dispense us from the necessity of coming to the light by an act and process of our own. He gives us light and life only through our own seeing the light and living the life. All rational, moral, spiritual crea-

tion is creation through and by ourselves; God does nothing in a Self that is not also the doing of the self. That is the condition and law of personality; anything done merely upon us, that is not also our own doing, that is instead of our own doing, or that saves or spares us the doing, is at the cost or expense of us; it displaces and annuls the personality which is the one object and aim. So the light shineth in the darkness, and will continue to do so until we will, and can, and do see it for ourselves; until our own spiritual faculties and organs are fashioned by use, and our perceptions are exercised to apprehend and discern it. I repeat that all through that self-becoming of things which we call evolution, we can trace the law which only in the highest things, ourselves, manifests its reason and justifies or explains itself: Life is only for that which fits itself to and for life.

“The light that lighteth every man was (Itself) coming into the world.” It might be assumed, if we go no further than what has been said, that this “coming into the world” could and would be only an immanent one: that the coming of the light would be only through the evolution of our own faculty of vision and power of apprehension. But, on the other hand, there is a question which we have first to consider and ponder before accepting that conclusion. It is the function and task of reason to apprehend, and so far and fast as possible to comprehend, our true ends and ultimate destiny. Is it to be claimed or demanded of reason, either that it shall have created, or that it shall deter-

mine and accomplish those ends? Can reason do more of itself than simply understand and interpret? And can it, of itself, understand or interpret anything unto completion or perfection? Reason does not either create or determine its objects; it only apprehends them, and, in the endless act and process of its own development, more and more comprehends them.

Reason in man, as I have said, is only the faculty and function of perceiving the prior reason that is already in things and, above all in this world, in himself — that prior reason which the Scriptures call the divine “foreknowledge and predestination,” which in fact is the Logos or Reason of God. The perfection of reason in us is, “to know ourselves even as also we are known” of God. But we cannot, from or of ourselves, by any immanent process alone, know ourselves as God knows us; such knowledge we may receive, but cannot produce or originate. “We know not (of ourselves) what we shall be” — and yet surely need to know it, if we are not merely to be it, but to be it ourselves, of our own intelligence, choice, free will, and personal act and activity. There can be no self-being, or personal existence, at all without an objective, far off, future end or goal of being — by foreknowledge, desire, will, purpose and pursuit, and gradual attainment of which, we are to become, find, or make ourselves.

This is yet more, and infinitely more the case, when the “all-we-are-to-be” is distinctly not in ourselves, but is to come only by union with an Eternal and Infinite,

before, beyond, and without ourselves. How can any immanent unfolding of our mere selves attain any such transcendent end? There is a real and divine truth in the principle and fact of immanence, but it is only half, and the lower half of the truth. All spiritual and actual life of men, all personal knowledge of and participation in the Life Itself, begins with transition from mere immanence into transcendence. It is not until we know God, and the world, and our own life, as objective and as objects to ourselves, it is not until we have entered into the conscious and free relation of distinct and independent persons with all these, that religion exists. The bond that constitutes it is not the immanent, physical, natural one of the universal and necessary inherence, connection, and dependence of all things upon God, but the rational, moral, and spiritual one of mutual knowledge and understanding, mutual love and agreement, mutual good will and consentient action between persons, between men and God. What I have called the *encosmic* relation of God to the world is properly described as immanent, and is subject to the universal and admitted laws of immanence, uniformity, necessity, and whatever else. But the *incarnate* relation of God to men is distinctively a transcendent one, a relation of either to the other from without. The former or encosmic relation underlies our natural constitution and faculties, our congenital affinity or congruity with God, our potentiality of the divine in ourselves. The relation of incarnation is one of spirits — based indeed and conditioned upon



that of natures, but in itself that of persons. The bond is one of mutual knowledge, love, will, action, and life.

Without venturing further into such depths, it is enough for our present purpose to recall the fact that, from the beginning, the Christian consciousness has recognized in Jesus Christ, not so much a human testimony (though this also) to light and life, as rather a divine manifestation of the light itself and the life itself, the Light and the Life of God. In His person it was given to the world, not merely to apprehend the light — to know objectively in Him the reason and cause and end of itself — but to receive and share the life, which is God Himself in us. And to the sin against light, its denial, was added the yet greater sin against life, in its rejection. Non-apprehension of the truth is non-acceptance of the life; sin of the mind and of the will go closely together.

“But to as many as (through right vision and good will) received Him, to them gave He right and title and power to become sons of God, even to those who believe on His name: who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Before approaching the question of our Lord’s communication or impartation of the grace and life of divine sonship to others than Himself, even to all who believe on His name, it will be necessary to dwell a little first upon the fact of human sonship as realized in Himself. When it is said (Eph. i. 5) that “God foreordained, or predestinated, us unto the

adoption as sons unto Himself through Jesus Christ," it means that the life which came to us from God as our father is ultimately to return to Him in our own realized and accomplished sonship. The principle and subject of evolution as we know it is Life; the culmination of earthly life is in man; the natural end and destination of man is in Christ, in whom we actualize or bring to effect our destiny, from the beginning, of children of God and partakers personally in the personal life of God.

The Life that was Jesus Christ Himself, as the culmination of human destiny in general, had thus an immanent and evolutionary, cosmic and human, derivation. Jesus Christ was of the seed of David, of Abraham, of Adam: He came in the fulness of time, the heir of its spiritual as well as natural accumulation and transmission. What we claim for Him is, that He was and is the true, divine as well as human, Exponent of the right reason, Realizer of the accomplished freedom, First-begotten of the risen life of the world. Irenæus well enough expressed the truth when he said of our Lord, *longam expositionem hominis in se recapitulat*: the destiny of man, from its conception in the mind or reason of God to its final fulfilment in the life of God, is contained and revealed in the story of Jesus Christ. That story begins not in time but in eternity, not in Adam but in God. But it is the story none the less of Adam also, of humanity from beginning to end of its true evolution. Jesus Christ is the Way of Man, from Adam up to God: as much the natural as the super-

natural way, the proper end of nature as the predestined end of God.

It is absolutely necessary therefore to construe the human sonship of Jesus in human terms. The prior, prehuman Sonship of Himself alone is the presupposition and precondition of the sonship realized in His humanity, but it is the human sonship alone of which He is for us the author and exponent, the only sonship which we can receive from Him and share with Him. It is that therefore of which He is the Way to us, and which it more nearly and immediately concerns us to learn from Him.

Nevertheless, Christianity can never see in Jesus Christ only the human surmise and suggestion, and not also the divine fulfilment of human life. He can never be to us only the human interrogation and not also the divine reply, the full answer to all we want of God. All our want is summed up in the single word Life, and this is the record in reply: "God hath given us life, and this life is in His Son: he that hath the Son hath the life." Our Lord is come for the express purpose "that we might have life." To say then that "the Christ" of our religious conception is only a human ideal, the personification of our own idea or sentiment or desire or hope of divine life, and that the historic Jesus was but the highest personal exemplar and expression of that ideal, who has therefore given His name to it — not only falls short of the truth, but directly reverses it. The idea embodied and expressed to us in the Christ is distinctly the difference and dis-

crimination between truth merely conceived and truth realized and existent. It is not a Christ in the mind that is our religion, but the Christ actual in the flesh. The gist and point of our Christianity is that the Christ, all that is contained in the concept or that is expressed in the term, all of God in man and man in God, all of Life Eternal for us and in us — “was manifest in the flesh,” was incarnate in Jesus. The spirit that denied that Jesus Christ was “come in the flesh,” was to St. John the spirit of Antichrist. The “newness” of old truths, old ideas, sentiments, and conceptions, “in Jesus,” was that in Him they were “come,” were passed into act and actuality. We believe that Jesus was the end of an evolutionary process — but what was that end? It was not only the mind but the life of God in the world, “come to Itself” in Him. He was the End and Heir of the world, inasmuch as He was its reason revealed, its meaning interpreted, its purpose accomplished. But in saying this, let us remember that the Christ is still only in process: Jesus is coming still, and yet to come. The Body of His incarnation was not alone His flesh, but all flesh. Jesus was not only Man, but all men.

The life, then, which Jesus Christ brought into our humanity, the divine sonship with which He invested it, was the natural destination, which is one with the divine predestination, of humanity itself. Humanity comes to its end first in Him: He is its Fulfiller and its Fulfilment: the Author and Revealer, not only of the fact that, but no less of the act or process by

which, humanity is born of God and enters into the life of God. For divine sonship and life have just as much to be the act and attainment of humanity in God, as they are the gift and operation of God in humanity.

“As many as receive” Jesus Christ, through faith in His name, through apprehension of what He is to them, see themselves in Him, and Him in themselves. In Him they “know themselves even as also they are known,” as God knows them; and “apprehend that for which also they are apprehended of God in Christ Jesus.” In Him they find “authority,” right and title, grace and power, to “become sons of God.” In Him they see themselves entered into their divine inheritance, as heirs and possessors of the Kingdom of God, and as actual partakers of Eternal Life. Why and how does our Incarnate Lord constitute and confer the right and title by which we become sons of God? Because — first in Himself for us, and then by Himself in us — He is the Author and the fulfilment of the condition upon which, and is Himself the mean or means through which alone we can be sons of God; and moreover is then the matter and substance of our sonship — by His own continued presence and life in us.

The process by which we share the sonship and life of Jesus Christ, the *rationale* of our own begetting and birth and life of God, is described in the words, “which were begotten, or born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Just as

Jesus Christ was Himself, in the flesh, no mere offspring of man and woman, but Son of God and Humanity, so that holy thing that is born in us through Him is no mere innate or immanent birth of, or out of, ourselves; but is a life begotten and born from without, and from above. As the true and inevitable designation of the higher nature of Christ in the flesh, or of Jesus, is Incarnate Godhead, so His lower nature and life, which we share with Him, cannot be otherwise conceived or expressed than as Humanity Regenerate. The life of God in man cannot manifest itself otherwise than as a new life of man in God. Regeneration is the fact and theme of the New Testament.

The seed, the soil, and the fruit produced; the sperma, the womb, and the life that is born of it, are constant figures of vital spiritual facts and events. In the operations described under these figures, the soil or womb is always upon earth — the more or less susceptible, receptive, responsive nature or heart of man, made for God, for the addition to it, the reception in it, the union with it, of life from without and from above. Always the sperma or seed is “the Word,” that which eternally is with God and is God, that of God which is communicable, which the world may share with Him, and which constitutes its measure of the divinity that informs and shapes all that is not God. The Word is in all that is, but is the light of man, to whom alone it utters and would reveal Itself. The Word of God, which is the divine counterpart and object of man’s own innate reason, the truth and mean-

ing of all things and chiefly of himself, to know Whom is his life, and to serve Whom his freedom — that eternal Word needed not alone to speak to us in all things, but more especially to “come” to us and “manifest” Himself among and in us. To know God in things, by natural reason and by inference from nature and from ourselves, furnishes no doubt a valid basis for natural religion. But to know God in Person, that is to say, in Himself and all of Himself that is revealable and communicable, in that perfect Self-revelation of Him which is most completely His Word to us, and that Self-impartment of Him which is His Son in us — that is religion of another sort and in an infinitely truer and more real sense.

As it is always the Word, which is the Seed, that is revealed or communicated, that is conceived and born in us — so always it is the Spirit by which it is conceived and born and lives in us. The Word is the divine principle of objective communication to us; the Spirit is the equally divine principle of subjective appropriation by us.

The seed assumes the soil; it is correlative with it: they are mutually related and adapted the one to the other, and neither has function or existence, as such, apart from the other. That which is to be born of them is joint product of seed and soil. So when our Lord entered into our nature through the womb of the Virgin, the seed was of God, but the soil or womb was man. And so He who was born was equally Son of God and Son of Man; the eternal Mind and Life of

God in the world comes to Himself through the process of nature and of man.

But the Spirit is not merely the natural affinity of the human with the divine, man's constitutional potentiality and need for God. It is not wholly man's instinct for God; rather is the Spirit of God Himself attracting and drawing us to Him through that natural affinity and need. Our Lord expresses the full truth when He says, "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him." Just as the Word was in the world before His incarnation in Jesus Christ, so the Spirit was in the world before His descent from the risen and ascended Lord of Life. But the Spirit after is as much more than the Spirit before, as the Word become Flesh in Jesus is more than the Word that from the beginning was revealed "through the things that are made!" It is always true that the Spirit "proceedeth from the Father and the Son"—or from the Father through the Son.

It is doubtless true that there is a premonition of spirit even in inanimate things, in the attractions of matter and the affinities of substances; still more, of course, in the natural affections and domestic relations that bind animal life together. But as reason is reason only when it comes to know, and possess, and determine itself as in man—so love is truly love, and spirit is fully spirit, only in personality, and in the unity of personal relations. Spirit answers to Spirit only through rational intelligence and understanding, through affection and love, through mutual will and



consent, through unity and harmony of action, conduct, character, life. Father and Son are One only in the unity of Spirit, and Spirit exists only in such a unity of Persons. The Holy Ghost is the divine perfection of Mutual Knowledge and Love.

As the Holy Ghost is the unity in Heaven of Father and Son: is the divine harmony in the universe between God transcendent and God immanent, God in Himself and God in all else:— so on earth is He the bond between God and us, that bond revealed, consummated, assured to us in Jesus Christ. We want not the human idea or ideal only of that bond, but the divine actual and real: something that faith makes visible, that hope makes present, and that love begins already to know, possess, and enjoy.

Why is it less rational to worship God incarnate in a Person than immanent in a thing we call Nature? Where is He most, or is He most Himself, and therefore most worthy of our worship? He is indeed in nature and in all its processes—but assuredly there most, where nature has come to its consummation in Himself, and where He stands revealed and manifested in Jesus Christ. I can doubt, I can at times disbelieve, God anywhere, everywhere, except in Jesus Christ.

## V

### THE GLORY OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN

“THE WORD became flesh, and dwelt among us. And we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father.” What was the peculiar glory of Jesus Christ, the significance of that complete impression which He has left permanently upon the eye and mind and life of all who know Him, and know themselves in Him? Within the thought of the New Testament there is room for at least three aspects or applications of the term “glory” as used in connection with our Lord. There is first the eternal and divine glory which belongs to Him as the Logos who in the timeless “beginning” was with God and was God. In the proper and perfect sense of the term, the Logos of God is the principle of all divine Self-utterance or impartation: it is that of Himself which is in all that proceeds from Him. The divine that is in the world and in ourselves, is not in the fullest sense God; it is what, speaking in terms of ourselves, we would call God’s Word, or Will — which must certainly, to save us from pantheism or from an objectionable monism, be just as clearly distinguished from God’s Self as it must no less be identified with Him. It is in this sense that the Epistle to the Hebrews describes our Lord in His eter-

nity as at once the "Express" of the Divine glory, and the "Impress" of the Divine substance or essence. He is the Mean or Medium of God's expression and impression in or upon all else than Himself. So through Him all things were created and are upheld: He is not a Being distinct from God, although within God His being is distinguished from the Father who is the sole source of all being.

The Logos of Creation as a whole is specifically the logos of each detail of creation, and most manifestly so of its higher and highest details. So, in the second place, as Logos of man, the glory of our Lord is that of the "Man from Heaven," man as from all eternity in the mind and purpose of God. In God foreknowledge and predestination are inseparable: the end was in the beginning: final cause was first cause. Jesus Christ was Alpha as well as Omega, from and through Whom, as well as for and to Whom, all things were created. Man in Him was first, as he is last in creation as we know it, beginning and end of all evolution, heir of all things and predestined head of the world that is to be. When the seer or prophet in John the Baptist recognized in Jesus the *πρῶτός μου*, he embodied in his person the witness of humanity to its divine prototype. Jesus Christ was before David, before Moses, before Abraham, before Adam, before the foundation of the earth.

But thirdly and chiefly, as concerns ourselves, the glory of Jesus, or of the Word made Flesh, was the glory of the deity realized by Him in our humanity,

the true divinity of His perfected manhood. That was a glory, not brought down with Him from heaven as God, but wrought out by Him on earth as man — and then taken up with Him into heaven. Of course the two cannot be severed, any more than the stream from its source: “No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.” But the true glory of the Son of Man, as divine representative of men, is, in this connection, not so much that which entered into Him as endowment as that which is accomplished by Him as human acquirement and attainment. It was with Him as it is with us — not so much what we have received, as what we have ourselves done with it and made out of it: “Herein is my Father glorified: that ye bear much fruit.”

But yet more definitely, what was the exact glory which the eyes of the two Johns beheld and bare witness to, that we all through them should believe? It was “the glory as of an only-begotten from a father.” What they saw in Jesus Christ was God Himself reproduced in our humanity — man reborn and remade in that only possible personal and real image of God, the Son in whom Himself is repeated. Sonship is the only proper utterance and expression of fatherhood, and the whole truth of man created in the image of God finds fulfilment only in the consummation of God’s predestination of him unto sonship through Jesus Christ unto Himself.

There is a yet further propriety which we may dis-

cover in the interchangeableness and almost identity of the two terms Logos and Son as applied to our Lord. Not only is *son* the natural and true correlative and self-utterance of *father*, but Father, and not Maker or Lord or any lower term, can alone express the actual relation of God to the all-else that proceeds from Him. Just as we say, that not Eternity, nor Wisdom, nor Power, nor anything else, but only Love can truly express what God Himself is — Love, which gives of itself in others, in order that it may give more of itself to others.

There is a propriety in viewing and designating Creation as a whole as Son of God, inasmuch as it is all One, and, as it came from, so it is destined to return to Him in the final inheritance of sonship. "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God," and will find in them the meaning and interpretation of itself.

But it is not so much as eternal and essential Logos of God, nor yet as Logos of creation as a whole, as when we view our incarnate Lord as Logos, divine definition and revelation, of man, that we see its full and necessary interpretation in sonship. The glory of the Only-begotten is the realization and revelation of the end of evolution in the deification of humanity. The crowning glory of Jesus Christ was not that which He had with the Father before the world was; nor yet that which He brought with Him into the world when He came forth from the Father; it was that which He wrought as man in the world, the

act and achievement by which He made humanity divine.

This brings us to enquire into the meaning of certain expressions which we much use and very little construe to ourselves. How much and what has Jesus Christ taught or revealed to us of God — what, and how? “No man hath seen God at any time; the Only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” Declared Him in words? defined Him in terms, and propositions, and syllogisms? “Jesus saith, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one cometh to the Father but by me.” The way to the Father, the truth of the Father, the life of the Father — they are all *He*, not merely His teaching or declaration. “If ye had known Me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.” “How sayest thou, Show us the Father? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” “He hath declared Him,” — in the word we have translated “declare” is there not something more than mere declaration: “expounded, interpreted, or expressed Him”? God is elsewhere described as He “whom no one hath seen, or can see.” He is visible only in whatsoever manifests Him, or manifests what He is: as when St. John says elsewhere, “No man hath beheld God at any time; if we love, God abideth in us; because God is Love,” and love is God.

All this brings us back to the truth that, as in Jesus Christ the Father is revealed in the Son, and only in the Son, so in general, and essentially, fatherhood is

known, or revealed, or indeed exists, in and only in sonship. The whole truth of Christianity is realized and expressed in the fact of the fatherhood of God as manifested in the sonship of Jesus Christ: for what is true of Him in His humanity, is made true for humanity in Him. As in Jesus Christ the Father was revealed or declared in the act and fact of His perfectly accomplished Sonship, so in us too God is seen, or is known, or (so far as we are concerned) *is*, only in the sonship in ourselves which constitutes Him our Father.

In response then to the question, what of God we see and know in Jesus Christ, I answer: All of God that is communicable to us, or receivable by us. That is the same as to say that Jesus Christ is the consummated fulness of the relation between God and us. In Him, God is in a sense *become* our Father, through our becoming sons or children of God in Him. He has brought us into that consummated relation of children to God in which God is no longer only potentially but now actually our Father. Of course potentially and causally fatherhood is prior to sonship, but actually and effectually it is realized only in sonship: if the former is cause of the latter, at any rate it is effected only in and through the latter.

However it may have been the nature and the natural destiny of man to become son of God, let it not be imagined that he could have become so by a mere immanent process of natural evolution, that is, by the operation of laws and forces wholly within himself. It is

the nature and destiny of an acorn to become an oak; not, however, by causes and activities altogether within itself, but only in reaction and cooperation with agents outside itself. And the oak is the result and expression, not of the acorn alone, but no less of all the influences and agencies that conspired to produce it. If we so readily recognize reaction and interaction with environment in natural things, why not equally expect and look for it in spiritual things? "Word" and "Spirit" most simply and exactly express media of relation and reaction between us and God, out of or apart from which we can as little become all ourselves as the seed can apart from sun and soil.

That "God predestined us to sonship *through Jesus Christ* unto Himself," means that only through relations and communications of Word and Spirit from and with Himself could we attain unto the destiny which is none the less our natural end because it is our supernatural destination. That God eternally predetermined us means that He actually and in time determines us to sonship; and the question of practical interest is, How does He do so? And more particularly, How does He do so through Jesus Christ? In the choice of such words themselves as "Word" and "Spirit," we have something of definition and description — as on the one hand, of the divine agents and agencies, so equally on the other, of the human operations proceeding from them. "Word" is not only the expression of and from reason, intelligence, understanding, but equally the expression *to* these. If Jesus Christ is God's Word to



us, and it is through Jesus Christ that God determines us to sonship, it follows that God calls us to sonship primarily through divine appeal to, and human response of, our own reason, intelligence, and understanding. Only we ourselves can be sons, in the full sense; we cannot be made so otherwise than as we make ourselves. God makes us only potentially sons; that is, not only endows us with natures and faculties to become so, but brings us into the gracious relation of sons. To be sons, however, actually, or to be so in ourselves, must be of ourselves. Otherwise we are not sons indeed; for sonship, in the truer sense of it, is not a merely natural or objective relation, but a subjective and personal one. The appeal of Jesus Christ to us, or of God to us in Christ, is the most immediate and direct possible, because it is not only the appeal to our whole nature, but the call to our completest and most perfect selves. But it cannot be to us more than an appeal and a call; God can fulfil Himself in us only in *us* — that is to say, in what we ourselves are. “Our wills (ourselves) are ours, we know not how; our wills are ours, to make them Thine (God’s).” That “making ourselves God’s” is what alone makes us, not only persons, but spiritual persons, children of God.

But God appeals not alone to our intelligence, to our knowledge and understanding of ourselves and of Him. He appeals yet more strongly to our affections: feeling, affection, will and disposition, as well as reason — all that constitutes and characterizes *us* — is what He

wants, and what He speaks to by His Word, through His Spirit, in Jesus Christ.

The Word, which is Jesus Christ, is Life objectively revealed. The Spirit, which is the Holy Ghost, is Life subjectively received and shared. Both divine revelation and human appropriation or reception are essentially transcendent acts and not immanent processes. Religion in all its parts is a matter between us as without God, and God as without us—though a “without” in both cases to be converted into a “within.” Religion is essentially an “at-one-ment” out of a previous “at-two-ness.” It is no mere subjective play or process of a divinity wholly within us, a divinity of our own. God in endowing us with reason and with freedom, has given us the power of objectifying Life to ourselves, and so making it both a light and a law to us from without. Rather, and more truly, I should say, He has given us the power of seeing Life objectively, in Him and in All as well as in ourselves: and so seeing it as what it really is, a light and a law to all who have eyes to see and wills to obey. Life thus becomes to us, not merely an immanent fact, but a transcendent act on our part. It is something from without and above us which we must know in order to attain, and attain in order truly to know. That is to say, we need to know it as something without and beyond us before we can know it as something from without within us. God’s part is (1) by His Word, and (2) by His Spirit; our part is (1) faith in response to the Word, and (2) works or life in obedience to and fulfilment of the Spirit.

It is not too much to say that it is not possible to know God except in Trinity, — not a trinity of speculative and metaphysical thought, but the actual and practical Trinity, in which God has made Himself knowable and known to us — without us by His Word, and within us through His Spirit. I might add in further explication or analogy that our relation to ourselves and to the world around us is no longer, as with beings below us, a merely immanent one, but distinctly also a transcendent one. We see and know and determine ourselves from without, and are not only determined by ourselves from within. The Self in us, or personality, comes from and consists in the reason and freedom which are distinctively acts and activities of transcendent vision and direction. We have a relative independence, not only of God and the world, but even of ourselves, quite sufficient to enable us eternally to make or mar ourselves.

As little are we in any merely immanent relation with the world around us. We are in it and of it, and yet are also without it and can be above it. The fact that we know it, and that we can in a thousand ways, right or wrong, wise or unwise, conform ourselves with it or not, constitutes for us a relative independence of it that is not only a fact, but the distinctive and characteristic fact with regard to ourselves and our position in the world.

And this fact of facts extends no less, as we have seen, to our relation with God Himself. Just the essential truth of religion is, that God is not merely

immanent in us or we in Him, but that He is transcendent. The immanence exists, and so far as the world is concerned, exists sole and alone up to the moment in which reason and freedom are born into it. But so soon as these appear, as we come to know ourselves, the world, and God, and know them, not merely as objects of knowledge, but as objects of personal relation and obligation — that moment our relation to them becomes transcendent, and ethics and religion become possible and necessary. There only remains then the relation and distinction between ethics and religion; and that may be given in a brief discussion of the word which just here looms most into prominence: “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace.” “Of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Grace is communicated Life — life imparted from without through our organs of spiritual reception and appropriation and assimilation. It is the life of God made or become our life, through faith, hope, and love. The life of God, as presented to us for these, and through these, is the person of Jesus Christ.

We may turn again to observe how, in the Scriptures, all life is treated as One; and one origin and account is given of it in all its stages. The Word of God is everywhere the source and cause of all being: “In It, or in Him, was life.” That was its universal and absolute beginning, outside of God Himself. This, as I have said, need not mean temporal beginning; it may

be simply causal beginning, or principle. How did it become, not merely life, but rational life? The life became the light of man, with the birth of reason: that is to say, as the Word of God immanent in the world, and highest in humanity, developed for itself a faculty and a vision, became visible to itself in the mind of man, God passed for him from immanent into transcendent and objective: man began to know God outside himself, and himself outside of God. Then entered the Law, of which Moses was the culminating representative and symbol. God is not simply and necessarily, *de facto*, in man and man in God, as would be the case if their relation were only an immanent one. Quite another thing — God *ought to* be in man and man in God: the “ought” referring altogether to the free choice and reception of men, and having neither place nor meaning apart from these. The relation, in other words, has become transcendent and objective, personal and ethical.

The One and the Same Word of God that was life in the world even before reason appeared; that was reason and law in the world of men to whom life was become light — that same Divine Word had yet a higher manifestation and communication of Himself to make to “men of good will.”

## VI

### GRACE TO BECOME SONS

THE love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fellowship of the Holy Ghost! — it is not too much to say that, expressed in terms of their essential natures and functions, God is Love, Jesus Christ is Grace, the Holy Ghost is Fellowship. In these three terms we have all the divine constituents in human life: that is to say, we have the full expression and description of what God is in His relation to our own personal life. In what fulness and exactness of meaning do we say that God is our life — not natural now, but spiritual and personal? The life of God, as distinguished from His mere being or metaphysical nature — what we venture to call His personal life — is best and fully expressed in terms, or under the specific designation, of that which is not only His most characteristic activity, but is the spirit and principle of all His activities. There is only one word that really defines or expresses God; all others applied to Him are only formal, not real designations of Him. To say, for example, that God is truth, is only to say that God is “that which is”; it does not say What He is. To say that God is righteousness, is only to say that He is right, that He is that to which we are under obligation; it does

not tell what right or righteousness is, and consequently what He is. We only tell essentially and really what God is, when we say that God is Love, or Goodness; these are the only terms which have a real and determinate content. Love is the willing of Good; and the willing of good is Goodness.

Now there is no question as to what Good is; every being's nature absolutely determines and defines its good: its good is the fulfilment and satisfaction of its nature. The one real good that, in the whole realm of possibility or actuality, we can know, or possess, or enjoy, is Life in its fulness and its freedom. We know therefore precisely what Good is, and what Goodness, or the will of the good, is. The only other good than life itself is whatsoever truly ministers to life. Metaphysics tells us that there is no other motive or end of desire or of action than either the perfection or the blessedness of life: and that these two things are so exactly coincident as to be practically identical. Good is Life, or whatsoever ministers to life.

Love or Goodness is willing good to others — willing to all others the good which we first know, possess, and enjoy in ourselves. It is the desire and disposition to share with others the good which is our own life and our own selves. When Jesus Christ speaks of “giving His life for many,” the word used does not mean literal or merely bodily life, it means His soul, His very Self. The love and goodness of God has but one meaning and one purpose in the world of His creation. He has given to all things to have life; He has given to

man to know, and personally to live, life; He has given us in Christ all the fulness and all the blessedness of the Life which is Himself, and which He has constituted us, and now enables us, to know, to possess, and to enjoy.

God is Love; and, next, Jesus Christ is Grace. Grace is love applied, love in operation or in effect. You look for love in the subject of it — in this case, in God; you look for grace in the object of it, in man. Grace is God Self-communicated, Life Self-imparted, Good and Goodness shared and reproduced. In Jesus Christ God has not given us somewhat from Him, He has given us His life, Himself.

Incarnation is something vastly more than immanence; but the difference is not so much in God and His part in it, as in us and our relation to it. God is so much more in us than in the clod, only because we have become so much more than the clod. The full half of the Gospel as the “power of God unto salvation,” is not in the coming of God to us in and by His Word, but in the bringing us to Him by His Spirit. Fellowship with God, sharing His spirit, His nature, His life, Himself, His goodness and His good, His perfection and His blessedness, is the sum and the substance of Christianity. It is all that God has to give or we to receive. But the doubt or difficulty in the matter of the divine fellowship is all on our side. It was easier for the Word *aptare Deum homini*—even through descent to the Cross—than it is for the Spirit *aptare hominem Deo*. Nevertheless God, and



His life, and His good, can be ours only through that fitting of ourselves to Him, only as we do actually receive and share Him.

Therefore I say that it is only from God the Father, through God the Son and by God the Holy Ghost, that we can so have and know God as to be partakers of Eternal Life. We know God only in Jesus Christ and in ourselves: that is to say, we know Him only by His Word to us, as the principle and medium of His objective Self-revelation and communication; and by His Spirit within us, as the principle of our own subjective reception and appropriation. Thus the whole matter of Life from God and life in us is expressed in the single comprehensive term Grace.

Grace, which is thus almost the distinctive term of the New Testament, is used (1) to express an eternal and essential disposition of God. Grace was in the world before the Law came: it is older than Moses. It is older than Faith, and was before Abraham. It is older than Adam, or Man: it was in the nature, in the heart and mind of God before the world was. All appearances and all facts to the contrary notwithstanding, the beginning and the end of the world is an act of grace. God created not only by and from but for Himself: the end, which is always before the beginning in rational creation, was and is for divine Self-communication, Self-impartment. God creates only that He may bless; the only sense in which it is true that He created for his own glory is, that His glory is His love, His grace, His divine sympathy and fellowship with

His creation. It is true, first and most, in God himself, that blessedness finds itself in giving rather than in receiving. He created in order that He might have whereto to give, wherein to impart, Himself: the end of creation is God in His creation.

If it be asked, how we know this initial and ultimate truth of God — the answer is easy. In the first place, it is written in ourselves, who are not only the creatures, but the children and image of God. The world finds its intention preëminently in us, and that intention becomes ever more and more plain as we learn better to know ourselves, and in knowing ourselves know God. The world foresees that, what it is coming to as the true end and law of its being, is the truth that life and blessedness, with us as with God, and with God as with us, are in giving rather than in receiving, and that the more that principle and spirit and law prevail, the more we fulfil ourselves, and the nearer we draw to God. The true nature and law of things are what they are coming to, and not what they already are. That love, service, and sacrifice are life, and that hate, selfishness, and oppression are death, Christianity has already made a commonplace of thought and speech; when it has made it a commonplace of conduct, character, and life, it will have come to its own.

In the second place, the truth of God and man we are insisting upon is just that which was revealed and given to the world in Jesus Christ. The light was always in the world, but it shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. The simple fact

that the Son of Man, He who came to reveal to man the truth that was in him, and the truth that is God, came not to be served, but to serve — to be servant of all, and to give His life, His soul, Himself, in behalf of all — that simple fact teaches at once what God is, and what man is.

Grace then is primarily the eternal nature and predestination of God. If it is asked, what there is in it in Him which distinguishes it from simply Love, we answer that, from the first, it is love, if not expressed in, yet at least with the purpose of, action, love that means and looks forward to self-bestowal. All that goes before that ultimate participation in God which is the destiny of creation, is the evolution of being or beings capable of participating in Him. That this capacity should come through eons of preparation, and that this preparation should be through eons of poverty, pain, and toil; that the earnest expectation of the creation should have so long to wait for the manifestation, or revealing, of the sons of God; that it should so groan and travail in pain, while it longs and hopes for deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God — does not contradict the truth that the meaning of it all is fruition, possession, and blessedness in the end. That life in the world should have had to undergo the pangs of birth in the acquisition of reason, self-knowledge, and freedom; that it should have to endure the discipline, the hard demands, and the penalties of law; that it should have to learn to know and achieve free-

dom through bondage, holiness through sin, and life through death — all this is not without a reason into which we may ourselves begin to penetrate. All things are subject to the law and necessity of making and becoming themselves, just because the One thing up to which they are all moving, and for which they all are, Selfhood and Sonship, reception and reproduction of the life and likeness of God, can only thus, through the long and painful process of self-becoming, become at all. “Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, the redemption of our body.”

But (2) Grace as a divine act as well as disposition becomes the special function of that (for lack of a better term of differentiation in the being and activities of God) Person of the Godhead, through Whom are mediated all God’s operations in creation, and who is known primarily as the Word of God. It has been intimated that all created being, simply as such, is an act of grace, inasmuch as it is, so far as it is its nature and law to go, self-communication on God’s part. Grace becomes more and more, as receptivity and recipient become more — until, capacity and faculty for sonship prepared and provided, Sonship from God comes to fill and satisfy it, by incarnation in it.

Incarnation was no after-thought of God, nor after-need of man. It was part — and highest, therefore latest, part — of the process of creation or evolution, which is one from beginning to end, and whose end

was already in, and even before, its beginning. Let it be remembered that, in speaking of beginning, I always mean logical and causal, and not necessarily temporal beginning. Creation has its reason, its meaning, its interpretation and fulfilment in Jesus Christ, in whom at last God is wholly in it, as it is wholly in God. But God is in it with a distinction and a difference between His modes of presence in it first and last. He is in it in Jesus Christ, not by immanence of nature, but, in transcendence of nature, by operation in it of Word and Spirit — which, while also He, are nevertheless to be properly distinguished from Him.

Grace (3), always in the World, comes into it in an eminent degree in the person of Jesus Christ. Just wherein that grace consists, and what form it takes, depends upon the specific nature and needs of those who are to be at once its objects and its subjects. The initial act of grace as Incarnation in Jesus Christ incorporates and expresses a principle which characterizes its entire operation: "Because the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same." The principle expressed is this: Grace, or Love in action, conforms and adapts itself precisely to its objects or subjects, and to the needs and wants to be supplied. Grace becomes both to us and in us just what we want, and in the form and manner in which it is possible and proper for us to receive it. So Jesus Christ is the life of God, objectively to us, and subjectively in us, in that degree and manner in which we can and ought, according to our

nature, to become partakers of the divine life and nature. The acts or processes, in us and by us, through which that can be, are — our at-one-ment with God, our redemption from sin, and our resurrection from death. All these Jesus Christ accomplished and was in our nature; and accomplishes and becomes in ourselves. What God accomplishes in humanity by His grace, humanity accomplishes in God through its faith. Jesus Christ as the both divinely and humanly accomplished Unity of God and man, is both God and man in the matter — the grace by and the faith through which we live.

Grace (4) is finally and immediately the work in us of the Holy Ghost — through Whom, in sequence and conjunction with the Word, are mediated all those divine operations upon the earth that we might characterize as subjective: that is to say, all the influences which, in the beings themselves who are the subjects of them, draw, or fit, or assimilate them to God, and make them in their measure partakers of His nature. It is in keeping with this that it is said of the Holy Ghost that He takes of the things of Jesus, of the objectively revealed Word of God, and “shows,” or interprets and imparts them to us. He works in us the subjective appreciation, appropriation, and participation of a truth and a life which come to us from without and from above. It is in this sense that the Holy Ghost is to us “the Giver of life” — the life He gives being the incarnate Word and Son of God. Thus the Life that was originally and eternally in God, and

was God: that was mediately in, and cause of, all else: that was then humanly and personally in the world in Jesus Christ — that life of God and of Jesus Christ His Son, is in us by impartation and participation of His Spirit.

How Christ is in us by His Spirit: accomplishes in us and by us all that He accomplished for us: and so makes us by His grace what He is, sons and heirs of God — that is just the practical and actual Christianity which we need to recover and to know. If there be mystery in it, as there is in all divine operations and in all natural facts and processes, it is not a mystery which cannot be rationally stated and spiritually apprehended.

The life of Jesus Christ upon earth was a human fact and act. If it was, taken as a unit and a whole, a life at one with God — and so, sinless and deathless — it was a human life *made so* by His own redeeming and quickening act in it. There is nothing in that act of human regeneration and resurrection different in kind from any and every human life, as it is, naturally and supernaturally, constituted and purposed to be, and ought eventually to be. Our lives are ours to make them God's, and they are God's only as we make them so. If God by mere word or power without, and not also by spirit within — that is by our own cooperant act — should make our lives His, they would not be *ours* so made: there cannot be an "ours" without "us." We see in Jesus Christ a human life at one with God, "made God's": and the act by which He made

it so, we call an act of reconciliation, of atonement, or atonement.

We see in Jesus Christ human life, not only reconciled or made one with God, but thereby and therein redeemed from sin, made sinless or holy. That again is in no wise contradictory to the proper course of human nature or life in general. Sin or vice is not the proper or true law of human life; on the contrary, virtue is, and holiness and righteousness. The spotless virtue, the perfect holiness or righteousness of Jesus Christ, which was in itself in our nature a redemption from sin, was His own act in humanity, and precisely the act by which alone humanity redeems itself from sin. If humanity cannot be holy or sinless by act of itself, its only redemption from sin is through the death of itself into the life of God.

We see in Jesus Christ humanity raised up out of inevitable death in itself into assured and eternal life in God. And again, this is no contradiction of evolution, no contradiction to the true and essential nature and destination of man: for it is as natural for him to pass from human into divine life, as to have passed from animal into rational and human life. If in each act or process of personal transition from stage to stage, there is involved a putting off of old nature, a dying from one mode of relation to environment to live in another mode of relation to environment and to self: if, as the rational man has to die from the brute or the animal that he was, so the spiritual or divine man has to die from his mere selfhood



which nevertheless was a necessary stage of his development — all this, I affirm, is part and essential part of the law of successive natural, rational, moral, and spiritual evolution.

Why this evolution cannot have been all and only immanent: why there needed to come in from without and from above an objective, actual and historical, realization, revelation, and demonstration of human life divinely accomplished, of God manifest in man and of man self-completed in God, is a question to which something of an answer may be suggested as follows: To begin with, if religion, considered only on our part, is a transcendent act, an act of objective attitude and relation, a conscious and free going out of ourselves to a Spirit and Life of the universe which, however it may include and be in us, yet is infinitely without and transcends us — if, I say, religion is thus distinctly transcendent on our part, why must it not be similarly transcendent on God's part? Why must it not be God, as it were, coming forth from Himself to meet us, who — in a relative sense at least, in consciousness and in freedom — are as objective to Him as He to us? How can we, by instinct, by reason, in freedom and in personal act and life, go forth of ourselves to meet an infinite and divine Not-Ourselves, which does not meet and respond to us there? If I speak and God hears, if I cry and God answers: if in any sense, and to any extent, there is spiritual interrelation and intercommunication, then there is real transcendence, an objective correspondence between God and us, each in

that respect outside the one of the other. And nothing short of this is really religion, or is what will fill and satisfy the human need and demand for religion.

How was mortal man to enter into and share the life, the personal life, of God? We are speaking no longer now of natural life, we have passed out of the realm of flesh into that of spirit: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," it is holiness, and righteousness, and eternal life, in the Holy Ghost. And what is the life of spirit, as such? What are the functions and activities within us, in which the life of spirit consists and manifests itself? We can know them only under the personal forms of intelligence, affection, will, and voluntary action. If religion is not in these, it is nowhere for us, for these cover the whole ground of personal life. To know God, to need, desire, and love God, to will and do or obey God, to be, so far as we may, what God is, to have God personally in ourselves, and to find ourselves only and wholly in Him — in what other terms than these can we express or describe our participation in God?

If this be the sole language or life of our finite spirits, as children of God, then the beginning and middle and end of all living relation to the life of God is that we shall know enough of it to enter into it and have part in it. Without knowledge there can be no desire or will or action, for there would be no object of these. Once, on the other hand, we know what God has shown us and given us in Jesus Christ, once we understand what Christ means and is to us — the end and object,

the fulness and satisfaction of all of spirit that we are or that is in us — then we see that, apart from the divine revelation and gift of Him, we were in utter and hopeless darkness.

Now we see in Him the power of God indeed unto salvation — but the power of God acting *how*? Why, through the knowledge, love and desire, will, and actual exercise and activity on our part, of everything that is in the truest and highest sense salvation. To know, love, desire, will, and serve God is salvation: it is His life, Himself, living in us. We see this in Christ, we know it in Him, we love and desire it in Him — and through all these we have and share it with Him. We see, know, and share with Him — what? The death in and to ourselves, the life in and to God. As by the birth and action of our own reasons and free wills we pass from animal into man, so by the new birth from above of the Incarnate Word and Spirit and Will of Jesus Christ in us, we pass from human to divine — up through the reason and will of incomplete, and imperfect, and sinful *self* into the Eternal Reason and Will that is, of right, all in all.

## VII

### THE PROCESS OF LIFE SPIRITUAL

CHRISTIANITY may be viewed under a variety of aspects, and expressed in various terms, but it is most exactly described as a life. More exactly still is it described by our Lord Himself, not as a life, as though one out of many, but as simply or absolutely Life, or by St. John as The Life: for the life we are speaking of is but one life and one thing. It cannot be properly described as a theory or scheme, or even a doctrine, of life; in direct contrast to and contradistinction from all these, it is the fact of life, the life itself, about which theories are mere speculation, and doctrines but explanations and instructions. It is not an ideal of life, as being even the truest conception and embodying the most perfect standard of life. It is contradistinguished from the ideal, as being the actual and the real. Neither can Christianity be properly described as an ethical or moral system, as a precept or law of life. While incidentally and all-importantly it is this too, as it is all the rest, yet essentially it has to be contradistinguished from this too, as well as from all the rest. Christianity is not a theory but the fact, not a doctrine but the truth, not an ideal but the actual; and so, finally, not a law or requirement of life, but the

life itself, not merely required, but given, received, and lived.

Christianity is of course the life of Christ: and as such it is necessarily a life like Christ's. But, speaking exactly, it is distinctly not a life like Christ's in us, but the life of Christ in us: not a life resembling His, but Himself our life. Jesus Christ certainly stands to us in the relation of example, but even more distinctly not in that of mere example, but of source, and power, and of content and matter of our life. *He* is our life, nothing whatever merely from Him, as example, or influence, or direction, or command. "I am the Life" is not the word He spake to us, it is the Word of God which He is to us.

"The Word of Life" — God Himself, Himself-imparting — speaks to us, according to St. John's account of it, in the flesh: not through one sense only, but through all, through every natural avenue of human perception, knowledge, or experience: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled, of the Word of Life (and the Life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the Life, the eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)." So this, then, is the witness, the witness not alone of those who saw Him with eyes, and heard Him with ears, and handled Him with hands of flesh, but the witness of "every one who believeth on the Son of God" (to whom God gives to have the witness

within him): namely, "That God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in the Son: he that hath the Son hath the Life": because the Son of God is the Life. What response can we make to this, but to say with St. Paul, "I live no longer, Christ lives in me!" True faith in the Son of God is the death of "me," the life of God in me. Our life is "hidden with Christ in God; when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."

The prime point in all this is, that all our relation to Jesus Christ is of that immediate, direct, and intimate character which is possible for us only with God Himself: "closer is He than hands or feet, and nearer to us than breathing." We live and move and have our being, not by any intermediary between God and us, but only by and in God Himself; and so Jesus Christ is our life, not through anything proceeding from Him at a distance in time or space, but through His own immediate presence and action in us. The now, and always, and everywhere living Christ is the only Christ of Christianity — or, rather, is the Christ of the one and only true Christianity.

We have seen how life from the beginning, from the lowest physical or animal form of it, through rational and spiritual, up at last to eternal or divine life, is attributed to the Logos who in the end becomes incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. Life, which begins as mere "living soul" in Adam, becomes in Jesus Christ "quickenings, or life-giving, spirit." The turning-point in the process may be described more in detail

than hitherto, as follows: Life becomes rational or human at the moment or in the act in which it is revealed to itself, when itself becomes objective and an object to it. This reflex or self consciousness is happily expressed in the words of St. John, "and the life was the light of men." The distinction between lower beings and men, which we call reason, marks a difference, leaps and leaves behind a chasm between animal and man, wider than we conceive. In it reason itself, immanent in all things, ceases to be mere object and becomes subject, ceases in nature to be thing and becomes person. There is reason in inanimate things as well as in life vegetable and animal, but it is no reason of theirs, nor to them. For the first time, to men is there upon earth a reason visible to itself in their persons: a knowledge and understanding of the reason and meaning and purpose and end of things, and chiefly of themselves. "That which makes manifest is light"; and the light that manifests to men themselves, and all things, and God, is Reason; which, however, is rather an eye to see the light than the light itself. And yet too, what but light can see light, what but life can know life? "If the eye were not sunny (of the nature of the sun), it could not see the sun." We can know ourselves because we are potential selves, and become actual in knowing ourselves. We know God because we have somewhat of God in us, because we are of God, and are sufficiently of His nature to become partakers of Himself and of His life. Only to him that hath can be given.

There is an intimate and necessary connection between human self-consciousness and self-determination or freedom: neither could be by itself, or without the other. It is in the gradual and growing exercise of personal independence, in the equal possibility of opposite activities, in the fact of choice and the moral distinction we make in acts, that the selves in us emerge of which we become conscious. It is in the discovery through experience of law, in the fact of obedience or disobedience to it and the consequences that ensue, that we come to know ourselves and to understand the reason and meaning of things. If all law — in that case improperly so called, since both law and obedience or disobedience are correlatives of freedom — were simply immanent necessity, if we were moved without reason or by a reason in no sense our own, we should neither know reason nor be conscious of selves which we call our own.

Reason, however it comes — whether or no only in the consciousness and exercise of personal freedom — could never of itself take us beyond ourselves and the world of sense. I do not mean that it could not, from the knowledge we have of ourselves and derived from sense-experience, draw inferences and build up speculations as to matters without us and beyond us. Reason of itself may thus lead us to infer, and may successfully justify its inference of, such a fact or truth as God, and may suggest true speculations as to His being and nature: I am not denying the possibility or rationality of a purely natural or innate religion. On the contrary,



if man is naturally constituted for religion, for knowledge and life of God — although I hold that he will never come to these by purely immanent process within himself, that he will never meet God by acts transcending self and sense-experience unless God also meet Him from without these, that however he may, prior to consciousness and freedom, be potentially child of God, he can never become actually son of God except as, through consciousness and freedom, God personally communicates and imparts Himself and His life to him — yet, as necessary precondition of all this, there must and will be in the purely natural man himself instincts and impulses tending Godward. Reason may thus teach us, and teach us truly, many things about God — what St. Paul calls the “invisible things of Him,” which “from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made.” Reason, I say, may truly reveal to us these things of God, but it cannot possibly give us God. Nothing can give us God but only God Himself, God in some mode of personal or Self communication and impartation, God speaking to us and to Whom we may speak.

A Person can give Himself only to persons, because he can be met and received only by persons. A Person cannot give himself, as such, immanently, but only transcendently. A father can give his nature and many things pertaining to himself to his son, by generation or immanent transmission; *himself* he can give to him only by transcendent, objective, personal self-

presentation, expression, and impartation. The personal is only between persons, from without to within.

The spiritual is something more than and beyond the natural, though it wholly presupposes and includes it. Man is in a double sense a spiritual being. First, he is by nature finite spirit: nothing but spirit can communicate with or can be communicated with by Spirit. To say that we are made for God, for union and communion, or for unity with God, means that we are of like nature with God, at least to the extent of that union or unity with Him. But to be constituted for and capable of personal relation and unity with God is not in itself to be in that unity or relation. That God has given us much in nature in common with Himself, in order that He might then in that community of nature give us Himself, that the knowledge of Him might be our life and the service of Him our freedom, is not yet to have given us Himself, or life, or freedom. The endowment for these is not these. Just as there is a difference between being naturally or potentially rational beings or moral beings and being actually and really rational or moral, so there is no less difference between being naturally spiritual beings, or beings made for spirituality, and being spiritual in act and in fact.

Jesus Christ spoke much of knowing the Father, and spoke of it, not only of Himself, but for us. We were to know God as He knew Him, for life; to serve God as He served Him, for freedom; and, in a word, to be to God what He was to God. Now how did our human

Lord know and serve God, and what was He to God? He knew Him as Father, He served Him as Son, by simply being as truly Son to God as God was Father to Him: Son not merely by nature, whether human or divine, but Son in act and in fact, Son by one spirit with the Father, as well as by one nature with the Father. It is a general or universal truth, that no man knoweth the father but the son: the only way to know the father is to be the son. The only way to know God is to know Him as Father, for that is the only actual true relation we can bear to Him; the only way we can know Him as Father is to know Him as sons, for we can only know Him in His relation to us by realizing or actualizing our relation to Him. We cannot know God out of true and real relation with Him, and there is only one real relation we can bear to Him — namely, being His sons, not only by bearing His nature, but sharing His Spirit and living His life.

Personal or transcendent relation between God and man does not originate or begin with the historical fact of our Lord's incarnation. The divine Word and the divine Spirit, which are the agents of all such relation, are described in the Scriptures as having been in the world from the beginning. But they could be in the world only as the world was prepared and able to receive them, and they were present in each stage of the world in accordance with the stage. Abraham, we are told, was the friend of God: and he lives still as permanent exponent of the faith by which God is said to be known. Did Abraham indeed know God through

faith: then it is possible for men through faith to know God. The extent or exactness or adequacy of the knowledge does not enter into the question. An infant begins to know its mother from its birth. If faith made perfect, as in Jesus Christ, becomes knowledge, then faith even in part, and in smallest part, is partial knowledge. There have been those in the world whom the world has called prophets; has God ever truly uttered Himself through prophets? Then it is possible for men to hear God, and to be real witnesses and messengers for Him to the world. Was God actually with and in these men in the sense and in the way in which they represented Him to the world? It does not follow from God's being with or in them at all that He must have been with and in them completely or infallibly. The mother is just as certainly and actually in the child, and with it objectively or from without, from the day of its birth as in its maturity. The fact and reality of religion depends upon the possibility and the actuality of a transcendent, objective, free, personal relation between God and ourselves. God has given us a consciousness and a relative independence of Himself which are designed to enable us, and which do actually enable us, to know Him personally and to serve Him freely. The end and essence of religion is so to know, to love, and to serve Him, which we do only by realizing Him as our Father and ourselves as His children, by being ourselves what He is, doing as He does, and so sharing His life, and being partakers of His goodness, which is His good.

“God who in divers measures and in divers manners had spoken to the world by prophets, has spoken to us in full measure and in perfect manner in His Son.” The turn of expression in which this truth is stated emphasizes the fact that God has spoken, not merely in the person of His Son, but in the fact and significance of His sonship. All that in part Abraham knew through faith, or that had been told through prophecy, has been fully manifested and communicated in the Son of Man who is also Son of God. We know the Father in the Son: we know the Father through being ourselves made sons.

Humanly speaking — and we must speak humanly of our human Lord: in His humanity His consciousness was a human consciousness — Jesus Christ knew the Father through His own perfect realizing of the sonship to God potential in humanity and made actual in Himself. The human condition of a perfect sonship to God is perfect faith, hope, and love, perfect obedience or service as the expression of these, and, through and in all, the life of God become our life. Our Lord was perfect Son, and so perfectly knew the Father, through perfect fulfilment of the conditions and perfect accomplishment of the process of human sonship. As man, Jesus Christ knew Himself only in terms of humanity. However true His deity — and it was infinitely true, for otherwise His humanity was impossible — it was humanly manifested, and cannot be known or expressed by us otherwise than in what He was as man. That He was the divine Man, the Man from heaven, the

Eternal Word, God Self-expressed in humanity, Son of Man because humanity itself realized and revealed — that was manifestation enough of His Godhead. He came to be known in man and as man; and it was neither necessary nor to the purpose that He should be manifested otherwise than as man.

Man is spiritual, as distinguished from rational, not through any amount or truth of speculative knowledge about God, but only through personal relation and association with God Himself. No immanence, or community or affinity of mere nature, can convey or impart that which comes only through personal association, through mutual knowledge, love, service, and interchange of offices and functions. The more immediately important thing even for Jesus Christ Himself was His oneness with the Father, not in nature alone, but in heart and mind and will and act; and the immediately important thing for us is that He attained that oneness for us and therefore as we — not as God but as man, not in the exercise of omniscience and omnipotence, but in the experience of all human weakness and temptation and through the sole power and victory that come from God through faith. In a word, our Lord was spiritual man through all the processes and achievements of spiritual manhood.

The spirit in man is the organ and faculty of the divine, of God in him. It is through it that we are by nature related and akin to God, constituted for Him, and capable of union and unity with Him. But the human spirit, as such and as part of our nature, as

mere potentiality and faculty, does not make us spiritual, any more than eyes of themselves, without sun or light, give us sight. They are both media, not sources: spirituality, as sight, comes through a capacity within us, but from an object and source without us. It is only God's Spirit in and with and through our spirit that makes us spiritual. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The first blessedness of the human spirit is the fact and sense of its own poverty: the essence of finite spirit and the condition of finite spirituality is poverty. What is capacity for God, but want of Him, dependence upon Him, utter emptiness and nothingness without Him? "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." What an emptiness is it that only heaven can fill, what a poverty that wants and can only be satisfied with God Himself!

The proper and only necessary functions of finite spirit are faith, hope, and love: given these in purity and integrity, and all else will come, for spirituality or for blessedness. Which simply means that if the conditions exist in us, the causes and operations will not fail from God. Of the three, faith, hope, and love — love is first as well as last: no one has real faith in, or hopes for, what he does not think about, desire, and love: love, if only yet in the form of need or want, determines the objects of faith and hope. But, still more, love is last; for it requires for its fulness and completion both knowledge and possession, and these for us are to be acquired only through the long discipline of faith and hope. Faith is initial, progressive, partial knowledge,

as hope is initial and partial possession: faith complete is the only knowledge, as hope attained and satisfied is the only possession, of which our finite spirits are capable. Necessary as it is that love should be first and last, and all in all—since faith and hope are but expressions and energies of it—it is equally necessary that these latter should have their place and time in the process of the spiritual life. To speak of knowing, or loving, or living, or possessing the kingdom of God or of heaven, all at once, without growth or process, or any otherwise than through spiritual evolution, is impossible and inconceivable for finite spirits. God must be long the object of faith and hope before He can be the possession of love and knowledge.

It is vain to think of our Lord's spirituality as not having passed through and experienced all the process of a human faith, hope, and love. What were His temptations but the testing, proving, and making in Him of those essential spiritual graces and qualities? What was His victory but the complete triumph and crowning in His person of faith, hope, and love? It is true that our Lord, in His active ministry of word and work, never speaks of His own faith and hope, while inculcating them continually upon us. That proves much, but what is it that it proves? He never speaks of Himself as a fighter, but He does speak of Himself as the victor, as having conquered in the great battle of life: "I have overcome the world." And who is the victor but He who has fought and won? And what is the victory that overcometh the world? "It is even



our Faith: who is he that overcometh, but he that believeth?" To believe in Jesus Christ is essentially to believe in the irresistible power and the certain victory of faith, hope, and love: to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is to believe, not only in the eternal fact of His divine Sonship, but no less in the humanly accomplished act and fact of His human sonship. Nor are we excluded from looking behind the scenes upon our Lord's hard-fought fight in the process of its waging and its winning: the Wilderness, the Garden, and the Cross teach us clearly enough that the work of the spirit, the strife against sin, is won only by resistance unto blood, is finished only in death.

I spoke of life, natural, rational, moral, spiritual, eternal, as all associated with the evolutionary increation and incarnation of the Word or Son of God. Eternal life is but the end and completion of one continuous process. Spiritual life is eternal life begun here in faith and hope: eternal life is spiritual completed in faith become sight, and hope become possession and fruition.

## VIII

### THE SPIRITUAL THROUGH THE NATURAL

THERE can be no question about calling Christianity a life, nor about calling it the life of God in the soul — that is to say, in the personality and the personal life of man. Neither, from the standpoint of the New Testament and of historical faith, can there be any question about all living Christianity's being the personal life of the living and present Christ — not anything merely of or from Him, as example, or influence, or virtue, or even grace, or spirit, but Himself in us. St. Paul's "I live not, Christ lives in me" is nothing more than the implicit attitude of the New Testament and of the Church whose expression it was and is. "In Jesus Christ," the baptismal, sacramental place and status of the Christian man, the ego or "I," the old man, the self of sin and death, is dead, and He takes its place and lives in me. That is possible by virtue of what Jesus Christ means and is to me. Just as the brute in us dies into the rational, free, moral man, so the natural man dies into the spiritual. By the natural, as well as supernatural, process of a living faith, hope, and love in Jesus Christ, not alone the virtue, the grace and power, but the very act and fact

of His death to sin and life in God, are communicated and imparted to us. The old self dies, and a new Self which is more truly ourself lives in its stead. The very life itself of this new Self in us is the death of the old: living in the Spirit and so walking in It, we cease to fulfil the lusts or to live the life of the flesh. As St. Peter expresses it, Jesus Christ has "brought us to God" through having been "put to death in the flesh, and quickened, or made alive, in the spirit." That act becomes ours only through His becoming "we," taking the place of our old selves and becoming the new and true Self in us. Jesus Christ may no doubt be truly called the Ideal Man, or each man's Ideal Self, but He is infinitely more than that: an ideal, merely as such, is an abstraction; Jesus Christ is our actual and real True Self. Man in the mind of God, in the eternal foreknowledge and forepurpose of God, man "as he shall be when his becoming shall be complete," is not less but more man than in his inchoate beginnings and in his incomplete processes. Our Lord is not our ideal self, He is our eternal, divine, accomplished, assured, and perfect Self. Myself apart from Him who is God in me, the everlasting truth and meaning of me, my eternal life and self, is not I. Losing self and life in Him I find them, and finding them apart from Him I lose them.

There are two truths involved in this, each of which is more than liable to be lost in part or in whole. In the first place, Jesus Christ was Himself not only the Life that was with God, and was God, and was mani-

fested to us; He was also that life made ours and manifested in us. And as such, it was in Him, in His oneness with us, precisely the same in kind with our life now in Him. For Him as for us, in our common relation with the Father, was the "Not I, but Thou," "Not mine, but Thine;" "I can do nothing of myself." "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth His works." The Son can do nothing "of Himself," apart from His "oneness with the Father." That truth, in all its human signification and application, our Lord first realized for us in His own humanity, and so, in its converse, too, that "in oneness with the Father the Son can do and be all things," He has made it forever applicable to us as to Himself. In Him the perfection of faith grew into sight and knowledge, the consummation of hope became actual possession; the fulness of the life of God manifested in Him was manifest in the fulness of the life that humanly was Himself and His own. The Son of God became man, and the man that He became and was, just as truly and completely, by human act and process, incarnated the Divine Word of God in His humanity, as the divine and eternal Word incarnated Himself in Him. As the Deity in Him became human, so the humanity in Him became divine, and God and man in His person were One. So Jesus Christ was the Way of Life in both directions, from God to manward and from man to Godward: from God to us He was Love, Grace,

Fellowship; from us to God He was Faith, Hope, Love, eternal Life.

In the second place, not only *was* Jesus Christ Himself our life in all the human way and order and process of it — through faith to grace, and through grace to glory; but Jesus Christ *is* Himself our life, in all our own progress from grace to grace, and finally to glory. We progress just in proportion as (1) “it is not we but He in us,” and (2) as it is not only He but we too, finding and realizing ourselves in Him. The living and present Christ operative in us for life now, is just as necessary a truth as the dead and risen Christ operating for us for life long ago.

We are being, not too often or too much if we take it aright, reminded in these days that the life of God or of Christ in us does not mean life out of or apart from the world, but rather the divinely right life in the world. It is a spiritual life because it is essentially, not only a life of the Spirit, but a spirit of life. One, and one only, spirit characterizes and manifests it. Hereby know we that we are of God, or of Christ, and that we abide in Him and He in us — by the spirit that He has given us. We know that we are of His Spirit, by the spirit that we ourselves are of. That Spirit, or spirit, we know, is Love; and although in a sense it is truly expressed in the words “Love not the world nor the things that are in the world,” yet it is not in the sense that the Object or objects of our love are wholly in another world and not in this. We do not perhaps need to be reminded that

the contrary is the truth, but how and how much it is the truth, we do need to realize much better than we do. The same Apostle in the same epistle in which he bids us not to love the world and the things that are in it, teaches us that, if we do not love our brother whom we can see, we cannot love God whom we cannot see: which embodies a great principle. If our life is not in our relations here, and is not all that it ought to be in them, it can neither be what it should be, nor be at all, in relations elsewhere. Life is correspondence with environment — its own, actual environment, and not another. Life here may fit us for another, but there cannot be another save through this and as the sequel and result of this. The conditions and circumstances of earth are precisely those that are fitted and suited to develop in us the actions and characters that make up our lives. In bettering them, and making them what they ought to be, we are actually making, shaping, and determining ourselves.

To make this world all that it ought to be, to see that the will of God is done on earth as it is done in heaven, to convert the imperfect and the wrong in all of our present experience into the perfect and the right of a divine standard which God has written in our minds and revealed to our faith, is the only way to make heaven for ourselves, or to achieve that kingdom of God which is the goal of spiritual desire. We complain that the world is made what it is, forgetting that it is not made but still in the making, and that it is here for us to make it what it ought to be, and that it

is no better only as we do not make it better. If the world is our proper environment, in reaction with which we are to make ourselves, and in making which we are to make ourselves, how else are we to expect it to be better than by our making it so? The right reaction of life upon environment and of environment upon life is the only mean or hope of either.

We forget how much of the good that Jesus "went about doing" was spent upon human and earthly conditions, and how much He makes the final judgment upon us to turn upon the same way and kind of "doing good." We are to find Him, as we are to find God, in all that needs us, and especially in all who need us, here. To go away from this, or these, in search of Him elsewhere or by Himself, is to seek Him where, for us at least, He is not.

In our fancied spirituality, we are perhaps too much inclined to seek and to find the goodness of Jesus in His concern for the spiritual and eternal conditions and welfare of men. We say that His bodily helps and healings are only temporary object lessons and parables of His permanent mission and ministry as physician of souls: "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to put away sin"—then, in proof, He put away sickness. Of course, there is much truth on that side, but on the other side too there is this to be said: Spiritual life is not something that can be detached and separated from natural or even from bodily life. The senses, the appetites and passions, all bodily functions, all pleasures and pains, are part

of the soul that needs to be saved: and only as they are spiritualized, and sanctified, and so rationalized and moralized, is the soul itself saved, of which they are constituent and determining elements. We are not ourselves apart from all these parts of ourselves; and while some of them may be organs and functions of life only as life is here and now, yet even these in their time and place in the process of life enter not slightly into the determination of what shall be our life hereafter. The bodily and natural life is therefore to be dealt with immediately and wisely and lovingly in the interest of the spiritual life which is inseparably connected with it; and the dealing with it in the right spirit and the right way is a very large part of our present spirituality. Patience, endurance, fortitude, courage, temperance, self-control, self-discipline, and general physical efficiency, have all directly much to do with the body, and are all none the less spiritual virtues and graces. Sympathy, pity, charity, relief, and help, which have even a greater part in our spiritual activities, have scarcely less to do with the earthly and bodily conditions of others.

Indeed, the spiritual in our life is so largely the spirit and temper in and with which we deal with the temporal and the natural, that in the life of Jesus and of the New Testament the danger is rather that of seeing little else or more than that in it. There is, of course, much there of God and of Heaven, but the God and heaven of our Lord and His Apostles are mostly in the world, not out of it. The concern is vastly more



with the now and here than with the elsewhere and hereafter. Faith indeed has everything to do with the absent and the future, but its whole function and concern with them is to make them present, in both time and space. In the spirit of the New Testament all our desire and effort should be, not to go to heaven, but rather to bring heaven to us, and to establish it upon earth: the kingdom of God is in need of nothing with Him in heaven; what it needs is to be set up among us upon earth. The things of faith are indeed absent and future, but that is just what they ought not to be, or to continue to be; we shall go to them only through bringing them to us. Our Lord "brought us to God" through dying to all distance or separation from Him, and living in nearness and oneness with Him.

The important question for us then is, What is the life of God, and of Christ, here and now: in what spirit, and by what spirit, shall we know ourselves in Him and Him in us? If we concern ourselves aright with the present and with earth, we may trust God for the future and its heaven. We do ourselves make and determine our future and our heaven, but the earth and the present are our only time and place for making them, and furnish all the material and the means out of which and by which they are made.

If we would study yet more particularly the form which the life of God and of Christ assumes among us upon earth, and the spirit that actuates and characterizes it, we shall find no more exact account of it than

in our Lord's own words: "Ye know the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would be great among you let him be your minister, and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant: even as the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." With regard to the last clause, we may safely pass by all controversial theology by agreeing upon only so much of common interpretation as the following: The "giving" of our Lord's life, or soul, or self (for all these three are included in the term used), was certainly the cost or price of our redemption by Him, no matter why or how it was by that effected. It was that act of perfect love, service, and sacrifice on His part that in fact redeems and saves humanity. The act was in itself human redemption, salvation, and eternal life: for in it, humanity in His person conquered sin, death, and hell, put all enemies under its feet, and is seated as victor at the right hand of God, as participant in His holiness, righteousness, and eternal life. The admixture of imagery or figure with literal fact in that statement, in no wise impairs its truth, and is of help to the imagination in conceiving it. This supreme act of our Head, of the Leader or Captain of our salvation, of the Author and Finisher of our faith, is accepted by God, and appropriated by us, as ours: because it is ours — not only potentially through the grace of God assured to us in Christ, but actually upon the sole

condition of our faith's taking and making it ours. Upon the details and methods of this divine salvation we may differ indefinitely, theoretically or speculatively; and yet, practically and substantially, can agree perfectly in knowing ourselves to be indeed dead unto sin in the death, and alive unto God in the life of our risen Lord.

It is, however, the spirit before and behind all this, of which I wish to speak as the breath and principle of the life of Christ in us. The life of man, as the life of God, is essentially and necessarily a ministry and a service. It lives in giving itself, and ceases to live in ceasing to give. It is a fundamental fact in itself, independently of the authority upon which it is stated, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Aristotle says substantially what our Lord says. Receiving, or merely having, is passivity; using, giving, spending, are activities; and life and blessedness are acts and activities — energies and actualities, not mere states, or conditions, or potentialities. The Self in us is at its best and highest in an act of pure love, service, and sacrifice. "Not that which goeth into a man either defiles, or beautifies, or blesses him, but only that which comes forth from him:" for only that is he, which proceeds from himself.

It is not mere giving, of course, that is the true expression of Christ, but giving life, soul, self. And there is no either true giving of self, or true self or life to give, that is not Love. If God can define Himself as Love, can comprehend and express all that He is

within the compass of those four letters and that single syllable — it is not too much, nor too little, for us to say that all true life, true selfhood, or true blessedness in us is love. It is not enough, in describing love as the essence and principle of life, as the sole principle of all true and real life, to insist upon its rightness; we must assert, above and beyond that, its absolute and sole blessedness. It is not only the sum and substance of all our duty, the fulfilling of the whole law of life; it is also our highest good and happiness. The “right” is but the rule or law of the “good,” the formulation and expression of our obligation to it. The Good, therefore, as an end is higher and more ultimate than the Right as a way or means. If “goodness” itself, which is the activity and natural expression of Love, and is the principle and essence of rightness or duty, is “will of the good,” then it would seem that good, as the end, is something above and beyond even goodness, as the will and the way. What then is the Good, to which all ways lead and all means tend? It cannot be conceived or expressed otherwise than as at once the perfection and the blessedness of Life.

If life, which is inseparable and indistinguishable from its movement, its exercise and activity, its use and application, were not in itself a pleasure, a happiness, a blessedness, there is no other sense in which it would be a good. Why should we want it, for ourselves or for others, to be complete or perfect, or to be at all, if it were the pleasure, and so the desire and the will, of no one. Our individual life might be only a pain to

ourself, and yet, because it is a duty or a good to others, or the will or law of God, we choose to continue it. In that case, not only has the pleasure, the desire, or the will of others been the end which has determined our action, but that end has determined us only by becoming our own dominant pleasure, desire, and will. We cannot escape the conclusion that pleasure, happiness, blessedness, is not only the actual and universal, but is the proper and necessary end and determinant of life. Our freedom, our responsibility, our wisdom, and our salvation, is in the choice of our pleasures, in the quality and material of our happiness, in the truth and purity of our blessedness. In choosing God and the Kingdom of Heaven we have made the wisest and best possible choice, but we have not chosen God because He is our duty alone, but because He is our highest pleasure or joy, our truest happiness, our essential life and blessedness. Or, if we have chosen Him from duty, then we have made duty our dominant pleasure, desire, and will, or happiness.

Which is the higher and the ultimate, Goodness or Good — good, which is personal perfection and blessedness, or goodness, which is will of the good to others and to all? The answer is that they are one and the same, and neither can be first or second. If good is life, and life is love, and love is goodness — then goodness, and love, and life are identical and are the sole and the only good. It follows that the spiritual, moral, divine end and aim of life is not reached by the surrender or sacrifice of pleasure or

happiness, in their true sense, to duty. What we need for that abundance of life which our Lord came into the world to bring and to bestow, is not to deny or mortify pleasure or happiness, but to raise it to its highest place and power. We do this when we learn that the highest good is the being good, and that to be good is to will and to do good. The true goal is yet afar off, it is only in the way and on the way of ultimate attainment, so long as it is to us only the object of duty, a matter only of law and obligation. Loving, willing, being good, are attaining perfection with us in the measure in which they are ceasing to be law and becoming spirit, are ceasing to be duty and becoming a pleasure and a passion, our happiness and our blessedness.

The philosophy of all this is, that the good gift of God to us is the life that is His own. If life is a good, its good is to be found, not in its mere potentiality or possession, but in its use and exercise, in its proper functions and energies and activities. All these are given in the actual and manifold relations, associations, and interactions of human life. Of all these there is one all-embracing, all-constructive, all-sufficient spirit, and principle, and law — the spirit, principle, law of love and goodness. Love is the fulfilling of the whole law of life — that is, only in it is life fulfilled, goodness attained, and good secured.

## IX

### LOVE THE SEMINAL PRINCIPLE OF LIFE

CHRISTIANITY is not a life, so long as it remains only a theory, an ideal, or a sentiment, or all these together. Life, as contradistinguished from all these, is the one reality, and it exists only as it is actual. All that is merely thought or felt or said about it adds nothing to the real knowledge of it; it can be known only by being lived. To "know" God, or His Son Jesus Christ, or eternal life, in the New Testament is synonymous with being in actual possession of, in living relation and association with them. "If we say that we know Him, or that we have fellowship with Him, and are still walking in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." We must be "born from above" in order to be able to "see" the Kingdom of God; and birth is an act or incident of life, not of thought or reasoning or feeling; however it may be necessarily connected with all these also, it is inseparable from its distinctive movement and action and actuality.

The practical question then is, How shall we make our Christianity the life, the activity or actuality, which alone Christianity really is? We shall not have it by merely telling or being told it; but, having it, we

may have it better by a clearer apprehension and expression of what it is. So let us reflect — and try not merely to speculate — a little further upon what the life of Christ is in this world.

The first difficulty in the practical understanding of the Christian life is found in the ambiguity of the one word which ought of itself perfectly to express it — and does not, because it is itself so profaned and degraded — the word Love. Like every other element or principle of our human life, love has had its evolution, and carries the marks of its lower stages. It originated and is still rooted in sensuous or bodily instinct and appetite or passion. Its elemental function is reproduction and propagation; its first form is sexual union. Sexual love is primitive or original love, and the source of all other. Directly out of it, and in the genetic order of organic growth, proceeds every other form of human love, parental, filial, fraternal, domestic, social, political, racial, humanitarian. Marital affection, relation, association, is the source, not only of all life, but of all the mutual offices and functions, all the reciprocal rights and duties, among men.

If it should be asked, What on the whole and in the end is the reason and meaning, the final and determining ground and cause of the sexual or marital relation, no one would venture to answer, that it is for bodily or sensuous gratification. And yet it is necessary to mention that: not merely because so many do make it the end, but because the practical and necessary reason for even that lowest feature of sexual love is plain



enough: there must be the elemental physical impulse and impulsion strong enough and universal enough to ensure always and everywhere the ends to be subserved.

Many more will say, and yet it is manifestly still not enough to say, that the end of the sexual relation is the propagation of the species. The species is indeed propagated through the sexual relation: we are not, however, considering either the fact or the necessity of propagation, but only the reason and propriety of that particular way of it. No doubt some self-working and effective process of propagation was necessary, but why the method of sexual differentiation, complementation, and union? It is impossible to say that reproduction might not have been more simply effected than through the device of the conjunction and cooperation of man and woman. That it is by that shows, in its highest form of human marriage, conclusive evidence that the natural institution has ends and uses that far transcend those of mere propagation.

Indeed, why should propagation be so carefully ensured, be so much of an end? The answer can be found only in the fact that there are, in the life conserved by it, values and uses far transcending those of mere being, or being propagated; and we can begin to see that the manner of propagation has meaning and application for these higher uses and goods, and is determined and fitted to them as well. Propagation is an end, not in itself, but only as a condition of higher ends which are necessary to explain it. We have always to carry along with us the principle, that final

cause and sufficient reason reveal themselves only in the consummation and completion of processes and evolutions. Very much of all of nature that went before him becomes explicable only in man; and very much in man himself, as well as in all antecedent nature, becomes explicable only as we come to see and know "Him as He is," who, as first and final cause of our being, carries in Him all the reason and meaning, all the truth and purpose, of ourselves.

It becomes already very plain that in the institution of male and female, in all that they are for each other in the entire range of their complex being, in the close relations and intimacies and mutual dependences that necessarily exist between them, in the propagation and nurture of offspring, and the formation and conduct of families, the most perfect foundation is laid and the completest provision made for that social state and environment in whose relations and associations human life at its highest was to be spent and to find itself. In a word, the ultimate reason and use of sex, of male and female, man and woman, and the close conjunction between them, is found in the principle of rational and free social union and unity. "Man is a social being," is the first word of the science or philosophy of human life.

"To be" means to be in relation: nothing exists except in definite place with respect to every other thing; that which is nowhere is not at all. And everything in the world is in definite relation, not only of place, but of interaction, more or less immediate or

remote, with everything else in the world. This vital and active interrelation is the very essence and principle of being. What is true of being is truer of that higher form of being which we call "living" — and truer as life is higher and highest. A dog may be a dog though it has not seen or come into contact with another dog; but a man cannot be a man without conscious relation and association with other men. Human life is possible only in society: the individual lives only in the common life, and *is* only as he enters into and fulfils its natural relations, shares its aims, ideas, and sentiments, takes part in the division of its necessary labor, and contributes his proportion to its good and its happiness.

Unity and community is the essence and condition of life; and it originates in the union and communion of man and woman in the closest of bonds, grows into the unity of the family, and widens from that into the oneness of the clan, the state, the nation, and humanity. It is not enough to say that "Nature" — we must express it in terms of more "wise and understanding action" and say that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the whole earth." All comes from one common parentage, the union of the man and the woman in the symbolic garden of the world's infancy. The woman was to be to the man "a help meet for him," a help-mate to him, the partner, not only of his sensuous pleasure, of his racial instinct, of his useful or necessary toil, but of his whole life, in its highest and farthest reaches as well as in its lowest and most elemental commonplaces. The Chris-

tian law and ideal of marriage is as much part, and highest part, of nature's institution of the sex relation, as reason and freedom were part of nature's original institution of man, although neither was visible or was present in the first beginnings, but has arisen only in the fulness of time and by a process of evolution.

Who will claim that when youthful pleasure ceases, and domestic utilities have come to an end, nothing more remains of the marriage relation? The true wife has become to the true husband that nearest and dearest "alter ego," in whom the "ego" finds the other and better half of itself. Is the divine help provided for man not "meet" and competent for this highest service and ministry? Is the help-mate to be a mate only in the lowest and not also in the highest functions of life, co-heir of the grace of eternal life as well as sharer of the pains and toils and experiences upon the way to it? All a man's personal, moral, and spiritual selfhood comes out in relation and association and correspondence with other selves, in mutual knowledge and love and cooperation; and the true intercourse and mutual complementing of the sexes, for which the difference was instituted, is the root and source and fountain of all that is most beautiful and elevating and noble, as well as of all that is most natural and elemental, in human life. When the marriage relation shall have been degraded into a consent for temporary pleasure and convenience, human life, in all that is worth propagating, will have withered up from the root.

Love is neither all itself nor truly itself until it has,

not necessarily outgrown nor lost, but certainly transcended, its sensuous origin and its selfish gratifications. True love, as such and as separate from the alloy which takes its name and is its contradictory, is of and for "the other," above all supremely wills the good of the other. "Herein is love, that a man lay down his life for his friend." In most human associations and relationships it is the law of nature that the lower elements of mere earthly appetite and utility, as temporary means and stages, shall gradually fade and die out into the abiding unities and realities of real love and true life, the affinities and associations of souls and selves, and not merely of bodies and business.

The sexual relation, then, is for love and life, in the highest reaches and meaning of each — for the production and nurture of social relations, functions, and affections, for the completest development and the highest activities and satisfactions of the entire social nature. Love is nearest perfection, and the most effectually perfects and blesses the life, the soul, the self, when it is least for self and most for its object — for God as its supreme Object, and for the manifold "others" in whom God gives Himself to be loved and served, in loving and serving whom we most effectually love and serve Him.

The Christian measure and standard of love is that we love others as we love ourselves; against which there is nothing to be said, if we take in its whole meaning. It lowers love to create or assume a schism and a difference between the self-love which is proper and neces-

sary to us and other-love. It is no real self-denial or abnegation to love others as ourselves, when in doing so we are most truly and effectively loving ourselves as well as others. Our true and whole self is not in ourself alone and can never be found there. It is to be found only in all our proper relations with all others and all else. And the All in all is God: we can find neither self nor God save in all. God, our neighbor, and our self are all One in the all-embracing unity of Love, and neither can be loved apart from the others. So love is the fulfilling of the whole law of life.

Love means willing the good — such willing as includes doing and being. Now the good, in all its stages of pleasure, happiness, blessedness, is something which can originally and primarily be known only in ourselves and as our own. Love or goodness, which is the essence and principle and source of all other-regarding, all duty or righteousness, all law and obligation, all morality, all justice, generosity, or benevolence — goodness, I repeat, which is pure altruism, is willing to others that which we have found and can know as good only in ourselves. The feeling, the experience, the consciousness of worth and value, the help and advantage, the pleasure, happiness, blessedness, which we could never have known in others, or outside the field of our own sensibility and cognition, we find a thousand-fold multiplied by being shared with others and as the property of all. Thus good, which is primarily egoistic, or one's own, finds itself ultimately and completely only in goodness, which is purely altru-

istic, is found only out of oneself in others. Goodness at last is the only real or true good, because it combines and unifies all the good of self with all the good of others: the good of self, because in sharing or imparting one's good, in the act of love, service, and sacrifice, one attains that purest and highest exercise and experience of finite selfhood, which is the only definition of blessedness; and yet again, because in thus making all our good the good of others, we have made the good of all others our own.

In willing the good of others, and indeed of ourselves, we are liable to no less fatal mistakes as to what is good or what good is, than we are as to what love is. The ambiguity of both terms runs into direct contradictions of the things intended by them. So-called love may be the grossest and most brutal selfishness and cruelty; and good or goodness, so-called, may be, and too often is, the worst of evils. Love, in order to be kept true to itself and its name, is in need of a very high science or philosophy of good. How much of the well-meant philanthropy and charity of the past, with truer conceptions of human life and rights, has come to be regarded as curse rather than blessing — too often the condescension of the proud privileged to the humble defrauded. How late and how true the cry of the poor, What we want and ask, is not pity and charity, but justice and opportunity.

What a height and depth of thought our Saviour opens up to us in the suggestion or reminder, that a man may gain the whole world, and lose himself, his soul,

all his true life! or, on the contrary, may lose the whole world and therein — possibly thereby — win himself, his soul, his life. In the true universal sense, not in the narrow, false, selfish sense, a man's good is himself, his own part, the thing that is appointed him, and not another, to be and to do in the world: "The work the Father hath given me to accomplish, even the work that I do, that beareth witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."

Such commonplaces as, that mere natural goods must be subordinated to moral and spiritual, that we must not serve a man's pleasure or ease or material interests, his selfishness, at the expense or to the detriment of himself, have of course their truth and use. The trouble and difficulty, to the point of impossibility, is to know all a man's good, and still more, how always to serve him to the true end of it. We can at least have the consistent and habitual true will of it in our own minds and hearts; so, to the extent of our purpose, shall we be living for the common good, and indirectly, by the happiest indirection, be securing our own.

At the point where we now are, it is not the meaning of either love or good, on the whole, which is in question, so much as the complex details of the ways and means to them. Good is the fulness of real life, and, secondarily, all that ministers to it. Love is the perfect will of the good, not only to ourselves, but equally to all. The question is not whether but how we shall love, and not what good is, but, in the complex conditions of human life, what things are good. Here we must study



God's mind and methods as revealed to us in the human life of Jesus Christ; for His ways of love are often very different from ours, and the means and instruments of good which He employs are not seldom received and treated by us as only evils.

The one point upon which the world seems willing to agree as to the content of the teaching of Jesus, is the Fatherhood of God and the divine sonship of man. Now the sonship is realized and revealed for us in the human experience and person of Jesus Christ Himself; as also the full fact and truth of the divine Fatherhood is felt and known first by Him. He is God's "Beloved Son" among all the children of men, in Whom all the truth on both sides of the mutual relationship is fulfilled and manifested. It is only as "of His fulness we all receive," that "He gives us power to become sons of God." God's way of love with Jesus Christ is His way of love with us, and the good He wrought in and upon Him is the good He has in store for us.

The very strongest evidence and expression of the Father's love for the Son, and for the sons whom He takes by like process unto Himself, is contained in the words, "He who spared not His own Son . . . how shall He not also with Him freely (and in the same way, by the same means) give us all things?" If the Son, or the son, is to receive the "all things" of God, he is to be spared nothing of the conditions or means or circumstances, on his part, of their acquisition and enjoyment. Not one jot or tittle of the toil or the pain or the stern discipline of human life can be spared him

who is to win and wear “the eternal weight of glory” they are to ‘work out’ in him who suffers and survives. We are to “run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” The point is, that human or earthly conditions, the most difficult and the most painful, are not things to be set aside for us in the matter of our salvation: we are to be saved, not from, but through and by them. It is not that life is to be a matter of mere patience and submission; we are not to submit to evils, but still less are we simply to complain of them or expect them to be removed out of our way. Evils are here for us to remove, to conquer either by abolishing or else by rising upon and above. Are not, for us at least, all moral and spiritual goods conquests of opposite and possible evils?

The love of God seeks only Us: the good of God consists only in what we ourselves are. And the “all things” that are working together to that end — whatever they may be in themselves — are in His hands only goods of God; though they come to us in all the gloom of Gethsemanes and with all the pain and shame of Calvaries.

## X

### DIVINE LOVE IN HUMAN SERVICE

WE need to bring our Christianity down more closely and intimately into the natural and common life of this earth. There is much in our life here, necessary and right now, that will probably not survive with us our present conditions. But even these things have their place and their part in their time, and will survive if not in themselves yet in the use we have made of them and in the permanent effects their use or abuse has left in ourselves. A man's respiration, circulation, and digestion, in so far as they are automatic and parts of a general nature that goes on without him, may not be properly or permanently himself, but they are certainly parts of his present self, and so far as they are in his power and under his control for more or less healthy and efficient action, they are not only himself, but very important parts of his duty and his religion. Upon the action and efficiency of the lower and commoner functions of life depend most directly the vitality of the higher and permanent ones. Every natural impulse, appetite, and passion of the physical life has its necessary and important part, and leaves its permanent influence and impress, in the sum total of the immortal being who originated in it and has lived through it.

Religion should begin early, embrace everything, and neglect nothing in the successive stages and long process of human life, for every moment and element in the evolution has its distinct and necessary contribution to make to the final result. The neglect of the earthly life in the interest of a heavenly is a fundamental error.

Marriage, the family, the community, society in general, as a living organism rather than an artificial organization, is older than any history we have of it. States are older than statesmen, just as languages existed before grammarians. Social life as well as physical has its principles and laws antedating our science or philosophy of them. The more closely we follow nature the better, so long as we really follow her, so long as we interpret nature in her highest meanings and follow her along her truest lines. God and nature are not two but One: Nature's determinations and destinations are God's predestinations working themselves out in the processes He has appointed them. There is no natural institution of society that is not infinitely perfectible, and yet none that does more than look toward a perfection that is infinitely far off. It is not God's plan or purpose to create by fiat a perfect social condition upon earth. From the beginning He has created by the action of a law within things, by the interaction of things among themselves. In the world of human intelligence and freedom He has by natural processes instituted a perfectible social state or condition, and devolved upon its subjects the

task of carrying on and perfecting it. This devolving the social condition and progress of the world upon its subjects, and leaving it there, is wholly for the sake and in the interest of the subjects themselves, for it is only thus that they become "selves" or "themselves" at all. In using the intelligence that human life requires they acquire intelligence, in exercising their own wills they develop freedom, in restraining and regulating freedom they originate law, in rectifying and formulating law they institute justice and produce righteousness, in perfecting social conditions in general they make themselves or build up personality.

To complain that human institutions, that any human institution is defective or imperfect, to require in thought that things with us should have been or should be made more perfect or less imperfect than they are, is to refute or seek to invert the entire intent and beneficence of nature or of creation: which is not that there should be a necessarily and mechanically perfect world, but that there shall be a world of intelligently, freely, and personally perfect persons, made so or become so, or becoming so, through the long and difficult and painful task and achievement of themselves personally perfecting the world. We are no judges or measurers of the time requisite for such a process, and as to the methods followed or the means used in it we ought surely to know that neither effort, nor pain, nor doubt and uncertainty, nor possibility of error or wrong, nor the fact of evil, nor indeed any one of our actual conditions in the world, could have been spared

from among the ingredients. As a matter of fact, not only our wills, as the poet says, but our selves, our conditions, our world, are all "ours, we know not how"; we know not how, but we do know why: "They are ours, to make them God's." God's end in it all is not Himself to make them His, but in our making them His to make Himself ours. In becoming coworkers, co-creators with God, we make ourselves one with and partakers of God Himself.

The impulse to discredit or destroy institutions that go back beyond all memory or knowledge of man — such, for example, as that of marriage — because of imperfections or failures or abuses, instead of reading their slowly unfolding meaning, and looking forward and patiently working up to their future ideal perfection, however far off, is an impatience incapable of cooperation with Him to whom a thousand years are as one day. The divine intent of marriage, as we have seen, is the highest ideal of human relation and association, of social purity and perfection. Discredit of it, leading inevitably to corruption in it, is poison at the root of human life.

The truth we are trying to carry along with us is, that life or salvation is not away from the natural to the spiritual, but through and by the natural into the spiritual. We are not to love God instead of our neighbor or heaven instead of earth, but to love God in our neighbor and make heaven out of earth. If we have not loved the visible, how shall we love the invisible? If we have not been faithful in the earthly,

we will not be so in the heavenly: "If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" Human life grows up, or is built up, from the ground; it needs to get the proper good of all its stages, in order to have its complete and perfect good in the end.

Moral good originates in and is identical with social good. If goodness is the will of the good, then, since goodness is itself the highest good, it is the will of itself: just as the highest love is the love of Love, so the most perfect goodness is the will, not merely of good, but of that completest good which is goodness. It is the will of goodness, not alone in ourselves, but everywhere and in all: we have shown that true egoism and true altruism, true self-love and true other-love, are not two, much less inconsistent and discordant, but one and inseparable. We are to love other as we love ourself: we are indeed to love other as ourself: we are to take the other into ourself, and to seek and find ourself in the other. So God loves us, and so He bids us love Him — Himself in us, and ourselves in Him. He and we are all members one of another in a common life.

Life is organized, as we have seen, on social lines and exists only in the fulfilment of social relations. It is born in union and perfected in unity. That is why God is Love, and all life is love: because love is the only real and perfect bond or principle of union and unity. The most elemental, earthly, human life rests upon that sole foundation. "Man," says Aristotle,

“is a political, or social, animal” — that is his first word, the seed of all his subsequent discourse about him. And he shows elsewhere that the one ideal perfect bond of society — that which lies before, behind, and within all mere justice or righteousness, the soul and life of all virtue or virtues — would be a universal *philia*, his nearest approach to that Love which, over three hundred years after, our Lord came into the world to make the realized and actual bond of all human life.

Natural relations, associations, intercourses, mutual offices, duties and services, are the cradle, the nursery, the school, the gymnasium for any and all human life that may come after, here or elsewhere. Our Lord began His divine office upon earth with the humblest ministrations to the bodies of the poor, the diseased, the repulsive, the ungrateful and undeserving. Almost His last act was to wash the disciples' feet, and to bid them go forth into the world and be in it and to it what He was, the servant of all. When at the last they should come before Him to receive His verdict upon what their life upon earth had taught and made them, the test and the testimony would be, “Had they been faithful in the little, and to the little? Then would they be accepted as faithful unto Him, and in the much.” “Had they fed the poor, clad the naked, visited the sick and the prisoner? What they had done to these they had done to Him:” Service rendered to love was rendered to God, and God would recognize or accept none other.



Religion begins with the simplest, the humblest, and the most earthly of duties and offices, and if it does not find God in these, it will not find Him elsewhere. Life is service or nothing with God; and service, like God, is no respecter of persons. God wants the service for the sake of the server, the servant, as well as the served. It is infinitely more to Him that we should serve than that He Himself should be served. He can dispense with our service, but it is our breath and our life: only in it have we Him; only in doing His work of love are we sharing His life of love, and enjoying the blessedness of it.

Life is more a service, and a more divine service, when we recognize and love it as such; but whether we know it or not, or will it or not, it is still so as a matter of fact, and we cannot well live it otherwise. It is remarkable how universally—and in spite of ourselves—we acknowledge the truth in terms, even when we are the most thoroughly contradicting it in spirit and intention. Among all the avocations or occupations by which men earn their living, and in which they practically live their lives, there is probably not one which does not in some way avow or proclaim itself a service. In the necessary division and subdivision of labor in every community, there is no way of living for one's individual self except through some sort of service of the community. To what an extent life is collective and organic, or social, and not individual or particular, we find it difficult to realize, for the simple reason that we dwell so much more upon the

little that is ours exclusively than upon the very much that is ours only inclusively or in common with others. It is literally true that "no man liveth unto himself": either he is not living "unto himself," or he is not "living."

The most selfish and dishonest politician is obliged to claim or profess that he "serves" a constituency. He is avowedly in the public service, however he may be using it for private ends or gain. No one denies in terms, however he may contradict it in acts, that "public office is a public trust." But it is so, not only with public office, but with any kind of public business: why should certain large organizations or combinations of capital style themselves "Trusts?" There is no business that does not use habitually the language of service: the merchant "serves" his customers, the insurance company its patrons, the lawyer his clients, the doctor his patients, the master his pupils. Lower down in the scale of service we distinctly apply the title "servants," but who in the universal occupation or business of living or of life is not a servant?

Our Lord did not come into the world to make life different so much as to make it real — to make it what it must be, what it cannot but be, if it is to be life indeed. St. John says of Him, that He was not come to give us a new commandment, but to put grace and truth, spirit and power and reality, into the old commandment which was from the beginning.

In human life, as it is constituted by nature, every act of real service is equally a service to others and to

ourselves. In the highest as in the lowest sense a man "makes his living," lives his life, by service. In every act of service there are two elements, motive or purpose, and consequence or result. When we speak of the end of an action, we may mean by it either the conscious intention, or the actual effect of the action. The law of these two, the true relation and proportion that ought to exist between them, may be the discovery or revelation, it is not the creation or invention of Christianity. No revelation of life to us is true because it is revealed, it is revealed because it is true. It is no truth of Christianity that a man's life or self is not to be an end to him. The end and motive of Christianity is not self-extinction, but self-realization. We are not to extinguish desire, but rather "to desire earnestly the best gifts." The self or personality in Jesus Christ is not reduced to zero but raised to infinity, exalted to participation with God. Nevertheless it is a fact and a law in self-realization, that the less self appears in the motive the more it is found in the result of all human action, and the more in the motive the less in the result. That is, the more in any kind of service we are seeking ourselves, the less we are in reality serving ourselves, "He that seeketh his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake (that is, he who most truly goes out of or beyond himself in others) shall find it."

This seems plain enough to us in the highest reaches of service and sacrifice: it is certainly in losing oneself

in the cause of God and in the interests of humanity that one attains the highest selfhood and enjoys the purest satisfactions. No one will deny a generality like that, but the question is, Is the principle true and applicable and practicable in all, even the lowest, details of our earthly life? We might take any particular business of life, from the lowest to the highest, and apply to it such questions as the following: Who makes, even here, the truest success of his business and of himself, the man who plies the business with the most selfish motive of himself and his own gain, or the man who, with equal purpose and devotion, plies it for its own high sake as a service, and for the sake of those whom he is serving in it? As a matter of fact, the common judgment and sentiment of the world, always so far beyond and above its actual working principle and practice, sufficiently answers that question. Its verdict of truth, of nobility, of heroism in action or conduct or character, turns immediately, if not exclusively, upon the relative proportion in the motive of self-seeking or of other-regarding. We know always what to love and admire in others, what to celebrate or commemorate, however little we may value or live by it in ourselves. All natural heroism or nobility is identical in principle with the loving, self-sacrificing service of Jesus Christ to God and humanity. He came not into the world to institute a new principle or law of human life, but to be the resurrection and regeneration of the old and the only. Even the non-Christian world's verdict of approval and

apotheosis upon Jesus Christ turns upon the recognition of the fact that "He loved not Himself unto the death." Those words express, not only the perfection of law to the followers of our Lord, but the limit of natural perfection for humanity.

"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me." The Apostle interprets the lifting up to be that of the cross: "this He said, signifying by what death He should die." It was assuredly not the literal cross that was the lifting up, but that of which the cross has been made by Him the permanent and expressive symbol — the spirit and principle of life and action which, when carried out to its limit, brings humanity into oneness with deity. Perfect love is the only at-one-ment. There is a very high sense, the very highest, in which it is true that all the world loves Love, and cannot but love the Lover: "I, if I be lifted up (lifted up by that principle and motive, and to that height, of self-sacrificing love and service), will draw all men unto me." The world, when it knows, cannot but respond to that expectation and prophecy. Because He was infinitely obedient to the one divine spirit and law of love, because He loved not Himself unto the death of the cross — "therefore God exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name." And therefore also, for that same reason — "At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of things in heaven, of things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

## XI

### CHRISTIANITY THE UNIVERSAL MINISTRY OF LIFE

THE irresistible and inevitable progress of human society, in all its forms, is from monarchy to democracy. Intelligence, with all its growing activities and powers, diffuses itself downward and outward from the one or the few to the many: its aim cannot stop short of all. Life in all its stretches and reaches must lie open to all who would explore its deepest recesses or essay its highest attainments. Human thought and will, in no part of it, can be kept in nonage, under guardians and stewards, forever. In spiritual things as in natural, the world is demanding that authority must meet and carry with it consent. The order and unity of the authority of one, is of course an easier and simpler thing than that of the consent of all; but the question is, is it a better thing? And the better, and best, has to be sooner or later pursued through whatever of confusion and pain and difficulty. At any rate the easier thing has passed away from among us forever, and will never be possible again; the harder thing lies before us.

The end of Christianity is the unity of human life with Christ in God. The ideal — by which we must

mean the ultimate, final actual, the end and goal of the present imperfect actual — is not the unity of or under a head outside and over us; even though the head be Christ Himself. The only true head of a body is that which is equally the life and intelligence of every part and particle of the body. The aim of the Church, which is the Body of Christ, is to be equally alive in its every part, in all the abundance of His all-sufficing life. This does not mean that there is not to be differentiation of functions and division of labor. It does mean the unity and consent of a life which, though distributed through parts, is one and is equally the life of the whole body.

The desideratum of Christianity, then, is that every individual member of the body, in his place and part, shall be and shall know himself actually and always engaged in the general life and work of Christ. This is practicable and possible only through a very much larger appreciation and realization than we now have of the universality and inclusiveness of the life and work of Christ.

A great and important phase and practical working out of this question is just now presented to us in the "Laymen's Movement" going on throughout our country and more or less affecting the entire Christian world. What is the immediate meaning of this movement, and in what permanent form or forms are its aspirations going to be expressed and satisfied? The principle seeking expression in it is that the work of Christ, that work which He came into the world to accomplish,

and the actual accomplishing of which was to be His witness in and to the world — that work of Christ is the work of the Church, and is waiting upon the Church for its accomplishment. That first — and, secondly, that the work of the Church is the work of the whole Church, and can be made so only by its becoming the work of every member of the Church. It is absurd to suppose that Christ is going to be a presence and a power upon the earth, unless the Church will wake up and become a power and a reality for Him — seeing that the Church is the Body of His presence and the instrument and organ of His power. And it is equally absurd to think of a living body in which all the members, the least as well as the most prominent parts, are not alive and performing their proper functions. If the life of Christ is to be the life of all, then the work of Christ must be work for all: faculty without function, life without work, is dead — in fact, is death. ∪

If, coextensive with Church life, there is to be Church work for all, then we must broaden and enlarge our conception of what is Church work; for hitherto the body of the Church, apart from a very limited number of differentiated and specialized “workers,” has found nothing really to do. We must first widen Christian or Church work to include all that is done in Christ, or in the name and in the spirit of Christ; and then we must expand what is done in Christ into “all things that pertain to life and godliness.” Christianity includes all life in Christ — not only some, or a part. As all comes from Him in creation, so He aims to enter



into all by incarnation. He shares all with us, and ministers to all in us — the life of body as well as soul. We cannot, except in the abstraction of thought, sever the continuity that runs through and unifies all life, from the lowest material up to the highest spiritual. So Christ's mission and ministry was to men's body and bodily life; the heaven He brought and preached was a heaven upon earth; the kingdom He set up was God's spirit of love, service, and sacrifice to be manifested and exercised by men among men in the world. All the work of Christ is work to be done here and now. Wherever and however life is lived and service rendered in the name and in the spirit of Christ, there Christ is in the life and in the service. We cannot be or do in Him, without His also being and doing in us.

When then the layman asks what of Christian or of Church work there is for him to do, and ends by finding none, it is the most fatal of mistakes to leave him in the conclusion that there is none for him except as he can take some quasi-part in the official or professional work of the distinctive ministry. What he needs to do is simply to make his own lawful and useful business or profession, whatever it may be, a work and his work for Christ. Let him be doing it "in Christ," in the name and in the spirit of Christ, and Christ will be doing it in him and making it an integral and necessary part of the work He is Himself on the earth to accomplish. He did not spend His time upon earth ministering only to men's supermundane interests or teaching a heaven elsewhere or hereafter; He brought God and heaven

down into hearts and lives and conditions here — where they are most needed and therefore best acquired.

I do not mean that laymen are not, upon occasion, and when qualified as many of them are, and more ought to be, to be interested and take part in ministrations and services which are now too exclusively made the business and left to the care of the clergy. A living laity will help and relieve the clergy in many ways, and leave them freer for the more essential parts of their special ministry. But the mistake is in supposing that the special so-called or “proper” ministry is the whole Ministry of Christ, and that one must intrude into that in order to be exercising a ministry or doing Church work. Whereas every Christian is not only a minister but a missionary for Christ, and has his own work and mission to accomplish. And inasmuch as there is no real business upon earth which is not in fact a service of God and man, it follows that one has only to follow the apostolic injunction, “whatsoever we do in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,” in order to know and feel that one is doing Christian and Church work. There is not a man or woman in Christ who ought not to — and, as they truly realize the meaning and the fact of being in Christ, will not — say with our Lord, and as our Lord, “The work which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the work that I do, beareth witness of me, that He hath sent me.”

We have seen that there is no living business, or business of life, that does not profess in terms to be

some form or part of that "service" or "ministry" for which the Son of Man Himself professed to be come into the world. There is no normal means of one's own livelihood which is not properly and professedly a service of others as well as of self. We have seen that the actual effectiveness as well as the moral and personal worth, the benefit to self as well as the common good, of all service rendered, is even by the world's judgment measured by the degree in which self is sunk out of sight in the motive, to reappear unsought and exalted in the reflex result. "Wherefore God highly exalted Him" — but God exalted Him only through His own act, and so alone He exalts us: it is always the act itself that exalts us, and ourselves through the act. But the law of the process is, that he most exalts himself who, with least thought of self, identifies himself with and attains his highest and truest self in unity with others and so with God.

Now this process of self-finding through self-losing, of making one's own life as well as one's mere livelihood through living in and for others, is as possible and practicable in one avocation as in another. "The Ministry," professionally so-called, is no more exclusively the service or ministry of Christ upon earth than any other natural and necessary form of living for others. Anything done in love, for the help and furtherance of life, is an actual and material part of the ministry of Jesus Christ, so it be done in His spirit and in His name. All life is His and is He: in His incarnation He enters into it all, in order that

by knowing Him in it we may have it more personally and more abundantly.

The man who tills the ground as an act of service to God, and in order that it may bring forth fruit for man, who realizes and feels that he is ministering directly to the most elemental needs and wants of human life — working with Christ that men may have life, and have it more freely and abundantly — will in the first place be a better tiller of the ground than he who sees nothing in his labor but the material betterment of himself. He will increase even his most temporal gains and condition by the higher conception of himself and his work, but what other and truer gains will he not add to himself, if he will in even his most menial tasks and toil see himself a coworker with God and with Christ, an actual steward of God and minister of Christ in the producing and dispensing of life! So no less with any and every other worker in the varied but universal and all-employing business of life. Our Lord was no less engaged in His ministry when He was healing the leper than when He was saving the sinner; and why should the physician of bodies be less a minister of Christ than the physician of souls? Will the physician be a less good or successful one in any, even the lowest sense or respect, if his practice is one of love, service, and sacrifice, and not merely (though that too) for what the world calls “a living”? Who is the truly great lawyer? — he who is the public-spirited and incorruptible servant of justice and humanity, a minister of Christ and with Christ for the equity and integrity

of social and corporate life, or he who uses his profession as a facile and powerful instrument or tool for the furtherance and protection of selfish interests?

The point is, If Christ's work upon earth was and is the universal and all-inclusive ministry of life, and includes "all things that pertain to life and godliness," and if the whole spirit and principle and law of life and godliness is expressed in the three distinctive Christian terms, Love, Service, Sacrifice — then who that is engaged in the business of life (as who properly is not?) is excluded by his occupation from that ministry? When the laity of the Church come together in a body, from which there should be no exclusions, to enquire what they can be actively and constantly doing for Christ — what shall be the answer? I am very far from saying that no man shall go outside of his own special business in search of Christian service, for no man should be a mere specialist, and it is well to be called out of our own routine, and there are needs and occasions enough for help in others. But I do say that no man need go outside his own business to find work for Christ and His Church, and that his first and most constant and urgent call is to make his own business distinctively and avowedly the ministry and the mission he is in search of. If it cannot be made so, or ought not to be made so, then it is not a legitimate and an honest business. For, I repeat, all life is in Christ, and Christ desires to be in all life; what cannot and ought not to be in Him is not life.

It so happened that the above words were in writing

when the writing was interrupted by the duties of Good Friday, but with no thought at the time of the services for that day, on which our Lord sealed with His death His life of unbroken love, service, and sacrifice. It may be supposed that the following prayer in the service on that day came into mind with a peculiar force: "Almighty and Everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified, Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before Thee for all estates of men in Thy holy Church, that every member of the same in his vocation and ministry may truly and godly serve Thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!" Who is there in God's holy Church without his own "vocation and ministry"? And what is there in any one vocation and ministry that is not in essence in all? The Son of Man is the truth and life of every man: and every man is in Him "not to be served but to serve, not to be ministered to but to minister, and to give his life for many."

It so happened also, that at the very time of the writing of these thoughts the following words appeared in the current number of a religious weekly: "The spirit of business, at its best and highest, is the spirit of service. No business can prosper permanently that does not find its basis and its reason for existence in rendering service to those whom it seeks to reach. There is of course a great deal of business done which is selfish in its purpose and intentions. But there is also a great deal of business conducted by men who, as consecrate

disciples of Jesus Christ, are using their energies and their business abilities in the spirit of a stewardship that is responsible to Christ."

There is no reason why good business, business conducted in a Christian spirit and upon Christian principles, should not be profitable business, in even the worldly sense. Whatever makes it good or better will naturally make it profitable and more so. It is not good or better, for example, that business should be conducted "for charity," as we use the expression. If we are conducting our business upon right principles of real service, willing and doing good in the best sense to those with whom we deal, we will not exercise our virtue at the expense of theirs; and the charity which may be the moral good of the doer or donor, we know has too often been the moral weakening and injury of the recipient. The truest principle of business, that which best works the total good which Christianity is in the world to accomplish, is fair and equal exchange. There is room enough and need enough for true and helpful charity, without injurious interference with justice and righteousness.

When our Lord bids us "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness," with the promise that the other things "shall be added to us," neither the kingdom nor the righteousness of which He speaks is a thing apart from our life and business in this world. How can righteousness originate or exist or appear apart from relations and interchanges of life, from business dealings and associations? It is amid occasions and opportuni-

ties and temptations of wrongness that rightness appears over against and in contrast with it, in conflict with and triumph over it. But even righteousness, in and of itself, is but a formal notion, a law and nothing more. As a mere expression and rule of obligation it is a body without a soul. That which gives it content or motive or life is the spirit of Love. There is nothing essentially and eternally right but love, the will of good to all; there is no actual or real love but service, the doing good to all; there is no true service but sacrifice, the spending of life and self in the service of all. That is God, that is Christ, that is the Holy Ghost, that is Christianity, that is the ministry, the priesthood, of every Christian man and woman.

And this ministry is best exercised in just that place and part which is each man's business in the necessary division and subdivisions of the labor of life. It is his part and place in the universal and the eternal, his life as one with that of God and of Jesus Christ. Where the parts are all in the whole, the Whole is in each of the parts. We are seeking God's kingdom and righteousness first, when we put the Whole which is God above the part which is ourself.

When St. Paul bids us "set our minds upon the things that are above, not upon the things that are upon the earth," he is not preaching "other-worldliness." The things that are above are as much with us, if our mind is set upon them, as the things that are upon the earth. If our daily business and dealings and duties and cares are all what they ought to be, and as they ought to be,



then the kingdom of God and His righteousness are as truly in them as the promised issue of "what we shall eat and drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed." And the more truly we put the first things first, the safer we shall be from lacking the last.

## XII

### FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

HUMAN LIFE, as it is the subject matter of Christianity, may — and indeed must — be studied from opposite points of view, accordingly as we treat it as our life in God or as the life of God in us. The human life of Jesus Christ Himself must be viewed, separately if not independently, in those two aspects. He was son of David, of Abraham, of Adam, Son of Man, as well as Son of God; and in His former character or capacity His life was subject to all the conditions, laws, and processes that belong to human life in general. There was a natural evolution of human spirituality, as of everything else that is human, from Adam, through Abraham and David, to Jesus. Our Lord humanly becomes Son of God through every link and moment of the process by which it is necessary that man should become son of God. Genealogically He was born of a progressively spiritual ancestry, and only in the fulness of time. Individually or personally He *becomes* son of God by human act and in the human way, as well as *is* Son of God in divine fact. St. Paul, on the whole, more clearly conceives Christ in the aspect of human author of a divine sonship and righteousness; St. John in the aspect of divine revealer and impartor of

divine sonship and life. Similarly we must regard our own spiritual life as, in one aspect, a human evolution and inheritance, and a personal act and attainment of our own, though wrought only in God; and, in another aspect, a direct revelation and communication to us from God in Jesus Christ. How to combine these two aspects of one and the same thing is the truth and task of Christianity.

The First Epistle of St. John may be taken as a dissertation upon the life of God as it is revealed in and imparted to humanity. He begins with *The Life* as it is first manifested in Jesus Christ. There is no, or little, allusion to how our Lord Himself becomes what He is in our humanity; He is simply, in his spiritual human perfection, what God reveals or manifests Himself in humanity: what He wills and purposes, if we will, to become in us all. The Apostle describes the manifested Life in terms, not alone of a natural witness who had had every sensible evidence and experience of the external and historical facts involved, but no less of a spiritual witness who, as fully as any other, apprehended the deeper import and significance of those facts. He sees the life that has come down from God perfected and glorified in Man; and in full confidence and assurance of participation himself in that life, he goes forth, in the joy of it, to complete his joy by making all others partakers of it. "We declare it unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

The first question for us, is as to the meaning and reality of that fellowship or *koinonia*, in which the life is to consist. What is it of God, or rather, what is God Himself, that we can share with Him? The answer is: that God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Among the many possible explanations of the meaning of "light" in this connection, we may consider the following: The light is not alone that of the intelligence, as Truth; it is equally of the feeling or affection, as Love; and of the will and life, as Holiness and Righteousness. We might say that "light" is simply a synonym for "truth," if we include in "truth" that, not only of thought or knowledge, but also of feeling or affection, and of will and action. These are the three constituent elements of ourselves, and in each there is a true and a possible false, or light and darkness. The truth of intelligence is "the right reason," wisdom, the knowledge of things as they are. The truth of affection or feeling is love, the right feeling for, the right pleasure or happiness in the right things. The truth of the will and activity is true freedom, the obedience of the whole life to the law of truth and love. Thus Light is the unity of the three prismatic hues or aspects of human life, knowledge or wisdom, love, and obedience or righteousness. Of these, love is the central and chief: it is the substance and content of the other two. In a sense it alone is real, and not merely formal. Knowledge is of "the things that are," independently of what the things are — good or bad. Obedience is conformity to a law, equally independently of what

the law is. Love is wish and will, not possibly of any thing else, but only of "the good." To wish or will evil, for oneself or for another, is not to love but to hate.

In consonance with this, it is evident that in the Epistle, Light is used in all the meanings of Truth, Love, and Obedience; and that Love is at once the content of Truth, the reality to be known, the "Thing that Is" in the universe; and the object or law of Obedience: it was to the law of love that Jesus was obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross: love is the spirit and life of all righteousness.

We come thus to the main question of our *koinonia* or fellowship with God, and here there is a matter of interpretation to be first considered. "God is Light; if, therefore, we say that we have fellowship with Him, and are walking in the darkness (of ignorance, or hate, or sin), we lie and do not the truth. But if we are walking in the light, even as He is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another." The point is, Who are the "one another" in this relation: who are the two parties to the fellowship? If we suffer ourselves simply to follow the argument or course of thought, it would seem that the two parties are ourselves and God. If our not walking in the light, which is God, be evidence that we are not in God, or in participation with God, who is light, then the fact that we are in the light is proof that we are in God, or that God and we are in fellowship with one another. The Apostle had already affirmed that our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. This does not exclude the

subordinate and consequent truth that participation with God is necessarily participation with one another in God. In the case of the Apostle, fellowship with God impels him instantly to the further and completing truth and joy of fellowship with the brethren: "that ye also may have fellowship with us, . . . that our joy may be fulfilled." God in us would mean infinitely less to us if it did not mean God in all, and all in one another.

What, then, have we, or what are we, in common with God? This cannot but include or involve the previous question, What is our natural or metaphysical kinship or relationship with God? Because there can be no transcendent interchange of relations with God, if there is no immanent basis of relationship with Him. Without oneness of nature, there can be no oneness of communion or intercourse. And such indeed is our natural kinship with God that we cannot know or think either except in terms of the other. As we have seen, we know ourselves only under the categories of thought, feeling, and will or action; our "self," or personality, is a compound and unity of intelligence, affection, and volition and action. Now what is God? He is infinite or omniscient intelligence, or Wisdom; He is infinite or perfect affection, or Love; He is infinite or omnipotent activity, or Righteousness and Goodness. Is it not true that God is the Infinite of what we are, and that we are the finite of what God is? The first word of religion is the recognition of the fact that we are in the image of God. To know God

at all we have to know ourselves; to know ourselves unto perfection, we have to know God. To be ourselves unto perfection, we have to be what God is. It is a natural and metaphysical fact that we "do not the truth," that we are not the truth of ourselves, are not our real selves, until we walk in the light, and are what God is. There is no other end or limit or goal for man than God. What we want from Him is nothing less than Himself, seeing that He is our own and only perfect Self.

But the truth which St. John is enunciating is not an immanent but a transcendent one, not a fact of nature but a revelation and impartation of grace. Or, if these are essentially the same, it is as one and not as the other that they are here under consideration. If it is our nature, or in our nature, to be saved and completed only in God, it is not only in our nature, or in our only immanent and natural relation to God, that we shall be saved and completed. God will have to make Himself and ourselves known to us by a transcendent act of Self revelation and impartation, before we can realize either Himself in us or ourselves in Him. That, too, is a metaphysical necessity: it is essential to our very being as persons, as finite spirits and children of God, reproduction and image of Himself, that what we shall be we shall be of ourselves. That is to say, what we are to be must be matter of our knowledge, our choice, and our action, if there is to be any selfhood in it for us, or we are to accomplish and become ourselves through it.

It is therefore not as God is in us in nature, but as He is in us in Jesus Christ, by Self revelation and impartation on His part, and by faith and personal appropriation on our part, that we are here described as having with Him something more than is adequately described by the term "fellowship," and for which I would retain the original *koinonia*. That evidently expresses more than association or communion with another: the two are no longer two, but are become one. It means more than sharing something with God: what we share with Him is Himself; when we have truth, and love, and righteousness or goodness, we have God. Love is both Truth and Righteousness, because Love is God — not merely *That which Is*, but the essential and eternal *I Am*.

When we say that "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," we mean that we become one with the Father in the Son — that in the sonship to God, realized for us by Christ, God has become to us Father, and we have become to Him sons. The time has come when we may settle by reconciling a controversy which has given rise, not only to rival schools of thought, but to rival types of life. The question has been, Whether we are children of God by nature, or only become children of God by grace — whether we are so by birth, or only by regeneration or new birth — by immanent fact or by transcendent act. Both are true, and neither is truth apart from the other. The confusion or contradiction arises from not realizing that sonship is both a natural and a personal



or spiritual relationship; that it partly is, as a fact, and partly must become, as an act. "Because we are sons" — that may be taken as a fact of nature; "God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" — that was an act of grace. The immanent or natural fact would come to naught, that is, would never be spiritually realized and actualized in us, without the transcendent and personal act: what is the relation of son, without the spirit and life of sonship? Regeneration then presupposes natural sonship, and natural sonship is only the ground or condition, the potentiality for regeneration or realized sonship, and is incomplete without it. Because we are sons of God by nature, therefore we must become sons of God by grace through faith, that is, by the Spirit of God working in and with and through ourselves.

As a matter of mere Scripturalness, or the point of view of the New Testament, the position of sonship by grace rather than by nature has the stronger argument. Sonship by nature is only a postulate or presupposition of historic Christianity, which is immediately concerned rather with the realization of humanity through spiritually accomplished sonship in Jesus Christ, than with the unrealized sonship of humanity in Adam — that is, in mere nature or in itself. Jesus Christ is regenerate or spiritual humanity, as Adam or primitive man is the symbol of natural or unregenerated humanity. The sequence and connection of truth in this matter may be illustrated by what

seems to be the meaning of an obscure passage in the Epistle before us. In Ch. II. 7, the Apostle is insisting that the truth of which he writes is no new truth, but the old truth that was from the beginning. But, again, he declares, it *is* new: because it has been made truth in Jesus, and in Him has become truth for us. Now apply this to our sonship to God: in a partial sense it is an old fact which has been from the beginning. But in the better part of its truth — in its realization and actualization — it has become what it never was before, and is new.

Quite as important as the truth of regeneration in Christ, is the question of its mode — or “way,” as our Lord Himself calls it. It is not enough to say that it is by grace through faith, unless we understand something of the process of each of these. And first with regard to grace and its mode of operation: Grace is indeed a species of power, inasmuch as it is an efficient cause producing a definite effect. But it is a species widely differentiated from mere power, or from power necessarily or inseparably connected with its effect. Grace is never bare operation: it is effectual cooperation. The subjects of grace are only those in whom its working is in and with and through their own working. The perfection of the operation of divine grace in human cooperation is manifest in Him who could say: “I and my Father are one:” “My will is His and His is mine; my works are, of course, mine; and yet not mine, but His in me.” The paradox of divine grace can never, any more than that of human freedom in

general, be elucidated in logic, while yet it is indisputable in experience. The divine is present and efficient in the human, while the human maintains all its integrity and acts freely in the divine; so that one and the same act is both human and divine; as, altogether, in our Lord one and the same person is both human and divine. The cooperation is not the semi-pelagian one in which each side does so much, in different parts; it is rather that of the hypostatic union, in which each does all, in perfect union, or unity, with the other. The human manifests itself in no positive independence of the divine, but only negatively in the power of non-cooperation, and so in the freedom of its cooperation.

Grace appeals thus to cooperation, and is ineffectual without it; otherwise it were not grace, but bare power. It can be resisted, grieved, and even quenched by the unpardonable sin of final rejection: "How would I, and ye would not!" And how can the appeal for cooperation be made to aught save intelligence, choice, and freedom; or otherwise than through all these? The essence of divine grace is divine Self-communication: God gives us nothing less than Himself. And He can give us Himself, or we receive Him, only through our knowledge, love, acceptance and exercise of Him. Only through all these can we of ourselves become what He is; and we cannot be what He is without ourselves becoming it, because the being so through bare power, and not grace, would not in fact be *we* being so.

I would not deny all truth to natural religion with-

out revelation: or, as I would express it, I would not deny a knowledge and service of God based upon mere inference from ourselves and the universe, and our immanent relation to Him, without transcendent communication from Him. I concede, on the contrary, that if there were no natural there could be no revealed religion. Natural religion is simply the potentiality and demand, of which revealed is the actuality and supply.

But, while natural religion may give us a knowledge about God, it would not give us that knowledge of Him which is Himself with us and in us, and which we have only in and through Jesus Christ. Nor can we see how otherwise that knowledge could have come to us than in Him who is at once God and we, God Himself our holiness, our righteousness, and our life. In Jesus Christ we have at once that knowledge of ourselves which enables us to know God, and that knowledge of God which enables us to know ourselves. For, I repeat, we can neither know God at all save through what we finitely are, nor ourselves adequately save through what God infinitely is. In Jesus Christ we have the totality of religion realized — not in ourselves, for that were impossible in the beginning—but in Him as the object and end of our knowledge, our choice, and our will, of our faith, hope, and love, of all our doing, becoming, and real or essential being. How otherwise could God better, or at all, bring us into all that Himself is?

As grace proceeds from the eternal love that God

Himself is, and reveals or communicates itself to us in the divine oneness with us that is Jesus Christ, so it manifests itself in us in that *koinonia* of ourselves with God in Christ, which is our present theme, and which is, in fact, the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost must, with equal truth, be spoken of as It and as He. As to what it is, when we speak of it as impersonal spirit, it is that character or quality of divine Love, which is the sole principle of all unity, and order, and beauty, and goodness, and real or essential life. Hereby know we that we are of God, that we are in Him and He in us, that He and we are one—that He hath given us of His spirit: “We know that He abideth in us, by the spirit that He hath given us.”

If we have not what the Spirit is, we have not Him, and cannot know Who He is. If we have it, we have Him, and know that He is God. There is nothing in God that is merely impersonal. If Jesus Christ was the word or utterance, the revelation or manifestation of God to us, then He was the eternal Personal Word of God, who is Himself God to us. If the Holy Ghost is the spirit of God in us, the mind, disposition, and character of God become ours, then is He the eternal Personal Spirit of God, who is Himself God in us. Our word or our spirit may become detached from us, and become in others only they, and no longer we. We ourselves may, without detriment to them, be not merely absent, but even wholly extinct. But God’s Word and God’s Spirit are never detached from Himself, but are always Himself both present and operative

in them. It is the worst of anthropomorphisms, to think or speak of God's acts or influences or operations as separate from Himself, as ours are. It is the sin of a mere transcendentalism or deism, as the opposite extreme is the sin of a mere immanentalism or pantheism. The true theism is that which does full justice alike to the transcendence and the immanence of God.

The life of God is represented, first, as coming down into us from God, in a series of stages; and secondly, as ascending up in us, into God, in an answering succession of stages. Love in the Father becomes grace or divine Self-communication in the Son, and finally fellowship, or human participation in the divine, in the Holy Ghost, in whom the Spirit of God and the spirit of man are brought into a divine-human unity, which is Christ in us. The answering ascent on man's part is from faith, through hope or anticipative possession, up to and into love, which is actual or accomplished possession. Of course, in both series, love runs through all and underlies all. Just as grace and fellowship are only progressive means and operations of the self-imparting of love, so also faith and hope are but progressive ways and means on our part of our participation and growth in love.

The process of faith, hope, and love may be described somewhat as follows: The life of God, to be really ours, must be ours of our own choice and of our own act. The "we," of personal quality and character, must be all in it. God gives us to have life in ourselves: the water He gives us becomes in us a well of life having its

source in us as well as in Him. Through faith, hope, and love, Christ becomes ourselves, and His Spirit our own. But the life of God thus becomes ours, not by a divine magic, but in a human process and order. God in Christ, by His Spirit, enters into us through the only personal channels of intelligence, affection, and volition. We must know life, desire life, will and purpose life, before we can really or fully possess life. Even the earliest of these stages is indeed already a beginning of life, but it is very far off as yet from the end of it. Life must come to us first from without; it must be an object, before it can become a possession: we must know it without us before we can have it within us. And what is all important, we must know it without us *as ours*, in God's purpose, and by God's act, before we can possibly realize it as ours, in us and by our own act. Who will of himself conceive, or by his own act alone undertake, all that to which we are called of God in Christ Jesus? "Whom He foreknew, them He predestinates to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First only of many, or of all. Moreover, whom He predestinated He calls: Christ is the call to every man, to become what He is. The elect are the effectually called: that is, all who answer and obey the call. Those thus called He justifies: that is, He accepts as being, in grace and in faith, in Christ. And then, by His grace and through their faith, in Christ He progressively sanctifies and ultimately glorifies them." If God be thus for us, and with us, and in us — for us, eternally in Himself as

Father; with us, effectually in Jesus Christ as Son; in us, actually and in progressive assimilation on our part by the Holy Ghost, as the common Spirit of His and our life — if God be thus ours throughout the entire process of our attainment of life, what can be against us in it or disappoint us of it? How necessary is it that we should have this objective revelation to us of ourselves and our destiny, of the part of God in it, and of the part that waits and depends upon ourselves! How needful was the divine manifestation of human life in Jesus Christ — “for our sake, who through Him are believers in God, which raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory; so that our faith and hope might be in God!” “The greatness of His power to usward who believe” is measured for us by “the working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.”

It is thus that the Holy Ghost in us is “the earnest of the promised possession.” St. John says that we have “a chrism from the Holy One”: what of the Spirit, or spirit, of God and of Christ is abidingly in us, as part of our life and character, is so much of Christ and of God in us, and is both potency and promise of all. Faith is of God and of God’s part in our life; hope is of us and our part. It is only, as St. Paul teaches, in the tribulation of life, that endurance and perseverance and survival on our part works in us proof of the sufficiency of grace, and of our own power through it; and so faith passes on into hope, and through both love, the love of God, is fulfilled in us.



He who in the Son sees the Father, who in Jesus Christ recognizes the Life of God manifest upon earth, who by the Holy Ghost appropriates that life to himself and assimilates himself to it, has set to his seal that God is true. The truth of humanity answers unto and fits into the truth of God, and the unity of both is proof of the truth of each. He who denies God in Christ, by the lie in himself makes God a liar to him. For this is the witness of God: "that He hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life."

## XIII

### CHRISTIANITY AS A WITNESS

THE last words of our Lord to His Apostles before His final taking up from among them were these: "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth." When the Holy Ghost was come upon them, the first testimony of the Apostles before the people was to this effect: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof — or, of Whom — we all are witnesses." And again, before the rulers: "Ye killed the Prince — or, Author — of life; whom God raised again from the dead, whereof — or, of Whom — we are witnesses." They everywhere emphasize their witness; and the ambiguity in the form of the pronoun only calls attention to the fact that Jesus and the resurrection are convertible, and to a certain extent identical terms: that testimony to the one is testimony to the other. Let us consider, first, the persons of the witnesses, and, secondly, the matter of the witness.

We might limit the persons of the witnesses to the number of the Apostles. Unquestionably, they were the primary witnesses, chosen with special reference to that end. When there was a vacancy in their number, they felt it necessary that "Of the men who had

accompanied with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that He was received up from them, of these must one become a witness with them of the resurrection." Perhaps the claim is not unreasonable, that the Apostolate as a permanent institution is a standing monument and witness of Jesus and the resurrection to the end of time, as well as to the ends of the earth. There can be no question that the Episcopate, whatever be the details of its origin, was from the beginning intended and looked upon as the instrument and expression of the unity and universality — the catholicity — of Christianity, or of the Church, in both space and time. And what is either Christianity or the Church but the extension or universal inclusiveness of Jesus and the Resurrection?

But witness to Jesus and the Resurrection was not limited to the Apostles, and certainly in no exclusive way has been transmitted through the Episcopate. There is a much deeper and truer sense in which all real Christians are witnesses, and Christianity itself is essentially the witness to Jesus and the resurrection. This will become apparent as we examine the witnesses more in connection with their witness. A large part of that witness was without doubt that of literal eye-witnesses to external and physical facts, historical incidents or events. Such, on one side of them, were certainly both Jesus and the resurrection. But if that were all, why — what possible reason or meaning could there be for — the promise, "Ye shall receive power,

when the Holy Ghost is come upon you," as the condition of their becoming witnesses? Could anything more than sound senses, good memories, and common honesty be required for competent testimony to common facts? Is it not plain that these particular witnesses needed something more than physical or natural qualifications for testimony to something more than physical or natural facts? It was not enough, what they saw or heard with natural eyes and ears; the important point was, what they saw in what they saw, and heard through what they heard. When Jesus said, "He that heareth my words —" He by no means meant every one who had heard them with outward ears. "Take heed how ye hear" — were very solemn words in His mouth. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" — was very far from true of every one who had seen Him: there are very different kinds of seeing. The function of the promised Holy Ghost was to be that He should "take of the things of Jesus, and show them unto us." He was to give us eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand, and minds to know. The Holy Ghost in us is our subjective qualification to receive the things that be of God, and that are addressed, not to our flesh, but to our spirit, to our sense for divine things.

Let us illustrate by the actual witness of one of the chief witnesses. Why was St. John so chief a witness to Jesus and the resurrection? Not because he could better see or hear or report with outer senses or understanding; but because he had the deeper inner vision,

and saw and heard what to others was invisible and inaudible. Hear his testimony: "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the word of life — what we have seen and heard declare we unto you." Every term is used, every qualification enumerated, of the purest external testimony, and yet it is evident that the thing testified to is accessible only to the most inner and spiritual senses or perception. All that our Lord had said or done on earth, all the wonderful things that had happened, including even the resurrection, are passed by, and only that is testified to which is the, to most eyes, invisible import and significance of the whole matter.

The term *logos* or "word" ("word of life") is used here in a different way, but not in a discordant sense, from that in which it appears at the beginning of St. John's Gospel. In that it is used personally, in this impersonally; in that it is used to designate the Subject of the Incarnation, to express Who Jesus Christ is; in this it designates the subject matter of the incarnation, it tells what Christ is — not only in Himself, but also in us. God's eternal and essential Word, the principle and agent of all revelation, manifestation, or expression of Himself — that is, of all that is — is defined here, not as the divine Expresser, but simply as the divine expression, revelation, or manifestation of Life. He is here to be studied, not as Who is our life, but as what is our life; the question is to be, not how God is in us for our life, but what our life is as God's.

Our immediate subject then is as to the expression of life, how life manifests or evidences itself — and that especially in humanity, whether in Jesus Christ as its type or original, or in us as participants in it in Him. Christianity as a permanent witness is witness of a permanent thing: it is not transmitted testimony of a Jesus who lived or of a resurrection that once took place; it is direct evidence of a Jesus who lives and of a resurrection that is continuously taking place. It is Jesus as Life that we are witnesses of; it is the resurrection as the divine victory of human life that we are here to bear testimony to.

The truth of Adam is altogether independent of the historicity of such an individual man. Adam is only the root and type of our common or universal humanity. He stands for our common nature and our common condition by or in nature. We express simply a common or universal fact of nature when we say: In Adam we all sin, and in Adam we all die. That may be an inadequate account of the historical origin or cause, but it adequately describes the fact of sin and death. Now Jesus Christ stands for an equally generic and universal fact and principle in humanity, the principle of God in it, and of eternal life. If there were not in man an original principle and potentiality of all that Christ means, Christ could not become in us all that He does. “Whom God foreknew He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son.” That means that God, in His eternal foreknowledge and fore-purpose of humanity, implanted in it the potency

and promise of becoming, through unity with Himself, all that humanity has actually become in Christ, through His love, grace, and fellowship in and with it. This is involved in the truth of our sonship to God by nature. We are not all products of nature; we are, in highest part, children of God; and His "seed" in us, our natural derivation from and kinship with Him, is in itself potency and promise of our becoming of one life with Him.

In the first place then, Jesus Christ means the inner man potential in every man. But in the second place, He means that inner and merely potential man quickened and regenerate by the — not merely immanent, but transcendent — action of Himself upon it, and become the "new man." By transcendent action is meant action not naturally transmitted, but personally communicated. The media of personal communication are invariably Word and Spirit — the Word, by expression to the understanding, and the Spirit, by appeal to and influence on the sensibilities, affections, and will. The function of the Word is the conveyance of truth or reality to us; of the Spirit, the quickening of apprehension, reception, and life in us. The evidences of life are, the passing or death of the "old man" or "old Adam," of subjection to sin and death, and the birth and life in us of the Christ or "new man," of the likeness and life of God in us. Jesus Christ is described by St. Peter as having "brought us to God" — how? By being "put to death in the flesh, but quickened or made

alive in the spirit." Flesh and Spirit had become—probably chiefly through the thought of St. Paul—synonyms for all that was respectively to be “put off” and “put on” by the supreme double act of the Death and the Resurrection of our Lord. It is not to be supposed that our Lord had not that which was to be put off in the flesh, as well as needed or was in want of that which was to be put on in the spirit. If it were not so with Him, then would He not be constituted and qualified to accomplish in our humanity that in which its salvation consists and upon which it depends: that is, the putting off the flesh and putting on the spirit; putting off nature and self in their deficiency and insufficiency, and putting on God as alone all sufficient for holiness, righteousness, and life. Jesus Christ did not put off sin and death, as having been Himself, personally, involved in them. He put them off by the act and fact of not having been involved in them: that is, by the act and fact of having overcome and abolished them. But He overcame them only in the human way of denying, mortifying, and crucifying the nature and self which, even in Him, were subject to sin and death, because incapable of holiness and life, and putting on God, who alone in us is sufficient, and is our sufficiency, for these.

The symbolical language — in so far as it is so — of the inner and the outer man, the old and the new man, Adam and Christ, the flesh and the spirit, death and resurrection, can never be improved upon or dispensed with in Christianity. Not only because they are the



best possible symbols of facts and realities in human nature and experience, but because they are themselves more and truer than mere symbols. They are a language that is translatable, and must be translated, into all languages, because they are the exact expression of all higher human life.

Witness, then, to Jesus and the resurrection is nothing if it is not witness to a present Person and a present and actual experience. As to the present Person: the tendency emphasized in these days is to divorce the historical Jesus from the symbolical Christ; the next step to which would be to dispense with the symbol, and thus to reduce God, and Truth, and Life from Persons to abstract ideas and principles. Then will be the end of religion; for religion is only between persons; the relation with ideas and principles may be for us science or art or philosophy; it may give us ethics, but it cannot be religion. When God has become the mere personification of our own conception of perfect truth, order, and goodness; when Jesus Christ has become the mere symbol of our own ideal of truth, beauty, and goodness, or God, incarnate in us, then these objects of our worship will be simply reduced to ourselves and the creatures of our own minds. And when we have really discovered that, we shall cease to worship them. Just because truth, beauty, and goodness are personal, and only in persons, or not at all — not to know them eternal in God, or incarnate in Christ, is to know them nowhere except in ourselves. We cannot speak of them as present or

operative in the universe as a whole, or anywhere in it outside ourselves; for we know none, and nothing, outside ourselves in whom or in which they can be. To speak of Goodness as an ultimate principle, or a principle at all, in the Universe, is to assume an objective or ultimate Personality in the universe.

I am perfectly aware of the ignorance and inadequacy of our ascription of personality to the Ultimate Principle of the universe; but the reality in that Principle, as is freely admitted by the truest agnostics, must infinitely transcend, and in nothing fall short of, the personality we ascribe, and must also include it. There can be nothing in us that is not in It. The ablest and devoutest Ethical Culturist I know — agnostic as to anything beyond that — worships, more devoutly than I, precisely What I do — but not Whom I do. If, as he believes, What he worships is more and higher than Whom I worship — he would not lower nor limit It to my conception or designation of It — then I believe that we worship, not only the same Thing, but the same Person. And I think that I lose nothing, and he would lose nothing in going as far as our limitations will permit, and ascribing to the supreme Object of our worship at least personality and personal relation with ourselves — whatever more we may be failing to ascribe. If he were not, implicitly, worshipping a Person, he would not be worshipping at all, and I believe that he is, quite as certainly as that I am.

Seeing, then, in Jesus Christ all that I do — the divine predestination and potentiality of my Self, as of all

human selfhood; myself, not only thus purposed and promised, but in Him realized and fulfilled; the outer man in me displaced by the inner, the old by the new, the flesh by the spirit, the Adam by the Christ, nature and self in me by God — Jesus Christ is to me, not a name, nor a memory or tradition, nor an idea or sentiment, nor a personification, but a living and personal reality, presence, and power. He is God for me, to me, in me, and myself in God. Wherein else do we see God, know God, possess God than as we are in Him, and He in us? And wherein else are we so in Him and He in us, as in Jesus Christ? If God is unknowable in Himself, whether as immanent in, beneath and behind, or transcendent above all nature and all else, where does He become knowable but in His Word to us and His Spirit in us: and that is what we mean by Jesus Christ, and what He is, to and in us. If God is not a Presence, a Reality, and a Power in Him, He is so nowhere. And if we are not to worship Him there, we worship Him not at all. "There is none other Name under heaven, given among men, wherein we must be saved." And "in His name" means "in Him," and "in Him" means "in His death and resurrection."

Our relation to, our interest and actual participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is no mystery or magic. Assume that Christ is in fact the Power of God unto salvation, God in us unto and in our actual salvation, our holiness, our righteousness, our life, and so our redemption from sin and our resurrection from death; assume that through faith we

experience enough to know this: we have the earnest and proof of it in ourselves; that in hope we appropriate and possess in anticipation all that we see and know in Christ; — if both the objective and subjective facts be actually so, is it either magic or, from the highest point of view, even miracle, that in Jesus we should see God and ourselves at one, and that His death should be our redemption, and His resurrection our eternal life?

It will of course be asked: “Yes, but is it not enough that the Christ shall be the ideal or spiritual Symbol of all that, as Adam is of all that goes before?” I admit that He is the symbol of it all, but not the mere symbol. By mere symbol I mean just that which is actually meant by those who contend for it: a sign that is not the thing, that represents only, and is not what it represents. The question is, Whose, and what kind of, symbol is it? If it is man’s, and expresses his immanent conception or idea or ideal of God and himself, and the relation between, then it is only a sign, and by no means necessarily the thing signified. If, on the contrary, it is God’s, and the direct manifestation and expression from Him of Himself and man, and the relation between, then faith is justified in taking it for no mere sign, but the Thing signified, and hope, in appropriating to itself the whole presence and power and reality of it. So, Jesus Christ is to us no mere idea, or sentiment, or aspiration, desire, or hope of our own, but God’s truth and reality of our at-one-ment with Him, our redemption from sin, our resurrection from

death. It is only so in faith and hope, and very imperfectly so in fact, from the nature of the thing, and of us the subjects of it. The thing is, our personal and spiritual oneness with God, redemption from sin, perfection in holiness, righteousness, and life. This is something which we have, not simply to receive, but to accomplish and attain of ourselves. It can be done only under the conditions and through the experiences of our life as it is: the conditions have to be met and overcome, and the experiences, not only to be endured and survived, but recognized and used as divine means and instruments of our making and raising to the full stature of ourselves. Nature is only the raw material of ourselves, and is incomplete without our own action and part in it. Ourselves are deficient and insufficient, and can accomplish our part in fulfilling our nature and realizing ourselves, only in union and communion, both immanent and transcendent, both physical and personal, both natural and spiritual, with the All Who is God, and in the fulness of that realized relationship with Him which is Jesus Christ. This can be only gradual and progressive, but the condition of it, the only possibility, means, or assurance of it, is the certain knowledge of God's part in it, upon which faith and hope may depend as absolutely as our actual and natural dependence is upon it. It is easy enough to say now, that the Christ is enough as an ideal symbol of our own creation, but as a matter of fact the Christ was manifested, not in thought only, or in word only, but in very deed and truth, in the personal, historical,

human life, and essentially in the death and resurrection, of Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus Christ is to us, now and always, all that He means; and what He means to us is Life: The Life was manifested, and we have seen it and bear witness to it. We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen. The Life is the life of God; but it is the life of God as ours, and in us. The whole description of it, in Jesus or in us, is the description of a genuinely and essentially human life. It is no less, of course, a divine life, a life of divine love and grace and fellowship with us, of God Himself in us. But it is equally a genuinely human life, a life of human faith and hope and love. As Jesus means and is the life of God in man, so the resurrection means and is the victory of human life in God — the indestructibility and invincibility of faith, hope, and love, of God and the life of God in us through these.

Let us take the very earliest description of this: "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." Why was it impossible that Jesus should be holden of death? Is it because He was God? It is absurd to speak of the possibility or impossibility of God's being holden of death. The ground and cause of the impossibility must be sought in something in Jesus as man. There is neither point nor pertinence in the saying, if it does not mean the invincibility and indestructibility of the divine life in the man Jesus — and, through Him, in humanity. The life that

comes down from God as Love, Grace, and Fellowship, and lives in man as faith, hope, and love, is stronger than sin, stronger than death, is more than conqueror, overcomes the world, and puts all enemies under its feet. In Jesus the Woman's Seed bruises the serpent's head; the Seed of Abraham, the inheritor and perfector of his faith, accomplishes and gives to the world the blessedness of a divine righteousness; the Son of David sits upon the throne of a, in Him realized, and in us realizable, kingdom of God upon earth.

To see that the story of the resurrection is that of the predestined victory of human faith over all adverse conditions, influences, or powers; the putting all enemies under the feet of redeemed and risen humanity; — we have only to go on to St. Peter's account of why Jesus could not be holden of death. "For —," says he, and then proceeds to put into the mouth of Jesus the typical and prophetic experience of David. What was only figuratively, hyperbolically or poetically, true of David, has become actual truth or fact in Jesus. All true faith is in part a conquest of death: David, *in extremis*, had gone down into the grave, and by the grace of God had come up again — just as St. Paul describes himself as having done — and describes the experience as follows:

I beheld the Lord always before my face;  
For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:  
Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;  
Moreover my flesh too shall dwell in hope;  
Because thou shalt not leave my soul in Hades,

Neither wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption.  
Thou madest known to me the ways of life;  
Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance.

What could more truly or exactly describe the accomplished triumph of the resurrection, with which every deepest spiritual experience has at least the principle in common, and is therefore in its measure a type and prophecy of it?

What was put into the mouth of David as prophecy, as assurance of the ultimate working out of a principle, the anticipative operation of which he experienced in himself, we hear from the mouth of Jesus in fulfilment of the prophecy. And we now can utter it in Him, no longer in mere human aspiration, or prophetic anticipation, but in full assurance of divine manifestation and demonstration, that all that the Prince and Author of our life, and Finisher of our faith, has accomplished for us in Himself, He will accomplish in us through ourselves.



## XIV

### THE BLOOD THAT CLEANSETH

As has been previously assumed in connection with the First Epistle of St. John, that Epistle treats Christianity more in its positive aspect as a Life of God in Christ, and our participation in that life, than in its negative aspect as a sacrifice for and a redemption from sin. But this latter aspect is by no means ignored — indeed, is very distinctly presupposed and assumed. The position the Epistle would seem to suggest, if not positively occupy, is that of warning against claiming an interest in the objective redemption of our Lord, through His death, without or apart from a subjective participation with Him in His life. There is in the position an unconscious kinship with that held by St. Paul (Romans V. 10): “If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved in His life.” St. John would say, “If we are not walking in the light, then are we not in the life of God in Christ; and if we are not in the life, then we cannot claim any part in the redemption or reconciliation through the death of Jesus Christ.” The argument is *a posteriori*, from effect to cause, from evidence to fact: If we are actually and manifestly walking in the light, then know

we that we have that Life which is the only true light of men; and if we have the life, then know we that, through our right attitude and relation to it, the blood of Jesus Christ has expunged our sin and at-one-d us with God. Each stage or step of our actual redemption proves the preceding one, and so we reason back from the last to the first.

If we say either that we have not sinned or that we have not sin, we show an elemental ignorance or unconsciousness of the first obstacle and discovery of the spiritual life within us. Holiness manifests itself to us only in the opposition to sin, and realizes itself in us only in the overcoming of sin: he who does not know sin has not begun to know holiness; and by holiness we mean, the spirit, nature, and life of God in us.

If, to ourselves and to God, "we confess our sins" — if we stand in the only possible true relation and attitude to sin, that of a genuine and real repentance — then is God "faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins." Forgiveness, either under or upon any other condition, is a moral impossibility, alike for God and for us. Forgiveness here means remission or putting away; certain kinds of consequences or penalties of sin might be remitted without regard to the attitude of the sinner to his sin. These are mostly human and artificial consequences; for the most part, natural, and certainly spiritual, consequences or penalties are irremediable except upon necessary conditions. You might, after a human fashion, remit the punishment

for sin, or alter the outward status of the sinner, treat him as not being one, regardless of his own disposition toward his sin; but there can be no real or divine pardon or forgiveness or remission of sin, or making a sinner not a sinner, without the full cooperation of the sinner himself in the act, and in the attitude of God in the act. To God, and to the real penitent, the true sequel, condemnation, judgment, and penalty of sin is in the sin itself, and in no mere external accident or circumstance of it. The only real pardon or forgiveness or remission for it, is the putting away of itself: and the putting away of the sin itself is possible only through the sinner himself. I say "through," not "by"; it can be put away only by God, through the sinner; but equally it can be put away by God only through the sinner. That is why the action of divine grace is never severed from the condition of human repentance and faith.

But now, while there can be no divine putting away of sin that is not conditioned by and upon the sinner's putting it away, it is not only possible but rational and natural that God's putting away should both antedate and condition the sinner's. In all human action, conduct, character, or life, that is personal, moral, or spiritual, attitude or disposition must precede action, and action must precede performance or accomplishment. Now if a man, through the prevenient grace of God, assumes the right initial attitude toward his own sin, of repentance, and toward God's holiness, of faith, hope, and love — God is faithful and right to see and

recognize in that initial disposition the beginning of action, and in action, with His help, the pledge and promise of accomplishment or fulfilment. On the other hand, it is only the evidence, assurance, and experience on the man's part that God will so accept and treat his most elementary disposition, and takes what he means, and would be, for what he so infinitely as yet is not — it is only that, I say, that can possibly encourage and enable the man to put his disposition into action, and to complete his action into accomplishment and attainment.

That is what we might call the divine philosophy of the attitude which St. John ascribes to God: If, obeying the motions of His Spirit, we will take up the true attitude toward our sin, and toward His love and grace and holiness, then He will be faithful and righteous on His part to more than meet our least movement toward Him. Indeed any movement on our part is already His motion in us:

“Every inmost aspiration is God's Angel undefiled,

And in every “O, my Father,” slumbers deep a “Here, my Child.”

On our part, “confession of sins” supposes and includes a real sense and consciousness of sin, the consequent need and desire of both pardon and cleansing, and faith in the love and grace and fellowship of God for these ends. On God's part, He recognizes in this disposition — which is itself His gift — the condition upon which His pardoning and cleansing grace is possi-

ble, or is operative and effectual in us; He accepts the attitude or disposition *a quo* for the end *ad quem*, and treats our faith and hope as though they were attainment and possession.

What, however, seems to be the desire and intention of the Apostle and the Epistle is to connect inseparably, if not identify, the grace of pardon and the grace of cleansing — what we have divided into the two parts of justification and sanctification. The first of these is meaningless apart from the second; the second is impossible apart from the first: it is only in God's both pardoning and cleansing love, grace, and fellowship, that we can both receive and accomplish the holiness, righteousness, and life, which is the end and the substance of all our salvation. So the Apostle would say: "If we are walking in the light, then are we living in the Life; and then — the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, not only justifies or acquits us of all condemnation or guilt, but is actually sanctifying or cleansing us from all sin." This appears in the further progress of the argument — if so subtle and delicate a sequence of thought or life can be called an argument. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." The end of the Gospel of Christ is, that we sin not at all: that there be no longer any sin in us: Christ has abolished sin, not only in Himself, but in us. So He has — but, so far as we are concerned, potentially, not yet actually: in God's gracious act and provision, and in our appropriating and anticipative faith, but not yet in the accomplished fact of assimilation and

attainment on our part. That is a necessary separation and sequence: what we have ourselves to be and do, must be ours to be accomplished and to become, before it can be ours accomplished and actually become. Therefore, while the Apostle insists that "the blood of Christ," or "being in God," must mean and must be — sin abolished, and holiness possessed; he knows that this, in us, must be a process of time and change, and so recognizes that while the determining and ultimate principle of our life will be holiness, and therefore sinlessness, sin will not be instantaneously dead, and will recur.

Therefore he adds: "And if one sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." This opens to us the whole ground of our spiritual and moral status or standing with God, as held by St. John, in harmony with all Apostolic teaching. Jesus Christ is Himself "The Righteous," or the righteous One: He is the "righteousness of God revealed": at once, God our Righteousness, and humanity righteous through God in it. Jesus Christ is both parts or sides in the unity of God and man, both *gratia gratians* and *gratia gratiata*, the divine grace that graces or confers, and the human grace received and shared. The human righteousness of Jesus Christ, which alone is or can become ours, was humanly both received and wrought by Himself: it was a righteousness alike of perfect faith and of perfect obedience. It was a righteousness, of which His "blood" was the sole condition, and is the only

symbol. The Holy of Holies could be entered only with the blood of the Offerer up of Himself without spot to God. Nothing short of that perfect attitude toward sin which is death at once to it and from it, and that perfect attitude toward holiness which is the life of God Himself in us, constitutes the righteousness that Jesus Christ was, and the righteousness that He gives. His blood was, not only His own actual death to sin, but must be no less ours also.

It remains to examine, from St. John's point of view, the exact meaning of the declaration that Jesus Christ, the righteous, was the "propitiation for our sins." We may first correlate it with similar expressions from other apostolic sources. St. Paul tells us (2 Cor. V. 19) how that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses." This reconciliation the Authorized Version (Rom. V. 11) calls "the atonement" — manifestly in the sense of at-one-ment. "God in Christ" in itself means the reconciliation of God and the world, or their at-one-ment: it is no mere true expression of the thing, but the Thing Itself realized and accomplished. God comes to His own in the world, and the world comes to itself in God — both alike in Jesus Christ. That which is fact accomplished in Christ, is fact accomplishing, and to be accomplished in us in Christ. And the process of accomplishment is this: Upon repentance from sin and faith in God, God sees and receives the sinner in Christ. He no longer reckons or imputes to him the sin which he himself repudiates and disowns,

but invests him with, as his own, the holiness or righteousness which he sees and appropriates to himself by faith in Christ. That so-called imputation is the divine method of giving or imparting to the sinner the holiness and righteousness which he has not and cannot have in himself, except by the divine impartation.

The merging and identifying of our repentance, and whole subsequent relation to sin, into and with that act of Jesus Christ which was in fact the death of sin and His own human death to sin, is explicable and comprehensible only as we see in Jesus Christ the revelation and manifestation of God's grace in all humanity — all, that is, that through Jesus Christ believes and accepts: the grace which will in us all complete repentance into death to sin, as it completes faith into life in God. The function of faith is to know in ourselves “the exceeding greatness of God's power to usward who believe, according to that strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.” Jesus Christ was manifested “for our sake, who through Him are believers in God, which raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory; so that our faith and hope might be in God.” It is not that Jesus Christ was an individual sample or example of human salvation. Christ is in fact as universal and generic as, symbolically, Adam is. He is God in humanity and in every man who repents and believes. His death and resurrection are not only representatively but potentially those of every man, and actually those of every man who thoroughly believes. “We judge,



that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all" — not that all need not die, or may be merely pardoned: but that they may so truly die — "that they should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who, for their sakes died and rose again." Death in all these connections must be taken in the sense in which it is manifestly intended: not the physical fact, but a spiritual and moral act, the death of the Adam in us through the resurrection and life of the Christ. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old things are passed away; behold, new things have come to pass:" he is dead in the flesh, and risen and alive in the spirit. St. Paul shows everywhere the same solicitude that St. John does, that Jesus should not be instead of us, exclusively, but for us, inclusively: that His death should not be instead of our death, but should be our death.

At Rom. III. 25 God is said to have "set forth Jesus Christ to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood." First as to Jesus Himself, His way into the Holy of Holies, of utter conquest of sin and oneness with God, was with blood — through the torn veil of His flesh. As St. Peter expresses it: "Christ also suffered for sins once, that He might bring us unto God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit." His act of utter holiness — that is, of perfect love, service and sacrifice — destroyed the sin that separated us from God, and so "brought us" to God. "We were redeemed" — to holiness, from the vanity or emptiness of our life apart from God — "with precious blood, as

of a lamb without blemish or spot, the blood of Christ." Such is Jesus Christ, and such was that act of human redemption, that in Him and in it we all stand, not merely, I repeat, representatively, but potentially redeemed. And nothing stands between us and our actual and eternal redemption but the one condition, without which it cannot act either upon or in us, the condition of our faith in and appropriation of it. Jesus Christ is our propitiation in the absolute sense of our ultimate perfect becoming one with God in Him. He is in the mean time our propitiation in the relative sense, that even in our incomplete faith and unrealized hope in Christ, God reckons not against us all that is lacking in us, but imputes to us, or accounts as ours, all that is fulfilled in Christ. If we in good faith repudiate and disown the self in us for the Christ in us, God sees only the Christ and not the self that is still in us.

In this, as in every other respect, if only we go deep enough, we see the substantial agreement of every single New Testament interpreter of Jesus Christ and His Gospel. St. John, St. Peter, St. Paul, the Writer to the Hebrews are at one in seeing in Jesus, not merely in a general way the presence of God in man, and the life of man in God; but no less that divine-human Oneness mediated and accomplished in the only possible way: by the removal of the one cause of separation between them: and that removal accomplished in the one possible way of bringing every man to the issue and to the power of death to sin and life in God.

In this connection, I may suggest one possible inter-

pretation of a difficult passage in the Epistle we are considering. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth." The "Son of God" here expresses not the Divine Sonship that was eternal with God, but the human sonship to God that came with our Lord's life on earth, and was accomplished or completed only in His resurrection. "He was determined Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." (Rom. I. 4.) Faith in Jesus as the Son of God and faith in Him as the Christ are synonymous expressions in the Epistle before us. The Chrism wherewith humanity in the person of our Lord is anointed is the spirit, nature, and life of God: the anointing is regeneration or birth from above, the divine impartation of sonship. It in no wise conflicts with the eternal essential Sonship of our Incarnate Lord, to say that as man He was subject to the universal human law and process of becoming son of God. Sonship with us is a free, personal self-conforming to the spirit, nature, and life of sons. It is not the natural potentiality, but the spiritual actuality or actualizing of all that is involved in the filial relation. In humanity it involves the exclusion of all that is unfilial, or contrary to the divine nature, as well as the inclusion of all that is filial, that is, full participation in all the divine nature. Participation in the divine

nature is holiness, and the vital principle of all holiness is perfect love.

Now when St. John speaks of our Lord's "coming by water and blood," the reference is to the manner in which, or the process by which, divine sonship in Him was humanly consummated. It comes, first, in the water of baptism: that is, it comes by birth from above, by descent of the Holy Ghost into Him. But the symbolical water of baptism only confers the principle and power of Sonship, or of the divine life. It but equips for, and calls to, the real work and life of divine sonship. It signifies, involves, and promises the death to sin and life to God, but it looks forward to the actualizing or realizing these on the part of the subject himself. Therefore divine sonship in its accomplished completeness comes, not in the water alone, in the fact of the full endowment for it by the Holy Ghost, but in the water and in the blood, in the endowment for it followed and finished by the performance or accomplishment of it. The water of Jordan means, and finds its fulfilment only in, the blood of Calvary, the actual and complete death to sin and life to God. "And it is the spirit that beareth witness, because the spirit is the truth." The mere letter of all this amounts to nothing, just as the flesh by itself profiteth nothing. It is the spirit that quickens and imparts life and reality. The reality of the water and of the blood, of regeneration, of the death and resurrection, is witnessed and proved only in the spirit and power of the new life, in the genuineness and reality of the sonship attained.

It is only sonship to God, so realized and accomplished, that conquers the world. It was so with our Lord Himself: "In the world," He says, "ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." It was not as God that He overcame the world, but as man; in the human way of a perfect faith, love, and obedience; by full proof and use of the divine Fatherhood and His own human sonship. When at His baptism our Lord heard from heaven the divine commendation, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," it was the human sonship in Him and not the Divine that received approval. When in the wilderness the temptation came to Him, "If thou art the son of God" — it was His human, and not His eternal Divine Sonship that was under trial. It was our Lord's perfect hold upon the fatherhood of God, His perfect maintenance and realization of His own sonship to God, that gave Him His perfect victory over the world, that made Him the conqueror and destroyer of sin, and was the cause that He could not be holden of death.

His victory was our victory: He wrought it in our nature, and works it in ourselves. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." And what is the exact and specific ground and substance of our faith? "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" "He that confesseth the Son hath the Father." Jesus has given us the Father, through the revelation and impartation to us of His own sonship, His own victory and peace, His own risen and ascended life.

Jesus Christ is God's perfect witness to us, both of Himself and of us, and of the relation He has instituted and established between us. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning His Son. And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life."

I use interchangeably "Spirit" and "spirit," "Son" and "son." The "Eternal Spirit, or spirit," through Whom, or through which, Jesus Christ "offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. IX 14), was equally the Personal Spirit of God and the human spirit actuating Jesus. If it were not both, in a perfect unity, it could be neither in that consummate divine-human act and character. So, if the accomplished human sonship of Jesus to God were not the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God in our humanity and in us, it would alike have been impossible in Him, and be impossible in us. On the other hand, the incarnation of Divine Sonship would be impossible and meaningless, otherwise than in our own human sonship by ourselves accomplished in and through it.

## XV

### THE COMFORT OF CHRISTIANITY

IN both Gospel and Epistle St. John applies, first to our Lord Himself, and secondarily to the Holy Ghost, the title Paraclete, or Advocate, or Helper, or Comforter. The word, in both Greek and Latin, means etymologically "one called to, to the side of, to the aid of another." One who is unable himself "to manage his own business," "conduct his own case," or "carry through his own cause," needs the services of another who can do it with and for him. The Latin term advocate has been limited to one who discharges that function in law; but it need not be so restricted in the part assigned to the office in the Gospel. There is no question that man in his natural state is in a case in which he needs intervention from without and from above himself. He cannot, of himself, live his life, or be himself: insuperable obstacles and complications lie between him and either the fulfilment of his nature or the realization of himself. The increasing recognition of the claim that religion is a necessary fact and factor in human life, is confession of the truth that humanity is dependent upon some sort of divine cooperation and help. I wish in this chapter to discuss the nature of that human demand, and of the divine supply to it.

It is a necessity of the time, as well for the correction as for the defence of Christianity, to point out how consistently, in its origin in the New Testament, it is its function to be a help, and not an interference, in and with human life. It is never anything to be done merely for, or instead of, but always something done with and in: never a substitute for, but always the realization, and self-realization, of that for which it is. There is a natural disposition to complain that God does not Himself do things, or prevent things, in the world. I am prepared to admit that there are no such interventions or interferences on His part in the natural course of the world. In purely natural matters His part is so conformed and confined to His own method and law of "Nature," that we have come to apply to it the notion and principle of "necessity." It is not in things but in persons — not in the domain of invariable law, but in that of freedom and grace — that we are to look for interventions and assistances. The natural world is here for us, and our uses in it. What God does beyond that in it, He does in and with, and through and by *us*. What more in it ought to be done, or ought to be remedied or prevented, we are here to do or to remedy or prevent. It is for us to have or acquire the knowledge, the skill, the disposition, and the will to make the world all that it ought to be. It ought to be only, and all, that which we can make it; and we can make it all that it ought to be. Wherein we are insufficient, of ourselves, for the task, it is the function of religion to reënforce and enable us; but that is all



that religion undertakes to do — or, for our sakes, ought to do. To be spared any part of the responsibility, or the labor, or the pain of what we are here for, or of what the world is here to furnish the necessary conditions for, would be outside interference, not in the interest of, but against all the means and ends of our being. If there are things that ought to be, and are not, or if there are things that ought not to be in the world, and are — it is infinitely better for us that they should wait indefinitely upon us to supply or remove, than that God should be expected to do it for us.

I am quite at the other extreme from denying that God is as much alive and present and operative in His world at this moment as at any other in its past; but the ever-new creative energy that is always in process operates, as a matter of fact, in this world of ours, in and with and through human freedom and initiative; and the changes to be made in the world all wait, and will always wait, to be made by ourselves, and not by Another without or instead of us. If accidents happen, or plagues spread, or evils exist, or vice reigns among us, we need indeed to call upon God to remedy or prevent them — but only as we “know His ways,” and understand that He will not do anything for us that we will not do for ourselves. We need Him every hour, but we need Him in ourselves, in what we are and do, rather than in anything done or to be done for or instead of us.

This “way of God” appears first and most mani-

festly in the method and manner of the Incarnation itself. The Life that was manifested — however unqualifiedly it was the Life that was with God, and that was God — was, nevertheless, manifested wholly as our life: the Godhead was wholly *within* the humanity. There was nothing of knowledge, of power, or of divinity, visible or present in our Lord's humanity, as such, that was not humanly communicated to it, that was not ascribed to the action of the Holy Ghost in Him as it is the function of the Holy Ghost to act in humanity. If the Spirit of God operated more powerfully, even perfectly, in Him, it was precisely in the ratio in which, humanly, He cooperated most perfectly with the Holy Ghost. This is not only plain matter of record, but is vital to the sense in which the Divine Life, in Him, became our life. There is a sense in which, and a process by which humanity, potentially divine in itself, can become actually divine by itself. The process is by faith, through which reciprocally Deity unites itself with humanity, and humanity unites itself with Deity. Jesus Christ is the revelation, the realization, on both sides, of that divine-human process.

Jesus Christ, then, is "God for us," distinctly in the sense of "God with us and in us." The attitude of God toward us, in Him, is that of sympathy and cooperation with us in our condition: grace to enable us to overcome and surmount our condition; never of deliverance from the condition otherwise than through our own victory over it. The condition is part of the process, to annul which would be to annul our own

part in it. This may seem as though God created evil for us to overcome. But there is no evil in all our condition apart from our personal will and disposition and action toward it, or apart from human responsibility in relation to it. It is idle, however, to speculate about the responsibility for existing conditions. They are here, and the question is what is to be done about them? To what extent are they to be changed or helped by prayer and miracle? No little indeed by prayer, and no less by miracle — if we mean the true miracles wrought, and that ought infinitely more to be wrought, by prayer. But all miracle wrought in this human world of ours otherwise than through and by ourselves is at the cost and expense of ourselves. The habit of expecting God to do things or to prevent things is nothing else or less than the shifting from ourselves the responsibility, and the deadening in ourselves and in human society the sense of responsibility, for doing and preventing or curing things. We are not set in the garden of this world to sit down and see God till and tend it for us; nor, if we prefer the figure, in the wilderness or desert of the world, to wait upon prayer and miracle to make it blossom as the rose — either materially, morally, or spiritually.

But what miracles will not be wrought by prayer, what wonders will not God perform by His grace through our faith, if our will to be divine shall ever meet and equal His desire to be human in us! We cannot too often recall and ponder upon His lament: “How would I! — and ye will not.”

Let us illustrate a little from the teaching or example of the New Testament the principle I have been insisting upon. There has been some question whether our English equivalent "Comforter" truly expresses the function<sup>1</sup> belonging to the Paraclete, Advocate, or Helper. It does so, I think, if we understand the term in all the fulness of its etymological meaning, but not otherwise. "Comfort — (*con-fortis*) To impart strength and hope to;" — says the dictionary. There are two ways of helping or saving from any evil — externally to remove the evil, or internally to fortify and strengthen against the evil. A patient calls in to his bedside, or to his aid, the physician, who is thus a true *advocatus* or paraclete. The physician may use an antidote or specific which neutralizes or removes the cause of trouble. Or, letting that alone, he may so treat the condition or system of the patient as to enable him of himself to throw off or overcome the trouble. Germs of disease are dangerous only to impaired or diseased tissues and systems. Impart vitality and vigor to these, and they may be rendered immune against the seeds of sickness.

The sense in which our Lord applies to Himself first the title Paraclete may be developed somewhat as follows: Jesus Christ may be defined as the divine response to the cry of humanity for help from above. There is a case or cause, not only between us and God, but no less between us and ourselves, us and our higher ends and destinies, which we are essentially insufficient to manage or conduct for ourselves. As

before an earthly tribunal the chosen advocate stands for and represents his client, pleads his cause, conducts his case, mediates between him and the law or the judge, so in our larger cause Jesus Christ stands with us, by us, and mediates for us, not only, as I have said, between us and God, but, in that, between us and eternal right or righteousness, between us and our proper ends and selves. The claim or demand of God or of righteousness upon us is not to be distinguished from that of ourselves upon us: we cannot think of God otherwise than as the infinite or perfect of ourselves, or truly of ourselves otherwise than as the incomplete and imperfect of what God is. The tribunal before which Christ stands for us is within us: He stands for the eternal and infinite "ought" of ourselves, the mediator not only of its revelation but of its realization.

But the point to observe is how consistently God in Christ appears as the helper of, and not the substitute for, ourselves. The Paraclete combines the functions of His office, interpreted actively as well as passively: He is not alone the "Called upon" but the "Caller upon." He is the sympathizer, the encourager, the strengthener, the enabler, and in all those senses the Comforter. He has begotten us unto a living hope by His own resurrection from the dead. He says to us, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." He calls upon us to be and do what He Himself has done and is. He is the Author of our salvation and life, as having been the leader,

the fore-runner, the first-begotten in it. He has done and is nothing for us that He does not call on us to do and be in Him. God in Him has abolished nothing either of the conditions under which, or of the process by which, it is appointed for, and is the higher nature of, all men to become divine. The Deity of our Lord, in contradistinction from the divinity which He shares with and imparts to us all, is to be found, not in any distinction in kind in His humanity or in His human life from ours, but in the fact that He is the Incarnation from God as well as the impartation in us of all that He is in our nature. He gives Himself to us, not only as sample or example, as evidence and proof of what God would do with us and in us — if we will — but as the effectual power and substance of it. Through our faith, hope, and love He enters into us as the very matter of our salvation and substance of ourselves — God our holiness, our righteousness, our life.

So, to turn again for a moment from Jesus as advocate of our cause, to Jesus as physician of our souls, His miracles of healing are ordinarily to be looked for in us and through us, and only mediately and secondarily upon us. Even where they were, or are, manifested physically or phenomenally, the real miracle, the new matter, force or power, was in the subjective condition or cause rather than in the objective effect.

We have still to illustrate from the New Testament the principle that the true Christian *aphesis* is not

the putting away of the evil from the person, but the release of the person from, enabling him against, the evil. It is always not only being saved but a saving himself from the power of the thing. One's self can be saved only by being directed and enabled in the saving oneself. In the case of our Lord Himself, nothing so brings His humanity home to our hearts as what may be called the natural weakness in Him, the elemental instinctive wish, on the first impulse, to have the extreme evil, the overwhelming temptation taken away from Him, to be spared what seems impossible to be endured. When "the hour" so long foreseen, even in anticipation accepted, is actually upon Him, what is the first instinctive impulse and utterance? "What shall I say! — Father save me from this hour." And immediately recollection and reflection correct the momentary instinct: "But for this cause came I to this hour." If we could all recollect and reflect, when temptation in its thousand forms assails us and seems more than we can bear, that "for this cause are we here!" Without going further back into reasons and causes that precede facts, our conditions in this world, as Bishop Butler says, "are what they are." And we are here to meet them as they are. It is no part of the manifest divine intention, in the whole or in any of the particulars, to alter the conditions for us, but only to do so through and with and by us — so fast and so far as we will act in and with Him. God did not spare His only-begotten Son the suffering of that dreadful hour; but He did what was infinitely wiser

and kinder: He saved Him, not from it, but in it, and through it, and by it. Again, as the hour draws yet nearer, nature will make itself heard: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" And again the true and the right that are above nature assert themselves: "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done!" Again, if we could but learn the lesson, that — not alone if we love God, but if we truly love ourselves — not our wishes, who know not, but His Will, who knows, and Who loves us better than we love ourselves, is that which is to be done! In all the earthly life of Jesus, which is the revelation of human life as God would be in it, and as it should be in God, I see no exception to the principle that our life is here to meet earthly and human conditions and to overcome and survive them — not that the inevitable is ever to be removed from before us, or that we are to be spared the pain of its endurance and the necessity of its conquest.

We learn the same lesson from the experience of those who follow most immediately and completely in our Lord's footsteps. St. Paul was crippled by "a thorn in the flesh" which impeded and threatened to defeat his ministry. Thrice he besought the Lord that it might depart from him; and the answer came, "My grace is sufficient for thee: My power is made perfect through weakness." Thenceforth St. Paul's support in the face of all difficulties or obstacles is, "I can endure all things, and do all things, through Him that strengtheneth me." No more in the case



of the Apostles than in that of their Lord do I see that miracles were wrought for them in answer to prayer; we see marvellous miracles wrought in and through them by grace working through faith and prayer.

The above discussion has nothing whatever to do with the question of the possibility, or the probability, or the actual occurrence of any kind of miracle or miracles. No one who seriously and understandingly holds the doctrine of the Incarnation and the truth of our Lord's Person and Work will hesitate about any inferior fact essential to that supreme one. But I am not talking now of what might, could, or would happen under any circumstances, but only of what is God's actual principle and mode of dealing, through Christianity, with human life and destiny. When we say or feel, as so often we do, that certain things that come by natural consequences, because of their sad or appalling effects upon human life or happiness, "ought not to be permitted," or "are mysterious and inexplicable" (though as natural occurrences they may be not only explicable but necessary), or "shake our faith in a divine providence," and even "in God," — what is meant by such thoughts and utterances is nothing less than this: either that nature itself is all wrong, or that God ought to be constantly interfering with it and shaping it in the supposed interest of every being whom it concerns. In reply to which I would say, That if nature were not just as constant, as invariable, even as necessary and as seemingly indifferent and inexorable as it is, human

life in all its highest characteristics and ends would be impossible in it.

On the other hand, I am a literal and firm believer in the divine assurance that to those who love God, and who enter into and understand His divine purposes, all things — absolutely all things, in nature as well as in grace — work together unto their eternal good. By “loving God” I mean no more nor less than loving eternal truth, and order, and goodness; not one of which is a mere abstract idea or sentiment, and all of which can meet and be real only in an eternal Person. Life is possible only in reaction or interaction with environment, but it is by no means lived only in or by concurrence and correspondence with environment. Life has in large measure to shape, mould, and even remake its environment. We are here, not to conform or correspond with the world as it is, but to be perpetually reforming and making a new world out of it. So far from our life being a correspondence with our world, it is equally true that it is here to be made through enmity with and conquest over the world. The enmity of the world is at least as necessary to the making and shaping of human life as its friendship.

For what do we mean by the friendship or the enmity, the concurrence or the contradiction, between us and our environment. The distinction between right and wrong, and the liability of things to the alternative possibility of right or wrong, is the root and ground, the condition, in nature of the existence of such a thing as

human freedom, of moral reason, choice, and will, of finite character and personality. We have said, with Kant, that there is nothing right or good but the right or good will: moral distinctions exist only for and in the free will. But in a lower sense of "right" it is evident that, from the beginning of the evolution of life as we know it, it has been liable to the possibility of going right or wrong. In the most mechanical of natural products, the most material multiplications of offspring, the fact of "variations," the recognition of degrees of fitness and unfitness, in consequence of which some survive and some perish, some are beneficent and some injurious, some beautiful and right, others ugly and wrong — these facts or phenomena of bare nature, prior to the appearance in it of spirit or personality, are premonitions and preparations that look forward to and are explained by the real right and wrong, good and bad, of the formal freedom with and in which personality and humanity are born. By formal freedom is meant reason to understand and freedom to make right or wrong choice and to perform good or bad actions. The evolution or transition from necessary to free, from physical to spiritual, from product of nature to child of God, will never be scientifically traceable or explicable. Life has depths of mystery in it far beneath the plummet of any earthly student of mere phenomena. All that we know is that, out of a seemingly eternal process of gradual becoming, there has come and does exist a world of finite spirit, of reason to understand and freedom to

choose moral opposites, to pursue and to reach alternative ends and destinies. This is the only complete meaning or possible reality of right and wrong, good and bad; and for this possibility, and the spiritual and moral personality conditioned by it, all things else have existed and do exist. It is perfectly true that Personality is the only true final cause or real end-in-itself. There is nothing else *for which* in any true sense things can be.

The world for us then cannot be otherwise than a world of possible good and evil, right and wrong: and if possible, then actual. There is no choice of good that is not an actual rejection of evil, nor choice of wrong that is not a real refusal of right. I admit that the practical distinguishing of the gradations between mere mechanical action on the one hand and free, spiritual and moral, action on the other, is impossible for us — and therefore the denial to us of final judgment or retributive justice — but the distinction exists, and the whole higher evolution of humanity is into the truer recognition and sense of it.

I repeat, therefore, that life for us is correspondence and cooperation with a world of right, or with the right of the world; and enmity with a world of wrong, or with all the wrong of the world. In which the true part and good for us is, not in the having things changed for us, but the changing them ourselves; not in looking to God to abolish the evil, but for grace and power, in our Lord, which means in ourselves, to endure, overcome, and *so* abolish it. What is true of the individual

man is true of the world of humanity; and the individual has always to wait and suffer for the slow movements of humanity. Society is cruel to men and women in its resistance and reluctance to right its wrongs and to recognize and advance their rights. But it is better for society to have to bear and discharge its own responsibility, no matter at what cost, or in what time, than that there be outside divine intervention to hasten it. It is better that the physical health of the earth should, after so long, be bettered by sanitary and salutary humanity, intelligence, energy, and actual cleansing, than that long ago God should have worked miracles in opposition to plagues in response to faith and prayer. The better place for His miracles is in the awakened, enlightened, and energized intelligence, affections, and wills of men, society, humanity, to do these things for themselves and for others. It is absurd to desire or to expect that God should have made us men, in His image, by giving us to have life in ourselves, by putting it upon us to make our own lives; should have placed us in an environment with all the materials and conditions for making our own world, after a pattern and fashion which He should show us in the Mount; and that then He shall intervene and interfere to make our lives and our world not our own, the expression, not of our growing and developing reasons, affections, wills, and powers, but of His own omnipotent power.

## XVI

### THE WAY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

WE are several times in the New Testament reminded that "No one hath seen God at any time." That means that if in any sense we are to know God, it must be through some mean or medium between Him and us. The vital question for us is as to what that mean is. Again, the reminder that God cannot be seen or known immediately or "in Himself," but only mediately or through something else, conveys to us this idea: That He is unknowable in His person, and knowable only in His acts or works. "He" or "Himself" is a personal pronoun, and assumes the personality of God. But are we to stop at the fact of God's being a Person in Himself, and remain satisfied with the conclusion that He is forever to be knowable or known only indirectly through acts and never directly or in Himself?

Let us approach somewhat systematically the answer to this question. There are three stages of thought on the matter. The first is that which, either avowedly or practically, denies personality in God Himself; which, as in pantheism or monism, sees in what is called God simply a personification of the Principle, One and Universal, of all things. God is there Substance or Cause, thinkable or knowable only in the

All of which it is the subject or substance and cause. Where there is the denial of universal or divine personality, there follows logically and practically the denial of all, and so of human, personality. Such a monistic or pantheistic position is outside altogether of our present enquiry.

There is, secondly, the position of the many who, if they do not concede the personality of God in literal terms, at any rate question it in the interest, not of anything less or lower, but on the ground that the higher being and nature of God cannot be thought or expressed in the lower terms of ourselves. These, if they are consistent and sincere, are practically theists for our purpose; if they are really anything more than theists, so much the better. My present business is only with those who, holding the personality, or something higher, of God, assume that such a God must or does, forever, let Himself be knowable or known only indirectly through impersonal acts and never personally or in that which is His true Self. Shall God have given us selves, even so capable as they are of knowing Himself: so full of aspiration and impulse to know Him; and shall He forever remain Himself unknown? The wide distinction I am insisting upon is that between a mere inferential or speculative knowing about God and the direct or personal knowing Himself. I have in mind now those who, admitting the former, practically exclude even the possibility of the latter. If they admit any human personal relation to God at all, it is in fact personal only on our side, not on God's. That God,

in any sense on His part, or otherwise than through exalted thought or emotion on theirs, spoke with Abraham or through the Prophets, or manifested Himself in Jesus Christ, does not enter into their calculation. Faith may have validity as a heightened sense of the reality of things imagined or inferred by ourselves; but as an actual experience of a real personal meeting with us of God, or communication to us from God, it is out of the question. The heavens are sealed, so far as any response from them is concerned; we are shut up to what we may infer or conjecture or guess from what we know of the world and ourselves: any transcending of that is only within the limit of our own personal aspiration.

Is there any real personal knowing of God — any true meeting, not only of us with God in faith, but of God with us in grace? Supposing that there is, we shall have to distinguish between the ordinary instances of it assumed in all acts of faith or prayer, or in divinely instituted answers of grace, as sacraments — between these and those extraordinary and exceptional instances which have prevailed and remained as revelations to and inspirations for the whole world. Such are those to which I have alluded: the permanent establishment of faith and promise of grace through Abraham; the voice of God uttered through Moses and the Prophets; the Word of God spoken and the Life of God manifested in the person of Jesus Christ; the degree or amount of permanent inspiration for the world to be found in the New Testament as the record of Christianity.



Before entering upon these questions of degree, let us first consider the whole matter of kind. If there is personal relation at all between God and us, the modes and varieties of it are only matters of detail. Any at all involves and establishes the possibility, and even probability, of all. Personal relation carries with it the larger truth of transcendent relation between us and God. It means that what we call "spirit" within us is not limited to what is immanent in ourselves or in the natural process of which we are product and part, but is organ and mean of intercourse and relation with the Spirit that is without, as well as within, the world and ourselves.

Supposing that God is Spirit and is Personal, and that we are finite spirits and persons, made for personal relation and intercourse with Himself — but only as by evolution, and by growth through use, we acquire or make the spiritual faculties and capacities involved in that interrelation: how then may God be expected to enter spiritually or personally into the world thus making for personal knowledge of and union with Him? We may be sure that He will never begin to be personally known through any mere processes or phenomena of what we call nature, nor of ourselves as products and parts of nature. The kind of knowledge we are speaking of, that not of inference or conjecture but of personal acquaintance, cannot come through things but only through persons. The order and processes of nature, the most stupendous or marvellous of physical phenomena, may reveal something about God;

they cannot reveal Him. Even though the fact of personality might be revealed through a physical act, the face of it, the Person Himself, is not visible in any mere act as such. Nothing whatever that even God can make or do, so long as it is to us a mere thing, so long as we speak of it as "it," as we speak of nature, or order, or beauty, or goodness as "it," can reveal God Himself, but only something about Him — as that, for example, "He makes for righteousness." Not even the certain fact that we ourselves are persons can do more than prove, as I believe it does, that God is personal; the certain knowledge that God is a Person would still be infinitely far off from personally knowing God.

How then shall God make Himself known to us — Himself, as distinguished from any mere effect or even quality or character of Himself? With certain assumptions we may safely begin. If God as personal and ourselves as persons are made for mutual knowledge and association — for essentially personal relation, as every spiritual instinct and aspiration of our nature seems to indicate and demand — then that personal relation is both possible and actual, subject though it must be to the so slowly eliminated limitations of ourselves. For God must not go beyond us, if we are to remain ourselves. If "variations" occur even in the processes and among the products of mere nature, we are prepared to meet them in those of freedom and grace to a far larger extent. The potentiality of spiritual relation to God common to all will be expected to

manifest itself actually with infinite variability among individuals. Life is the great mystery of the universe: we know nothing of it but the fact. At no stage of it can we say more of it than that it is, and least of all at its highest stage, when the finite enters into and becomes one with the infinite, losing itself only to find itself. We can only observe and study it in its highest expressions. With whatever of human limitation, error, and sin, humanity manifests itself in Abraham as the personal friend of God. The exact, scientific, historical amount of truth in that one outstanding instance, we need not now concern ourselves with. The type has passed into the experience of the world, and has become universal and permanent. Whatever may be said of Abraham, the faith of Abraham is here and is ours. Leaving aside for the present the extraordinary degree of revelation, of divine promise and prophecy, that came to the world through Abraham, we find in the ordinary, non-miraculous, exercise of his faith, in that which we may and do share with him, the fact we are in search of. I mean the fact of a personal knowledge of and understanding with God. In Abraham the friend of God we have the type and example of personal relation, communion, and spiritual participation with God, which has reproduced itself in and justified itself to all religious experience since. To him we owe historically the first expression of the fundamental truth of Christianity, the essentially human truth that there is no true holiness, righteousness, or eternal life available or possible for us save through faith in God,

and from that personal union with God which is His gracious presence with and in us through faith. The reality of such a personal union with God is not a matter either of explanation or of scientific proof; it is a matter simply of fact and of spiritual experience. Its verification is only with those who have it and know it, who can say with our Lord, "I speak that I do know, and testify that I have seen." Moreover, the knowledge of God which, our Lord says, is our eternal life is not even to those who have it an immediate and instantaneous demonstration to them of itself. Its truth, not in itself but to us, so much depends upon our own attitude to it, and the consequent quality and degree of our experience of it, that the very variableness and imperfection of our faith keeps it in constant doubt. We must remember that our faith is our part in the matter, and though the gift even of it is from God, yet the use and quality or degree of it cannot but rest with us, who are most uncertain quantities. The truth of faith therefore, or the truth to faith, the truth of God with and in us through faith, cannot rest upon the variable experience of individuals. It must rest upon the true consensus of experience, which can only mean, here as everywhere else, the agreement of the experiences that are the most genuine and the most complete. An experience of the personal knowledge of God which on the whole persists, and gives evidence of the permanent quality and character of persistence, is entitled to the claim of all the external verification we are able to give it; and within ourselves, that claim may always

be indefinitely and unlimitedly confirmed by this fact of experience: that the more fully we are our best selves, and at our best, the more fully are we assured of the truth of the knowledge of God; and, conversely, the more fully we know God, and are assured of it, the nearer we are to our best. On the other hand, the more we drop ourselves in the scale of our best being and experience, the more certainly and strongly does doubt assail the validity of faith and the truth of any real knowledge of God. I explain this simply by the fact that truth is its own best, and only ultimate, proof; and that its best, if not only, direct evidence to us we find in our own highest conformity, or in the conformity of our highest selves, with it.

The point so far reached is this: If there is any personal expression or manifestation of God at all within our world, it can be only in and through a person or persons. That can only mean, for us, through men or a man. God cannot manifest Himself in mere nature, either in the whole or in any particular fact or phenomenon of it. Because Himself means His personality, and there is nowhere in nature as such any "self" or "selfhood" that can manifest or express personality. If there be such a thing as religion, and if religion is a mutual relation of persons, in which alone God's Self is manifested in our world of men, then it is only in men, or in ourselves that we shall find God in the full sense of Himself, as distinguished from His acts. And if not only our natural capacity for knowing God, but our actual knowledge of God is, as

everything else with us, an evolution, then we shall expect in the world first a wide-spread, if not universal, intimation and evidence of the natural instinct and impulse to know God. This natural motion or emotion Godward will appear very unevenly and variedly in individuals and in races; and its most general, rising even to universal, manifestations will come through transcendently great individuals, as well as through gifted races or nations. If, answering to these highest reaches and demands Godward, there shall come supplies of divine response, rising to the height of real revelation and inspiration, not only to the extraordinary individual, but to elect peoples, and to the world, it will be what was to be expected.

Once admit the principle, the probability, or even possibility, of divine Self-manifestations or Self-communications to men, and where shall we stop? Concede that God has in any way breathed or uttered Himself to or in or through any Abraham, and no one can fix a limit to the mode or degree of His Self-revelation or Self-impartment to or in the world of men. Thenceforth we can only wait and see what, as matter of fact, it will please Him to do in the world.

What it has pleased God to do in the way of Self-revelation, manifestation, or communication in the world, is just what Christianity claims to be. The divine communication comes not through stupendous acts or phenomena; God is not in the storm or the earthquake or the fire; the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. The Self-manifestation is where

alone selfhood can be, in a Person and persons. God reveals Himself in a Person in Whom Himself, His personal Self, can be, and be seen; and through Him—in us, in whom alone, as persons, He can in all the world of our experience be or be seen. In all the actual universe, so far as we know or can know it, God is nowhere directly knowable save in the person of Jesus Christ and in ourselves. The divine Word or Son who objectively reveals or expresses Him to us, and the divine Spirit who subjectively communicates or imparts Him in us, are the only possible media of any direct knowledge or experience of God.

I do not at all assert that there was or is no knowledge or life of God outside of historical, organized or institutional, Christianity. We are distinctly told that the Logos or Word of God was in the world always and prior to His taking flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. And no less, that the Spirit of God is wherever the spirit of man is open to receive Him. The Word of God is the utterance of Reason to reason, the Infinite to the finite; just as the Holy Ghost is the breath or inspiration of Spirit in spirit, the Infinite in the finite. And whenever or wherever in the human mind or the human heart there has been any degree of response to, there has been just so much communication of divine intelligence and grace. Religion before and in Christianity has always recognized the truth that God is greater than any given or appointed system of human means, and that His love and grace extend far beyond its pale and are as wide as He Himself. I would deny

the presence and operation of God's Word and Spirit nowhere where in any measure or degree they actually are. What I affirm is only that God — Himself, or personally — is known to or lives in us only through His Word and Spirit, and only in the response of our intelligence and affection to Him through these.

This brings us fairly up to the question of the relation between what we may call the ordinary manifestations of God's Word and Spirit and those extraordinary ones which have been received as divine revelations or inspirations; and again, between even these latter and that complete Self-manifestation of God in Jesus Christ which we receive as the Incarnation of God. God from the beginning of the world has spoken to us in Prophets. In the prophet as distinguished from the ordinary "man of God," or spiritual man, we see no more uniqueness in the communication he brings to us from God, than in his own elevation, reach, or response toward God: He brings us what is truer from God, because he himself is higher, more open and receptive from God. There are differences and degrees among prophets themselves, and so among their prophecies. The difference here, therefore, is one not in kind but in degree. In great measure the question of revelation and inspiration has been determined by reception and consensus. What have acquired the dignity and authority of "Scriptures," New or Old, were practically so decided and accepted. The spirit of man "sets its seal" upon what is the Spirit of God. There is more truth and authority in the common or collective sense



of the human spirit in time and space than in the highest individual reach of the highest men. Even though the highest gifts of God do come to us through the highest men yet we of the ordinary or common body of men are commanded to try the spirits whether they be of God.

If this be true of the high, what shall we say of the Highest? There is certainly a likeness and community of kind between Jesus Christ and all those who before Him, or apart from Him, have manifested God in the world. If this is not so, then in the most vital and essential respects He was not man as we are — which would mean that He was not man at all. We need to know our Lord in His sameness with us, if we would truly interpret His uniqueness or elevation above us.

The issue at the present time is between the proper or essential deity of our Lord's Person and what there is a general disposition to concede as His divinity in a lower sense. This lower divinity, in an unquestionably true sense, may be defined or described somewhat as follows, in terms too of an at least partial truth of the Incarnation: How shall we define the precise end of what we call the Incarnation? Is it not, that God, in a sense or measure, becomes human, becomes man, in order that man, also in a sense or measure, may become divine? The consummation of the predestined, and in the highest sense natural, union and unity of God and man can result only through an entrance of Deity into humanity, and a consequent participation by humanity in somewhat of the nature, character, and

life of Deity. This is not the same as, it is something more than, what is ordinarily meant by the "natural divinity" of man. That man, as such, or by nature, is divine, has certainly a truth in it, if we are to hold with the best philosophy that "finite spirits (ourselves) are not mere products of nature, but children of God"; but that can signify nothing more than a potential divinity, the natural capacity for what is divine, which however can become actual in us only through personal union and unity with Deity. St. Paul expresses the matter when he describes us as having been "predestined of God unto sonship through Jesus Christ unto Himself" — a predestination which must have been grounded in nature, though realized only through personal act and accomplished relation to God. It is this personal and accomplished sonship to God, actually realized for us, and to be realized in us, in Jesus Christ, that I call "in the highest sense" natural: because it expresses, not alone our potential, but our accomplished and completed nature. We are not, and cannot be, (actually) divine in ourselves; we are so, in faith, and shall be so in fact, in Jesus Christ.

Now if Jesus Christ was the great leader, founder, author, finisher of our actual and accomplished destiny, of our perfected sonship to God, of all the divinity of which our finite nature is susceptible, if He was the first-fruits from among us, the first-begotten into the fulness of the divine nature and life — how shall we not say that His divinity was ours, ours in kind, ours only accomplished and completed in degree? It is a

precious truth — never to be surrendered, and ever more and more to be appropriated and realized by us — that all that is humanly Christ or Christ's is eternally and essentially ours. He is our holiness, our righteousness, our life, our new birth from above, our resurrection from the dead. If in any of these acts, characters, or respects, He was not like us, was not actually we, — then how can we be He, and all that is His be ours?

I hold then, with all my heart, the human divinity of our Lord, the divinity that was, essentially and in kind, ours in Him, and is His in us. But does this contradict or deny also the essential personal Deity of our Lord? Assuming that fact, and all the truth of the Incarnation as the Church holds and defines it, what does all that has been said express or affirm? Simply that the Eternal Word of God, in becoming Man, became "very man," as much "one with us" in His humanity, as "one with God" in His deity.

The strength of those who hold the human divinity of our Lord as against His essential deity lies in the fact that we have been too much holding the latter against the former, instead of equally holding both — and both as equally necessary to the full truth and end of the Incarnation.

I see in Jesus Christ the accomplished and complete truth of God in man, and equally the accomplished truth of man in God: neither of these truths would be accomplished or complete without the other. There is the Fact of Life with which we have to do. It is impossible for me, it is impossible for Christianity or

the Church, to lower that fact on either side of its One indivisible Truth. I see myself in Jesus Christ, and equally I see God in Him; I none the less feel my infinite distance from God, in also feeling His infinite nearness to and oneness with me. I finally and forever refuse to see in Jesus Christ, in the One Person of Jesus Christ, only the finite human person myself, or a finite human person like myself, however exalted — and not also the Infinite and Eternal Personal Word and Son of God, fulfilling Himself in humanity and in me.

## XVII

### WHOM ELSE BUT GOD?

THE vital truths of Christianity the most open to speculative question and doubt are the personality of God and the deity of Jesus Christ. The practical response of the human soul to those questions and doubts may be expressed in two utterances taken respectively from the Old and New Testaments. I do not profess to give the immediate or exact interpretation of the passages taken in their connection, but only to apply the words to the expression of the complete truths under consideration.

In reply to all questionings as to the God of Abraham's faith, or the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God and Father whom He professed to know and to reveal, the general answer of the soul of religion is: If not Him, then Whom have we — or What? "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, O Lord? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."

Giving our own widest interpretation to the word "heaven," we may mean by it, primarily, all that is outside of our world of sensible or natural experience, all that is matter of faith and not of sight or science. There is no one who denies the existence of such

“another” world; denial cannot go beyond the impossibility of any knowledge or experience of it, any communication or intercourse with it. All beginning or end, all substance or cause, all ultimate or essential reality belong to it — none of which we may know, but all which we must in some way admit. Religion, the religion of history and of civilization, has written upon that other world, which is the postulate and correlative of this one, its substance, cause, and meaning, the primal ground of all reality, the name of God.

Religion has gone further and transcended the notion that the world of the beyond, or of God, is one of mere speculative inference and of agnostic admission. It claims that, not merely has God not left Himself without witness within and through the world of sense, but that He has not left us without means and capacity for more direct and personal relation and intercourse with Himself in the world of spirit.

Heaven then is not a region, a world, without and beyond the reach of human experience, a sphere of being unseen and unseeable in itself, known only as inference from, as cause and condition of the things that are seen. It is indeed without and above all purely sensible experience: the search for it which we call natural and, at its best, scientific will rightly discover itself agnostic with regard to it. The question, of which the very fact of religion assumes the affirmative, is whether there is not an experience of God and heaven that transcends mere nature and pure science.

If we are to admit God at all as the possible or probable postulate of the things we know — *some* postulate being a necessity of thought, and none other more probable or credible — then it is out of the question to assume that God shall have produced finite spirits capable and desirous of personally knowing Him, and then have remained personally unknowable by or to them. We assume then, with religion, that there are divine as well as human means and possibilities of knowing God. So far from knowledge meaning necessarily adequate or complete, or even at all developed, knowledge, it may begin in absolutely the most elementary way, as a bare potentiality. The infant knows its mother from the moment of birth, by feeling if not by cognition — but by a feeling which is already the beginning of cognition. That human knowledge of God, human experience of and association with God, should have begun in a thoroughly childlike way; that when humanity was a child, it should have spoken as a child, felt as a child, and thought as a child, is just what our evolutionary science or philosophy should teach us to expect.

By heaven then, let us, for the time, mean this much more: not merely the world that, in itself, transcends sense and science; but the world that also to us is knowable, however little it may be known, by faith — meaning by faith all sense or faculty of the divine, of God and the things of God, all potential citizenship in the kingdom of heaven, that may be proper to humanity. Whatever of defect, error, irrational-

ity, or even immorality, might by any stretch of conception or assertion be alleged against the God of the Old Testament, it would be easy to demonstrate that the God of religious history as a whole, of the Old and New Testaments and of the Christian Church is one and the same God. We have only to remember that the God of the Old Testament is only the Old Testament's conception of God, just as the God of the Church today is only the Church's present realization and understanding of God. No one would claim that we know God unto perfection, or that we ought not to be knowing Him more and more perfectly as humanity and the Church grow older and more experienced in spiritual or divine things. However perfectly God was in Jesus Christ, no more was or is actually communicated through Christ to the Church than was or is actually received and possessed by the Church. No one claims that we know either God or Jesus Christ, or the full power and life of the Holy Ghost, unto perfection. All that we do claim is, that the more of the Eternal Spirit of God we have in ourselves, the more we know God in Jesus Christ, and the more we know God in Christ, the more we know of God in Himself.

Who then, or What, is the God of our religious history, or of our historical experience? I take the Bible now for no more than Religion's own Record or History of Itself, its Autobiography. In tracing the spiritual evolution of the conception or knowledge of God we are to remember that it is not the making or shaping



of objective truth or reality that we are engaged or concerned with, but only the story of our own apprehension and understanding of the truth. We need make no further claim for that than that it is based upon a right principle, has on the whole advanced along a right line, and moves toward the right end. The God of Christianity may be a truer God than that of Hebraism, as the true God is truer than as we know and worship Him; but the more or less truth, the relativity, is in us not in the reality. It is the same God all the way through, imperfectly and progressively conceived and known.

Let us glance briefly at the history of the idea or knowledge of God from the beginning of that Record of it to which we attach the name of Scripture and the sacredness of Revelation. Its first essential feature is found in the fact, that in the very terms "Creation" and "Creator" is involved and expressed the truth of a rational, spiritual, we may say personal, origin, meaning, and destination of the world. From the beginning the first word of religion has been that which is still the first article of every Christian creed. The world begins and ends with, is upheld and governed by, is the expression of Reason and Purpose. God is neither identified or confounded with the world, nor on the other hand separated or excluded from it. His Mind, Will, or Word is the immanent and causative principle of it, while in Himself He as actually transcends it as we do our acts or expressions. We are not saying too much but too little when we ascribe to God,

in terms of ourselves, intelligence, affection, will, purpose, character — in a word, personality.

Religious history has from the beginning had most to do with the more distinctively spiritual side or aspect of the divine nature. Its primal quality is Holiness. Holiness may be defined simply as “what God is”; as its correlative and contradictory, sin, is “what is contrary to God.” Holiness is not simply a law; it is a spirit, a disposition, a nature; and sin is not merely transgression of a divine law, it is violation of the divine Spirit, a break with the divine nature and disposition.

The Old Testament had fully attained to and worked out the truth that Virtue, Morality, Righteousness is at once the law of God and the law of life. Righteousness, an obedience to God’s will growing out of oneness with God’s nature and participation in God’s spirit, is that which alone truly makes or exalts either the individual or the nation. The world means God, means Holiness, means Righteousness — and is predestined to end in the New Heavens and the New Earth wherein shall dwell Righteousness.

The Old Testament had already pierced to the heart of the matter and recognized, not only the fact, that God is holy, but the truth of what holiness is. To say that God is holy, is simply to say that God is “what He is.” It may mean, in addition, that God wills and requires in us what He is in Himself; that He conditions the blessings and blessedness of life upon our sharing His spirit and keeping His law: “The right-

eous Lord loveth righteousness." But to say so much is not to say what holiness or righteousness — and, in the true sense, life and blessedness — are. The Old Testament, if it did not attain the full and final manifestation and expression, yet implicitly included the substance of the truth, that God is Love: that holiness, righteousness, life, blessedness, are all rooted and grounded in that Love which is the one perfect bond, and one bond of perfectness, which, as God Himself, is the All in all.

But what most distinctively the history of the Old Testament had to contribute to the growth of religion was the development of the principle of *faith* as the human medium or means of participating in the divine spirit and nature and so sharing the divine activity and life. A function supposes an organ, as also an organ assumes a function. As a matter of creative evolution, or evolutional creation, it makes no difference which was prior and produced the other. The point is the present fact or actuality of personal relationship and intercommunion with God. If religion is or exists at all, and is an integral factor in human life, and if it is a matter between us and God — "God and the soul, the soul and its God" — then God is no mere conjectural inference from known facts, no mere conclusion of speculative reason, but an object of actual experience and direct knowledge. In some way the Eternal Spirit bears witness with our finite spirits of the relationship between them, and the mind and affections, the will and purpose, the actions and

character, the nature and life of God have entrance into and influence and shape those of men.

The organ or function of the divine within the human, our faculty or capacity for God, however defined, we call in general faith. It is a matter of secondary importance in what sense an Abraham walked with God, or talked with God, or was the friend of God. It is enough that he was a developed instance, the type, of an actual spiritual or personal association with and knowledge of God, potential in all men but most highly evolved in him. The claim is simply this; that human experience, human influence, direction, and end, is not only through sense and self, but comes also from without and above and leads and lifts us beyond ourselves and all our mere sensible conditions. That faith in its origins and earliest forms should have been simple and elementary, that its historical traditions and records should have been expressed in terms of the ideas and general knowledge of the time, is too patent a necessity to insist upon. The wonder is not in its childlike expression or in its manifest incompleteness and imperfections. It is rather that underneath these it was in principle and in essence so infallibly and demonstratively, and therefore so persistently and permanently true.

The faith of Abraham — as much the father of those who believe as Aristotle is still master of all who think — is essentially the faith of Jesus Christ, as that is forever the faith of all who truly know God. The story of Abraham, no matter how we criticise, explain,

or interpret it, contains in germ the perfect principle of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. To the developed Christian experience and consciousness, it is absurd to think of human salvation — which means spiritual and moral, or personal, redemption, completion, and destination — by either mere process of nature or mere act of man himself. We are so manifestly in no sense either all ourselves, or capable of becoming so of ourselves; we are so transcendently *of* God, and God is so transcendent a part of ourselves, that salvation in any sense, of redemption, completion, or perfection, is unthinkable without or apart from Him. When we say that to know God is eternal life, we mean that, in the very deepest sense of knowing, we only know ourselves as we know God: God is so much of ourselves, so much ourselves, that we do not know ourselves at all out of or apart from Him.

More than this, and consequent upon this — the faith of Abraham teaches us that, apart from the knowledge and love and grace and obedience, the holiness and righteousness and life of God, we are as inevitably sinners against Him and ourselves; that is, that without faith, which brings us into relation with all these and makes us the living subjects of them, we are as incapable of being what God is and so becoming our true selves — as, without the exercise of right reason and free will, we could rise above mere animals and become truly men.

What historical religion owes to Abraham, or to the type of faith represented by him, is the defining of the

proper personal attitude of man toward God. This attitude has been expressed by the term *dependence*, by which must be understood nothing less than, not only the entire respect in which, but no less the complete extent to which God constitutes actual part of our nature and must enter personally into our lives, in order that we may become all ourselves and attain all our ends. To say that "in Him we live and move and have our being," as the expression of a mere immanent or natural fact, as a declaration of the speculative truth or belief that God is the underlying and containing cause or condition of all that is, is a presupposition of religion. But it is not religion merely as such; it only becomes religion as, through spiritual and moral consciousness, acceptance, and experience, the mere natural fact passes on up and transmutes itself into personal act — that is, as we ourselves in our nature, and not only our nature in us, are personally living and moving, finding, possessing, and exercising our whole being, in God. There is no religion in the mere immanent relation between us and God, nor in any merely speculative or even moral attitude toward that relation. All personal relation whatever is transcendent, not immanent; and only in such personal relation between us and God does religion really consist or exist.

In the story of faith from Abraham to Jesus Christ we may trace the historical evolution of the attitude or relation of man to God through faith. Abraham simply lives in the consciousness of God, believes,

trusts, follows, and obeys God, finds all his good in Him, is the recipient of all blessings from Him. It is an implicit and childlike faith; and in such an integral, undeveloped faith there is the germ and promise of all life and blessedness. But the faith of Abraham and that of Jesus Christ are far apart in the evolutionary development and completeness of an identical principle. In both there is the necessary and inseparable element of the trial, proving, and perfecting of faith; but while the faith of Abraham moves on elementary and temporal lines, the faith of Jesus Christ compasses and accomplishes the entire eternal and divine destiny of man.

What is the common principle of all true faith, but is realized and accomplished fact only in Jesus Christ, is that truth of the proper relation between God and man of which we are in search. Whether from the standpoint of ethics or of religion, no human being — but One — stands even to himself, to the accomplishment of his law and the perfection of his spirit, in the relation or attitude of actual fulfilment. If we are to be judged by any standard that humanity has ever set, or can set itself, there is no man that can be justified by his works — that is to say, by actual obedience to his own law and by actual conformity to the spirit which he enjoins upon himself. If he requires of himself only a perfect manhood or virtue, personal and social — courage, temperance, justice, generosity — there is none that can justify himself by actual standing in these qualities, otherwise than by either

unjustifiably lowering them to a very relative, average or comparative, standard, or else by frankly confessing that these virtues, as virtue in general, are only maxims or ideals to him, expressions of what he would be and very far beyond what he is. Kant is scientifically exact in the assertion that man is the natural subject of an infinite or perfect law. Before such a law he can stand justified even to himself only by an illicit lowering his conception of the law to the obedience he is willing to render it.

What does this mean but that to himself, to the law of his own being and the spirit of his own life, man can stand in no relation and can set up no claim of fulfilment or actuality? Himself is ever, at the best, only a matter of faith and hope to him. He has ever to be justified, not by what he is, but only by what he would be, by the unattained maxim and ideal of his life, by what he believes in, and hopes for, and loves. Justification by faith, properly and scientifically understood, is the principle of all human life, progress, or destiny. We are forever only potentially and prophetically, never actually, ourselves: we shall be that only in the complete possession of our spirits and in the full realization of our law.

It is here that religion comes in as the only solution and completion of ethics. The trouble is that no natural, human, merely moral or ethical law is discoverable that will fit man only as he is. And the reason is that man never *is* only as he is: he never is as brave, or as temperate, or as just, or as generous, or as *any-*



*thing*, as he ought to be. His true being and self is always something beyond what he is. That "always beyond" has to be taken into account in the definition of his law and in the measure and estimate of himself. And there is no limit here, or in present human experience, to the "beyond"; no man on earth ever is as wise or true or right or good or great as he ought to be, and the nearer he is to any of these, the further off he knows himself to be. How then shall we go about constructing an ethics or a law which shall just express what we ought to be and therefore can be *here*? :

The universal natural law of evolution seems to give us a clue to at least the right statement of the facts of the case. Man passes from any previous lower stage into that of reason and freedom, or of personality, by not merely the acquired potentiality, but the actual exercise of his right reason and his free will. In the necessary, and necessarily long, process of progressive reason and freedom, man must become and be a law to himself, must be autonomous. His reason, his freedom, his personality can exist at all, only as his own. Reason and freedom are the only proper subjects of law, and the obedience of these is its only proper correlative. There could be no true law if there were no rational and free obedience, but neither could there be reason or freedom without a law of obedience and without obedience to the law. The function of reason and freedom is obedience to absolute truth and infinite right.

As reason and freedom progress, men more and more

discover at once the absolute obligation and the infinite transcendence of law. There is no end to either truth or righteousness, and there is no compromise with either. Does nature, and our own nature — does God subject us to an “ought” to which there is no corresponding “can”?

Thus it is that the true ethics of humanity drives us to religion. The only law for man is one impossible for him either in or of himself. And the explanation is that there is no such thing as man in or of himself: as a natural fact he lives and moves and has his being only in God. And no less, as a spiritual act or actor, as a rational, free, and moral personality, as son of God, as part and parcel of God Himself, he cannot obey his law, he cannot fulfil his nature, he cannot be himself apart from God. The greatness and the littleness of man are equally incontestable facts. No matter what we are, we have no origin and no destiny but God. Man can propose no other end or purpose to himself than that perfection of truth, of righteousness, of love and goodness, that fulness and completeness of divine life which is God Himself. We cannot think of God but as the Infinite of all that we ourselves ought to be; nor of our own true and right selves otherwise than in terms of what God is. As children of God we can have no other end or destiny than to share His nature and live His life; and we can fix no other limit to that aim and intention than “to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.”

This is, of course, assigning to man an infinite law

and an impossible obedience; but it is based upon the fact that he is partaker of an infinite nature and the subject of an immortal life. What else or less can be meant by the now largely professed faith in the natural divinity of man? Once admit for man the fact of an infinite or endless law, and express obedience to or fulfilment of that law by the term "righteousness" — and in what possible relation can a man stand to his own righteousness but that of faith, hope, and love? What man can feel himself "justified," or lay claim to a righteousness satisfactory and acceptable to either God or himself? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness:" the germ of the whole truth of justification by faith was as truly contained in the attitude of Abraham, as the whole truth itself was perfectly fulfilled and expressed by the act and in the person of Jesus Christ. There is no way of actual righteousness but through identification of ourselves by faith with the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ: which means simply, that there is no way of obeying our law, fulfilling our nature, being ourselves, otherwise than by faith identifying ourselves with God Himself in Christ.

"Whom have we in heaven but Thee, O Lord?" The Psalmist is right in asserting that we have, and can have, none other. The common sense and traditional faith of historical religion has made many mistakes about God, but underneath and through all the God of its faith has been the One only true God, to know Whom is life, and to serve Whom is freedom.

And not only have we none other, but the Psalmist is right too in asserting that we *have* Him. The God whom Abraham believed is the God whom Jesus Christ so perfectly knew as to personally manifest and reveal; it is the God whom, through the Word without us and the Spirit within us, we so know, that He is no longer merely God — but *our* God, substance of our life and matter of ourselves.

## XVIII

### WHAT ELSE BUT CHRIST?

I SAID at the beginning of the last chapter that in two verses of Scripture we may express our final attitude toward all questionings of the essential truths of Christianity, the personality of God and the deity of Jesus Christ. The first was, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee!" — by which simple words I would understand two things: First, that in the world beyond or without sense and self, which no one can deny, and of which no one is independent, there is none else and nought else that we have or can have but only the One God of our historical religion. In the second place, that we *have* Him, by an actual communication and impartation of Himself, and by an actual consciousness and experience of our own, against which no counter evidence or reasoning from without will be of any avail. The least fact of an actual experience is proof against the strongest conclusion of mere speculation; and there is no argument against the essential fact or facts of religion that is not speculative. The lack of experience or evidence in some, no matter how many, will never disprove the fact of it in others, no matter how few. As long as we have God in the world, God

will be in the world of those who have Him. And *they* will not give Him up for the simple reason that the Psalmist gives: "Whom else have they in heaven, in all the 'beyond' of their poor selves and their inchoate conditions or attainments? Whom else have they in the heaven of redemption and completion, and what is there on earth to be desired beside Him?"

Let us now turn to the other words in which we may no less simply and satisfactorily express our reply to the doubts and questionings that assail us on every side. In a turning-point of our Lord's ministry, the high claims and strong assertions which He was beginning to make about Himself caused many of His then numerous disciples to withdraw from Him and give Him up. "Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

"Thou hast the words of eternal life!" I will pass at once to the fuller and fullest import which these words were not long in acquiring. In fact, even at the time, St. Peter goes on to base his valuation of our Lord's words upon faith in His person: "We have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God." It is not alone that our Lord spake words of eternal life — He was the Word of eternal life. That Jesus Christ is personally identified with the Logos or Word of God is a truth wider and higher than I am at present concerned with. That as man, and simply in His humanity, He was God's "word of life," as St. John

designates Him, is that part of the greater truth to which I would limit our immediate attention.

God's words, we have been told, are not "grammatical vocables," they are things and persons. That our Lord was "the word of life" means at the very least, that He was the divine expression to us of what life is, the way of it, the truth of it, and the fact or actuality of it. That the life thus manifested was essentially "our" life, there can be no question. It was manifested that we might know and share it; the whole issue presented to us is that of making it our own, which we could not if it were not ours in kind. It is the primary truth of Christianity that Jesus Christ came into the world to be its life, to be our life — which He could not be, if He were not that which God predestinated us, and our nature constitutes us, to be; short of which, consequently, or other than which, we are, at the very least, not yet ourselves. The life of Christ would not be our life, if it were not, in very truth, that in Himself: if He were only a painted picture and not the full reality of ourselves. The evolutionally completed truth of ourselves which we recognize in Jesus Christ may be described in three stages:

First was the stage of mere nature, which man outgrows and transcends in the very fact or act of becoming man. Whatever he was before, from the moment of becoming finite spirit or person he is no longer mere product or creature of nature. His life becomes his own or subject to himself so soon as the "self" is there to take charge of it and become accountable for it.

The second stage is that of freedom and of law: life is no longer the act of nature in the man, but the act of man in his nature. His nature and himself becomes a law to him, which it is his part in life to realize and fulfil. All law, social, civil, or religious, is but the various expression of that one law. If that were all, what we call ethics or morals would be the sole and sufficient science or art of human life. If the one real requirement of life were that we should fulfil our nature or law and be ourselves, then we should be able by obeying our law to become ourselves. But human nature, by an experience sufficient for all who undertake to live and not merely to speculate about life, knows that it can neither deny its law nor fulfil it, and that if that is all that there is for life, nothing awaits it at the last but failure and confusion. Man can never be released from his law, nor be satisfied with his own obedience to it: which simply means that he will never be himself, in or of himself alone.

Nor was it ever his nature or his destiny to be himself in or of himself and apart from the source and ground and end of his being. He has indeed no nature which he may not ultimately fulfil, nor law which he may not obey, nor self which he may not realize, but the part cannot, in any sphere or plane of its possible being, be independent of the whole, nor the stream of its source. If physically or metaphysically we live and move and have our being in God, it cannot be that rationally and morally, and still less spiritually or in the highest reaches and functions of ourselves, we can live and move



and have our being without God, apart from our personal knowledge of Him and of His personal interest and influence in us.

God shows us in Jesus Christ that man not only may be divine, but is destined by his nature, and by his own act in his nature, to be divine. But it is neither in his mere nature, nor by his mere act in his nature — what the Scriptures call by his works or by the law — that he is or becomes divine, but only by the perfect identification of God with himself and of himself with God. He must be wholly *of* God in order to be wholly himself — his holiness, his righteousness, his life all God's and not his own, but all his own now because God's in him.

Jesus Christ stands to us for a distinct definite third stage in human evolution, which no denial will eliminate, and the essential principles and characteristics of which we cannot overestimate. It is not too much to call it a “new creation,” a “regeneration,” or a “resurrection”: it is in fact all three, and it is just our failure to recognize and realize all this in Jesus Christ that is now the so-called decadence of Christianity. The claim of such a third stage in life does not imply the existence of what has been called, or treated as, a dead line of separation between stage and stage. There is not the difference and distance between Adam and Jesus, the natural and the spiritual, the unregenerate and the regenerate man, that there is between inorganic and organic, or between animal and man. Man is, potentially at least and constitutionally, *ab initio* all three, natural,

moral, and spiritual; and he is actually and completely all three in the ideal end of his evolution. But it is not too much to say, that the essential characteristic of the third stage is not the immanent physical fact that in God we live and move and have our being, but the transcendent spiritual fact that, consciously, freely, personally, we are living, moving, having and exercising our being in God. This, if it means anything, means that God is, at the least, as personally in us as we are in Him for life, that our life is as truly His as His is ours. And this being so, it is not too much to claim that the life which God lives thus personally in a man, and the man lives thus personally in God, is sufficiently different from and superior to the life the man can live in and of himself to be called a regeneration, a new creation, a resurrection. We should not say that either the Word or the Spirit, which too are God, and through which God reveals and imparts Himself to the world, was not in the world prior to their incarnation in Jesus Christ. Nor would we say that God, by His Word and Spirit, is not in any and every man prior to what we call his conversion, and is not even accomplishing, in many, many of the fruits of a real conversion;—but it cannot be denied that God is in us for conversion, to impart to us a life that is not our own, to make of us a new creation, to raise us up out of inevitable death in ourselves into an assurance of completed life in Himself. Conversion is nothing more nor less than such an attitude toward God as is compatible with His accomplishing Himself in us and imparting His life to us.

The essential point in Christianity may, and must, be regarded from opposite points of view, if we would truly comprehend it. Looking at it from the divine side, we say that God has in the person of Jesus Christ accomplished in us and for us all that properly constitutes our salvation; that is to say, all our redemption from sin and death, and all our attainment of holiness and life; that is to say again, all fulfilment of our nature, all realization of our law, all acquisition and achievement of ourselves — in a word, all holiness and righteousness and eternal life. Faith sees, hope foretastes, love possesses and enjoys all this completed fulness of divine grace in Him in whom, as not only First-begotten of God, but also first-born of men, God foresaw and foresees us all. When we look from this side upon human salvation in Jesus Christ, we properly see nothing but God in Him or it — God Manifest, in the flesh indeed, but so Himself manifest, that the flesh is only the all but invisible veil through which we see Him.

But now I contend that all that would be incomprehensible and meaningless, if we did not add the other side to it, and that with exactly equal fulness and unqualifiedness. Looking at human salvation from the human side, we say that humanity in the person of Jesus Christ has — not by any mere fact of His human nature, differencing it from ours; nor yet through any mere fact of His human self, differencing Him from us; but in our actual nature, and wholly as one of us — accomplished for itself, and for us all in it, all that

constitutes our salvation or is expressed by it. It is not truer that salvation is all the work of God in us in Jesus Christ, than it is that it is all the work of man in God, in the person of Jesus Christ. We have as surely to work out our own salvation as God works in us to will and to do the things that make for and constitute our salvation.

All that is true of us in the matter is equally true — only in highest degree — in Jesus Christ; His salvation can be ours, only as ours was His. How our salvation was also — and first, in its perfection and completeness — that of Jesus Christ, may more easily be illustrated than explained. For our present purpose we may take the position assumed and habitually maintained by St. Paul — namely, that salvation is synonymous or identical with righteousness. To be spiritually, morally, and physically or metaphysically, all that we ought to be, would be at once, as an act, righteousness, and, as a fact or condition, salvation. There is nothing truer to ultimate experience than the principle that all truly human, and not merely animal, pleasure, all happiness or blessedness, is an act, and not merely an affection. It is in what we are or do, in fulfilment of ourselves, and in nothing that only comes to us without entering into our own being and doing. Aristotle defines happiness as an energy, by which he means self-realization, the actualizing of all that is potential in us. We make all real happiness or blessedness that we can have, and God Himself can be or do no more in us, personally, than we ourselves are and do in Him.

It is all He, but it must be all we also; what He is in us is measured and limited by what we are in Him.

We speak of Jesus Christ the Righteous, in the language of St. John. And in Him we recognize, with St. Paul, "a righteousness of God" — that is to say, a human righteousness which is, nevertheless, *of* God, which indeed is God in us, God our righteousness. For all that, it was, in the very truest sense, in the only possible true sense, distinctively and essentially a human righteousness, a righteousness wrought by man — only, where alone it can be, in God. The righteousness of Jesus Christ, if it was ours as well as God's, was wrought by us as well as by God in Him; under the human conditions and by the human methods and powers of us all in Him as well as by the presence and power of God in Him. As to the fact that the human righteousness of Christ was actually wrought under all the essential conditions, and subject to all the laws and processes of a truly human righteousness, we must, I repeat, have recourse to illustration rather than to explication or analysis.

Attention has been called to the fact that, much as our Lord insists upon faith in all others, large part, if not the whole, as He makes it in all our personal relation to God, He never speaks of it as describing or expressing His own personal relation to God. This is all very true, and requires not only consideration but explanation at our hands. I attach all the importance to it that it demands. But I do not account for it or value it on the grounds it has been used to estab-

lish. The inference drawn from the above fact when carried out to its full conclusion comes to nothing less than this: That our Lord in His human life was independent of faith for His knowledge of and His general status and relation with God. It is only part of the larger assumption that His entire consciousness was of that immediate and direct kind which belongs to God alone, and not, like ours, mediate and derived. On the contrary, if our Lord was not subject to our own human law of faith, we cannot but realize in all the consequences His utter unlikeness to us in every respect in which His life has significance and value for us. He is not one of us; His experiences, temptations, victory, His death and resurrection are none of ours; His holiness, righteousness, divine life are His alone, between which and anything we can be there is no possible likeness or connection.

How was our Lord tempted in all points like as we are? What was the essence of that temptation which was the distinguishing trait of His earthly condition, and victory over which was the crucial and crowning point of all His earthly achievement and attainment? All His trial was the trial of faith and all His victory the victory of faith. It was the distinctive probation of man, the test and proof of the distinctive principle of human salvation and eternal life. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And "What," asks the Apostle, "is the victory that overcometh the world, but our faith?" There *is* no conquest of or victory over the

world other than human faith. It is absurd to talk of God's victory over the world; the very terms are applicable to man alone, and their applicability to him is of the very essence of his nature, his condition, and his business in the world.

And when we come to analyze our Lord's actual temptations, it is not less plain that they are all directed against faith, and that His victories over them are all victories of faith. The contradictories of faith are doubt, presumption, and self-seeking: to question God, to presume upon or tempt God, to seek ourselves under the guise of serving God, these are the three subtle dangers in surmounting which we overcome the world. The acme of human faith is when, in some supreme moment of new, or renewed, birth from above, literally or metaphorically (but none the less really) the heavens are opened above us, the Spirit descends in sensible form, and we hear the voice of God, "This is my beloved Son." The extreme of temptation is when, in some wilderness of bewilderment, fear, and doubt, our own weakness, the impossibilities of our task, the supremacy of the powers of darkness rise up before us, God seems infinitely far off, and the temptation comes home to us, "If thou art the son of God, command these stones that they be made bread."

Or, when we have, by the grace of God manifested in our faith, mightily overcome that first and deadliest temptation — the temptation to let go our hold upon God and lose our sense of victorious sonship; then, upon some giddy pinnacle of perhaps exalted reaction

from all doubt or distrust of God, the opposite temptation assails us: we expect of God that He will sustain us by miracle, that He will save us without ourselves, or through us save others without the use or necessity on our part of common sense or natural means.

Or again, with all faith, and with all zeal and practical wisdom, there is the temptation to conduct the kingdom of God upon principles and lines of worldly success and enterprise, of selfishness and pride, of earthly advantage and human ambition. There is such a thing as a serving God with observation, success, and applause without, that, within, is a falling down to and worshipping Satan.

The humanness of our Lord's temptations and victories is all their meaning and virtue to us. His earthly life is the triumph of human sonship to God. In the invincible faith and inextinguishable hope of that divine relationship we have the sole and essential principle of eternal life: where these are, God is, and the life in which He is is indestructible. That is the human explanation of the fact with regard to our Lord, that "He could not be holden to death." What constitutes Jesus Christ our High Priest, our consummated Representative in matters relating to God, that is, in the matter of our relation to God, is that He is a "Son perfected for evermore" — perfected too "through sufferings," by the painful but necessary discipline of temptation. Such a sonship, so achieved, is essentially a human one, is in all points ours, save that it is "perfected" — that



is, it is ours as yet only in faith and hope, not yet in attainment or possession.

The perfection of sonship to God is not only in and through conquest of all question or doubt of our relationship and oneness with God through His all-prevailing oneness with us; it requires on our part an actual and practical human obedience in all natural and moral respects: we owe to Him all the natural virtues as well as all the spiritual graces, all fulfilment of nature and realization of ourselves as well as service of Him. In fact the natural and the spiritual in us, the human and the divine, are not separate compartments, distinct elements in our being; each is perfected and complete only in and through the others, and all are one in an organic whole. What we supremely recognize in Jesus Christ is not alone the perfect spiritual, but, realized in it also, the perfect natural and the perfect ethical or moral. If in any way the supernatural in us supersedes or impairs the natural and the moral, it is to the detriment of the wholeness and completeness of a process and a product which are all divine. Our human Lord is human through and through, none the less divine for being human, nor less divine in any part than in all.

The crowning trait of our Lord's human fidelity to God, or to His filial relation, was manifested in His utter refusal to entertain the slightest suggestion to mingle high motives or principles of personal or social conduct with concessions to human expediency or policy. The third temptation in the wilderness was

no doubt the suggestion to link the great cause of the Kingdom of God with expedients or policies which would have given it earthly success and world-wide dominion. Absolute truth, eternal right, perfect love and goodness were His sole principle and policy, alike for Himself, for others, and for God. Any worship of earthly success, efficiency, power, or glory, at the expense of truth, or justice, or love, was a bending the knee to that which is not God; any suggestion to avoid one consequence, to decline one drop of the cup of failure or pain or shame that might come in the train of simple obedience to the perfect law, was, though from the mouth of his nearest and best, to be met only with the "Get thee behind me, Satan!" There is no question that Jesus Christ meant to build His kingdom upon the one, practicable as well as ideal, principle of perfect love, ensuring perfect justice, and realizing perfect truth — that is, the universal reign of God upon earth. I say the perfectly practicable principle of love, for though it may not be practicable in the sense of our being able to establish it yet it is, in the sense that, if it were established, it would, even on this earth, work to perfection for each, for all, and for God. Perfect love would carry with it the natural and complete fulfilment of all law.

It is upon this general line that I would express our concurrence with those original disciples of Jesus who to His enquiry, "Will ye also go away?" could only reply, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Where else shall we find the Life, which is ours, and apart from

which we are not ourselves? There is none other name under heaven, given among men, wherein and whereby we may receive health and salvation.

If, then, the life of Jesus Christ is the life of a perfect human faith, how is it that, in prescribing faith as the condition of life to all others, He never ascribes it to Himself as the source of His own life? The answer to that question we must reserve to another chapter.

## XIX

### THE DEITY AND DIVINITY OF CHRIST

THE question upon which we have come may be answered under a discussion of the two sides of a current controversy. The question is between the mere relative divinity of Jesus and His essential or absolute deity. By the former we understand that what is revealed to us in Jesus Christ is the innate natural divinity of humanity, that divinity actualized in His person to the highest degree, through His own unique human consciousness and realization of it. Because He of all men most perfectly apprehended the fatherhood of God, and so most perfectly fulfilled and manifested the common human sonship of us all to God, therefore in Him supremely God is revealed in His relation to us as Father, and we are revealed to ourselves in our relation to God as His children. This does not necessitate any conception of the person of our Lord as different from ours in kind, but only in degree. He is the divine man, man as he is from heaven and God, and not merely as he is from earth or nature. As such He is only what we all ought to be in fulfilment of our natural derivation from God and destination to God.

As contradistinguished from that view of the essen-

tially human divinity of Jesus, it is not necessary yet to restate the traditional Christian doctrine of His distinctive deity. That will appear in the end; in the mean time I wish to emphasize the fact that, in such controversies, the truth is never to be found in one side to the exclusion of the other. In this particular case, the whole positive contention of those who affirm the essentially human divinity of Jesus is impregnable; it is only their negation of the concurrent truth of His actual deity also that we have to take issue with. I myself have no hesitation in denying any presence or operation of real deity in Jesus Christ as manifested otherwise than in the fact of His accomplished and perfected human divinity. There is no realized actuality of man in God that is not equally the fulfilled actuality and living presence of God in man. God was in Christ for human redemption and completion, that His divine fatherhood should fulfil and satisfy itself in our human sonship, that His eternal purpose and our natural destiny should be accomplished in the one divine-human act in which He "becomes" our Father and we His children. Outside of the effectual accomplishment of this end, I see no proof of or reason for any exploitation of deity in the person of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, there is not one evidence or expression of deity in Jesus that is not resolvable into the direct and necessary action of God in the redemption and completion of humanity, manifested in the self-redeeming and completing activity of humanity in God. The resurrection itself was the perfect grace

of God acting through the perfected faith, love, and obedience of man. It was "our" death to sin and life to God, "our" redemption from sin and death through our resurrection to holiness and life.

Our Lord began His ministry at the age of thirty. God could already say of Him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." That was no recognition and approval of a divine, but manifestly of a human sonship: only what our Lord was in His humanity was subject or matter of divine commendation. His perfect sonship was that of a perfect faith in and relation to God; and yet that very faith in His own sonship was, from the constitution of human nature and the conditions of human life, almost immediately and all through His stay upon earth, the subject of fierce temptation and bitter trial. It was through this very fact that our Lord's life upon earth was one also of the constant, unbroken though not untried, victory of faith; so that He could say at the last, "I have overcome the world." It was given to Him in the moment of the concentrated power of darkness against Himself to "see Satan as lightning fall from heaven"; and to hear the word of God, "Sit Thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

The "authority" with which Jesus spoke and acted, as apparent to us in the record as it was evident to those who saw and heard Him, and causing them to say, more truly than they knew, "Never man spake as this man," was indeed the authority, not only of perfect

truth, but of perfect knowledge of the truth. But it was not in Him, at the time and under the conditions of His humanity, the direct and underived knowledge of Deity: it was not God speaking as God. In the Sermon on the Mount, for example, our Lord speaks with the authority of the truth itself. But it is the truth incarnate, speaking out of the certainty of a perfect human experience and knowledge of it. Not only the truth but God Himself — for they are the same — spoke in Him; but it was God in human intelligence and understanding. It all came up in Jesus, and came forth from Him, as what He Himself had tried, and proved, and knew: "I speak that I do know, and testify that I have seen." It is not that Jesus did not truly, and even divinely, know all He taught; but it was the knowledge of one who, as He Himself expresses it, had "seen" and "heard" and "received" all that He had to communicate or impart. He never spoke or acted or judged "of Himself" but only as God did so through Him. In a word, the truth, and the beauty, and the good to us of all that Jesus was or said or did, lay in the fact that in Him we have a perfect experience and knowledge of "our own," of God in human life and of human life in God.

I would say therefore of the knowledge of God and of Life, manifested by our Lord in His earthly attitude and activity, not that it was the knowledge of one who was independent of the faith by which alone we know God, nor of the hope in which alone, for the most part, we really possess Him — but rather, that it was

the knowledge of one in whom faith is so perfected into sight, and hope is so completed in possession, that he has transcended the means and attained the end, and no longer remembers the way in the perfectness of the arrival. But our Lord never forgets that His way is ours also, and that where He is we too must come, and see as He sees and know as He knows.

Thus in the Beatitudes with which the Sermon on the Mount opens, the force and application are largely lost, unless we see in them the principles and basis for a philosophy of the highest life drawn from the experience of one who had sounded all the depths and attained all the heights, and who knew at first hand all the secret of human blessedness. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The humility and love which He taught He had Himself learned, the rest He promised He had Himself enjoyed: "Learn of Me" — from what you see in me, and not merely from what you hear.

From all this it is apparent that what I see primarily in Jesus Christ is the divinity of our humanity, a divinity potential only in the beginning, and consisting in a natural relation and in a capacity for personal union, but in the end, as in Him, perfected into a personal oneness with God; in Whom, and of ourselves, we now indeed do consciously, freely, and literally "live and move and have our being": now, in Him, "we know even as also we are known," and love as we are loved. This "in Christ" is not only, as I have frequently said,



our supernatural divine predestination, it is no less our natural human destination. In Jesus Christ alone we come to all ourselves.

Full admission, then, is to be given to the contention that, in the Jesus, not only of history, but of spiritual apprehension and experience, the divinity revealed to us is one which we are called fully to share with Him. It is the divinity of our natural generation or sonship from God, realized and actualized by our regeneration or spiritual new birth from God in Jesus Christ; that is to say, by the operation upon us and in us of the divine Word and Spirit manifest and actual in the person and work of our Lord. We see in Him at once the agency and the action, the energy and the process of our own salvation: God's Word speaking life to us, and God's Spirit answering life in us.

The point to which we come now is this: does this full recognition and appreciation of the divine humanity and human divinity of our Lord contradict or preclude the traditional and catholic doctrine of His personal and real deity? As to what that doctrine is, I hold that the true and general Christian consciousness of the Church is identical with the one mind and spirit of the New Testament. I do not hesitate to say that the understanding which cannot recognize unity in the truth of the New Testament and in the faith of the Church is, to say the least, not spiritual enough to discern essential identity of reality underneath the manifold appearances and differences of individual and transient opinion or explanation. In expressing the

mind of the New Testament, as the one thing that does not change, I assume that I shall be representing also the essential consciousness and experience of Christianity.

When we speak of seeing God in the face or in the person of Jesus Christ, we must keep in mind always this principle of faith as contradistinguished from ordinary or natural sight: God is, to the latter, necessarily and universally invisible. "No one hath seen God at any time"; He is visible, therefore, never in Himself, but only in some mean or medium of Himself. He reveals Himself thus, for example, in creation; which, however it may manifest Him — inasmuch as His mind, His will, His power, expressed in it are certainly Himself — is nevertheless not itself He. Now in the very highest and completest sense in which God can be visible, apprehensible, knowable to us, we say that Jesus Christ is "God manifest in the flesh." In what else actual or conceivable — sun, moon, or star, action of matter, or law of things — can God be so visible, what other mean or medium can God have of self-manifestation to us, so capable, or in comparison capable at all, of revealing and expressing Himself to us, as the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ? If we are to find God, see God, know God, meet and deal with God, in prayer or praise, in worship or service — if God and we come together at all or anywhere, where shall it be but where, in the person, in the personal act, in the death and life of Jesus Christ, God and we are at one, and are one?

If it is said that we are to find God in nature, I reply that I find Him truly and perfectly there only in Him in whom I see the end and reason and meaning of nature, the only complete explanation and justification of nature. If I am told that we are to find God in ourselves, I answer that I do not find or know myself except in Jesus Christ, in whom I find myself in finding God. The conclusion of the matter is, that if Jesus Christ is not God to me, there is no God for me at all. God outside of Him is an inference, an abstraction, a form or necessity of thought. God in Him enters into my consciousness, my experience, my life, myself. He is my beginning, the divine Idea in which I was created, or rather which created me; He is my end, the divine predestination or fulfilment for which I was created.

If it be objected that we cannot identify Jesus in this way at once with nature or man and with God, I reply that, in reality, we cannot do anything else. Whatever "outsideness" of things and persons there is in God, is not there for us. In Himself He is invisible and inaccessible. It is only in nature and ourselves that He touches us; it is only in Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God, the Life of nature, the Light of men, that He is personally with us and in us, so that we know as also we are known.

There is no question that our crude systems of explanation have largely obscured and even perverted the truth of the Incarnation. But we should remember, in the first place, that it is divine truth and not human

explication that is catholic or "of faith"; and, in the second place, that human comprehension and elucidation has always to pass through crudeness and is necessarily liable to error on its long way to knowing "even as also we are known." The faith of Christendom has on the whole been organic, and is to be accepted and defended as to its consistent conclusions of fact; but even the grounds upon which, in argument, the truth has often been established and enforced, are still liable to be called in question and to be proved invalid. The truth does not ultimately rest upon its proofs: there is truth that persists through and survives the most manifold inconclusiveness and irrationality of its proofs. The Church has had an unailing instinct and experience of the Incarnation underneath the sometimes absurdities and even immoralities of its explanations and explications of it. The theory of the process of the At-one-ment of God and man in Jesus Christ — objectively for us in Himself, subjectively in us, in ourselves — by the Word of God to us in Him, by the Spirit of God in us through Him — will doubtless be always more or less in controversy, while the fact will remain and the process continue the same.

We have not then to demonstrate the consistency in itself of our holding together the purely human divinity and the distinct and essential deity of our Lord; nor have we to elucidate metaphysically or scientifically the process by which we do so. There are many things which we are compelled to hold together without being able to justify their consistence. What we

have to do is to express as clearly as we can the necessity we are under to hold them together; in doing this, we may safely conclude that the best way is to follow the mind of historic Christianity itself. Christianity has accepted Jesus Christ as the eternal and perfect Logos or Word of God: it has found and seen in Him, not only the highest conceivable, but the highest inherently possible Self-manifestation and communication of God to man. There is both, nothing more of Himself communicable to us, and no mean or medium through which He could more communicate Himself to us, than we have in Jesus Christ. Christianity has been first in recognizing the spiritual as well as rational unity of the universe. According to it, the divine *logos* — by which is meant the eternal reason, meaning, and ground — of all creation, natural and spiritual, is one. If Jesus Christ is the Logos of man, then is He the Logos of all creation — of, what we should now call, all evolution — of which man is final cause and crown. And if He is Logos of these, then He is Logos of God Himself: that is to say, the full account of man is the account of the universe, so far as it has significance for us; and the truth of the universe and of man as its end and crown expresses all the account God can give us of Himself: outside of that is outside of our limit of being or of experience.

When we speak of the reason or meaning or purpose of a thing, the human reason, meaning, or purpose of it, we may be speaking of something abstract or impersonal, or at least of something no longer concrete

and personal. But the reason of the world, the reason of man, the reason of any divine or real creation, can be no past or absent or impersonal reason. Creation proper exists only by and subsists only in the present, conscious and operative, personal Reason and Meaning and Cause of it. If Jesus Christ is the divine reason of man, then is He the divine reason of all, and then He is personal God in all to us.

Would it be possible for Jesus Christ to be, in any real sense, the Divine Man to us, and not be God in that Man to us? Could He be perfectly man in God, if He were not equally and primarily God in man? The trouble is that they who speak most of the natural divinity of man, and who see in Jesus only the highest expression of that divinity, for the most part use the term in a very modified, Aristotelian, sense. Aristotle, speaking of the highest human Good, or Happiness, practically, but politely, waives aside the popular notion that there is anything really divine in it by suggesting its divinity in another sense: "If it is not actually God in us, at any rate it is certainly the divinest of things." The natural reason of man, the undeniable evidences of reason in the universe, bespeak an eternal and universal ground of being which we cannot call less than divine. Whatsoever is in highest conformity with that ideal is worthy of the same title.

The question to be decided is this: Is Jesus Christ the highest reach of man Godward, or is He the perfect movement or action of God manward? My answer

is that He is both; that He could not be one without the other; but that He is primarily and essentially the latter, and only by consequence and in effect the former. We can draw near to God only as God draws near to us and draws us: We love Him because He first loved us: We know only as we are known:

“ Every inmost aspiration is God’s Angel undefiled,  
And in every O, my Father! slumbers deep a  
‘ Here, my Child.’ ”

The too common sense of divinity as applied to our Lord does not practically or really include God at all. It means a human ideal, a quality or character of conformity to our own abstract conception or speculative theory of God. It is hostile to any actual or personal part of God, any real presence and operation of God, in the affairs of the world. I sympathize with this general side of thought to the extent that I admit that God, even in Jesus Christ, manifests Himself, is present and operative, only within and not without, inside and not outside of the world and humanity. It would not be a valid Incarnation, if God in Jesus Christ were present otherwise than in and as all that man is. But then, neither would man be all that he is — but is only in Jesus Christ — if God were not really and personally in Jesus Christ, at-one-ing us with Himself by first at-one-ing Himself with us.

What Christianity wants today is, not an inferential or speculative, not an abstract and ideal, but a personal and real sense of God. We want, not a conception

merely, but an experience and knowledge of the universal true Real Presence: an objective real presence of God, everywhere indeed, but manifestly and supremely in the person of Jesus Christ; an objective real presence of Christ still in the world, and manifestly in His Church and Sacraments; a subjective real presence of God through Christ by His Spirit in us, in the faithful use and exercise of the divinely instituted means of grace. There is nothing more empty and ineffectual than a divinity in which there is no real and effective personal presence of God Himself. If God was not really and personally in Jesus Christ, and if Jesus Christ is not really and personally by His Spirit in us, our Christianity will always merit to be a mockery and a failure. If God is in Christ, and Christ in us, our faith may rest secure.

The question still remains: If Christ's divinity is ours; and if, to be actual and real, it involves in us as in Him the personal presence and operation of God Himself, then where and how shall we draw the distinction in kind between Him and us? Or why draw the distinction at all? Will not the claim for Him be satisfied in the realized divinity of the whole humanity of which He is the head? But in what sense is He Head of humanity? And why and how is humanity realized in and through Him? The conditions of our realization or salvation are as follows: First, we *see* salvation — which can mean nothing else or less than redemption and completion — in Him; only in Him do we know what it is, how it is, and all that it is. The



thing which alone is salvation for us, the process by which alone that salvation is possible for us, we see accomplished and presented as the supreme end and object of our faith, our hope, and above all of our love, desire, and effort. Christ's holiness of spirit, His obedience and righteousness, His death to sin and life to God, are all human facts in Him because they are necessities for us: they are the conditions and the constituents of our salvation: only in them as acts and facts in ourselves are we actually redeemed or completed. There was nothing that Jesus did that we are not to do with Him, or is that we are not to be in Him. Only as we share all His experiences in the flesh, His temptations, conflicts, death, can we share His attainments and realizations in the spirit, His victorious holiness, righteousness, life.

But, in the second place, no human being on earth claims here, as *de facto*, the accomplished work and the completed life of Jesus Christ. They are ours indeed, but they are ours in faith only and in hope, never yet in fact. St. Paul distinctly disclaims having attained, and St. John tells us that, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. In the clear light of the perfected salvation revealed to him in Jesus Christ, no Christian claims to be saved otherwise than in faith and in hope. But faith and hope are both only phases and stages of love. No man merely believes in or hopes for that which he already sees and possesses; but, on the other hand, no man truly believes in or hopes for that which he does not sincerely

care for and supremely desire to possess; that is, which he does not truly love.

In the third place, the gist and essence of Christianity consists, not alone in the reality and perfection of a salvation which is never, in fact or wholly, ours within our present experience; but not less in the certainty of the faith and hope that, nevertheless, they *are* ours. We are saved in Jesus Christ in whom salvation is complete, even though we are not saved in ourselves in whom we know that it is very far from complete. But how could faith thus become to us, practically, sight or knowledge, and hope actual possession, if we did not see in Jesus Christ such a direct Word of God to us — such a word of truth, of promise, and of power and fulfilment, as is sufficient to put reality into our faith and certainty into our hope? Christianity is nothing less than this: God so in Jesus Christ, so incarnate in us in and through Jesus Christ, as to be actually and personally, though humanly and progressively, our Holiness, our Righteousness, and our Life. All this God could never be to us or in us by mere requirement or law, but only through the mutual relation and action of perfect love: a love which, on our part, can begin only in faith and hope, and be perfected only through the divine assurance of faith and certainty of hope.

Jesus Christ is thus completely man — none so much so as He who recapitulates in Himself the whole reason, meaning, and process of humanity. But He who is thus its Logos, its divine Idea and eternal

Destination, its temporal revelation and actual completion, cannot be merely on a par with the other members of humanity. That which is first and last of a series, and which pervades the whole as its ideal principle and causative fulfilment, is more than only one of the series. Let us recall an illustration from Aristotle: We may call Happiness the supreme Good and End, if, as he does, we mean by happiness that which in fact is, in itself, the supreme good. Now in that sense happiness is certainly good, and a good; but it is not one of the goods, outside of and in addition to the others. It is a good which includes all the others. The whole is not only the whole; it is also all the parts, and its perfection involves and includes the perfection of all the parts. Jesus Christ was man, and was a man. But He is also all humanity, and if, in simple faith and hope and love, which will carry with them all the desire and purpose and effort of which we are progressively and increasingly capable, we will put ourselves and be in Him as He is in us — if we will truly apprehend that for which we are apprehended in Christ Jesus; then we shall know in time, though we may never be able to explain in terms, the truth and actuality of an Incarnation which, beginning and ending in Jesus Christ, includes and completes us all.

## XX

### THEOLOGY AND ETHICS

THE following chapter is based upon a recent work, "The Ethics of St. Paul," by Archibald B. D. Alexander, M.A. (Glasgow). With that work as a whole, as the best and completest exposition I know of the ethical teaching and system of St. Paul, I am in entire accord. Now, however, I desire to lay even additional emphasis upon a particular point, which the author himself makes much of.

In the preface a saying is quoted to the not unfamiliar effect, that "for many thinkers St. Paul is as obsolete as Tertullian or Calvin." What of fact is expressed in these words is to be deplored rather than ignored; and I believe that a true accounting for the fact will be the most effectual step toward curing or correcting it. Why is it that — even from the Christian standpoint — St. Paul is largely being abandoned for Christ Himself? The cry "Back to Christ" means for many — "Back from Paul to Christ," from the metaphysics of the Apostle to the simplicity of the Master. Which again means the modern deposition of Paul as true "theological expounder and successor of Jesus." For all this I believe that the theology or doctrinal system of popular Christianity has been itself primarily to

blame, and that St. Paul has suffered more of injustice and misrepresentation at its hands than any of us have come as yet to realize.

What I mean is, that most of the Paulinism against which modern ethical criticism is so effectually directed is that of our successive and traditional doctrinal systems rather than that of the New Testament or of St. Paul himself. As in general I offer Alexander's "Ethics of St. Paul" as a statement of the true ethical Paulinism, so I take Wrede's "Paulus" as a type of the doctrinal Paulinism subjected to present-day criticism.

For myself I have carefully reviewed the "Paulus" in detail, and the little I shall have to say of it is based upon its entire position; but for our present purpose I need not go beyond the single pertinent quotation in the "Ethics of St. Paul." Wrede's thesis is the not mere difference but actual contradiction between the ethical positions of Paul and Jesus. "The preaching of Jesus is direct and imperative: man is to submit his soul to God's will without reserve: the condition of his salvation is obedience: it is simply a matter of personal (human) decision." "The central point with Paul is a divine action — or complex of actions: the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of a divine being — which opens to mankind a salvation prepared for man. He who believes these divine acts can obtain salvation." Running through the entire critique there are two assumptions carried out to their limit, for which — as has been confessed — there is only too much excuse in our traditional theology. The correction of these

assumptions is due to St. Paul, and is, I think, the debt of our present-day thinking.

The first of these assumptions sees in the Christ of St. Paul the act of an entirely and exclusively celestial, superhuman, or divine person. To Wrede the so-called Life in the Flesh, the Redemptive Acts, the Death and Resurrection of Christ were not one whit more human actions than the antecedent Incarnation.

The second assumption is, on the human side, that our relation to the so-called saving acts of Christ is wholly an external one. They are in no sense our acts, but only acts performed *for* us, in which our sole part is to believe and accept. The effect of these two assumptions is, first, to separate Christ utterly from us in His work of active salvation, and then equally to separate us from Christ in our work of merely passive salvation.

On the contrary, we have to assert that the very Incarnation itself was not a one-sidedly and exclusively divine act. We see in it a twofold process in which not only is God at-one-ing Himself with, incarnating Himself in humanity, but coequally humanity is, in the person of Christ, at-one-ing itself with God, in furtherance and fulfilment of its own nature and end incarnating God in itself. It would not be difficult to prove that the divine half of this process is unmeaning and impossible without the human half. No man is in any real sense taken up into God who has not in the process wholly taken God into himself — and done so in the predestined way of his nature, and in the per-

sonal fulfilment of himself. In other words, an actual incarnation is as completely an act of man as of God. Of course even man's part is God's also — Who is All in all; but so is all our life, natural as well as spiritual, His — in Whom we live and move and have our being.

So, more definitely, the redemptive and complete human life of Jesus was not one whit more truly the act of God in His person than it was the act of humanity in His person. God redeems or completes no person except in and through the act of his own self-redemption or completion. Neither can we redeem ourselves without God, nor can God without us — in an act which must be ours as well as His: it is a matter of God in *us*, which can mean nothing else than what *we* are and do and become through Him in us.

It follows that Christ's redemption was through death only because His death — the death He died — was the actual and sole human redemption; and His death could be for us, only as it could be and would be in us and of us. So also His resurrection is ours, only as it can be and is our own resurrection. If we want to understand St. Paul's interpretation of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we must understand them in a sense in which we can and will ourselves enter in and share them. Christ's death and resurrection must be, as well as mean, our own.

St. Paul's theology is just as ethical as, and infinitely more effectually ethical than any mere ethics. His God is essentially an ethical God — rightly defined, from the agnostic standpoint, as "The Power not our-

selves that makes for Righteousness." The law of His nature is the law of His will for us: "The Righteous Lord loveth righteousness." And it is the law of His absolute requirement of us: "He that doeth it shall live by it," and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." That is only the expression of an ontological fact: a being's life is its law, and its law is its life. St. John sees in Jesus Christ God in us for Life; St. Paul sees in Him God in us for Righteousness. But they exchange terms: St. John's life is righteousness — "Jesus Christ the Righteous"; St. Paul's righteousness is life — "Christ Who is our Life." He is either because He is the other. St. John, more implicitly and concretely, sees the result, the whole; St. Paul, more explicitly and analytically, sees the conditions, the process. St. John dwells more upon the Person, St. Paul upon the Work; but, if we look deeply enough beneath their differences, they give us the same Christ.

St. Paul's theme then is righteousness; and if he makes much of the righteousness he preaches as being God's and not our own, he is no less insistent upon the necessity and the fact of its becoming our own. The great question with him is not so much — as with St. John — the *What?* as it is the *How?* of righteousness and life. And his answer to it is in the two words *Grace* and *Faith*: grace covering the entire act or part of God, and faith including all that of man in the divine-human process of our salvation. The insistence of Christianity upon the co-actual Godhead and manhood of Jesus Christ means that we must see in Him



that completion of Grace in Faith which is the only perfected Incarnation of God in man. I repeat that the man in whom God is really and wholly incarnate is only the man who has really and wholly incarnated God in Himself.

No one can deny that in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus Christ is Himself the righteousness and the life which He offers to the world. He is the Way of both and the Truth of both — there as much as in St. John and St. Paul. He was lifted up upon the Cross which alone raiseth us: He became Son of God in power, as we must, through resurrection from the dead. The beatitudes He taught He had Himself learned in the school of human life — the blessedness that comes from the true poverty of spirit, from the right sorrow for all sin and evil, from the meekness of love and humility, from the hunger and thirst for righteousness, from mercy to others, from purity of heart, from the spirit and rôle of the peacemaker. When our Lord commends these graces of spirit, this secret of blessedness, He speaks from Himself: He says, “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” It is impossible to have all of Jesus in ourselves until we have learned to see all of ourselves in Him — sin only excepted. And the sinlessness of Jesus! — it is not that sin was separate from Him in our nature, but that He was self-separated — which means, for us all, God-separated — from it.

And, *how* self-separated? It is not that there was less in Him than in us the natural deficiency and

weakness of mere nature, or nature by itself. Nature was no more in Jesus than in us capable — however it may be susceptible — of holiness, righteousness, or eternal life. Nor was Jesus any more than we sufficient of Himself in our nature, for holiness, righteousness, or life. When He took our nature He took our actual and absolute dependence upon God, for either the fulfilling our nature or the realization of ourselves. Jesus needed as we redemption from the deficiency of nature and from the insufficiency of self; and He found it where only it is to be found — in faith in God. He could say with St. Paul, “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing”: as indeed He did say, “Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.” It is not that there was not absolute good in Jesus, and in His flesh. But He disclaimed it for His flesh and for Himself — as He always did. It is true that He was, unlike St. Paul, unconscious in Himself or in His flesh of any evil thing; but it was because God was so in Him, the grace of God was so perfected through His faith, that sin was excluded. The triumphant human sinlessness or holiness of Jesus was God’s condemnation and annulment of sin in the flesh, and the redemption wrought in and by Him is made ours, not only by our faith in Him, but by the in-working of His all-conquering faith in us.

It is said that, while Jesus makes so much of the necessity of faith in us, He never speaks of it for Himself: the implication being that His direct knowledge is without the intermediary of faith. If so, He was

indeed superhuman beyond any participation of ours in His life upon earth; but the truth is that when He says, "I speak that I do know, and testify that I have seen," He speaks out of a human faith that has become knowledge, as out of a human hope that has attained to actual possession. When He says, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," He means that He has Himself trodden and opened every step of the way by which we become sons through knowing the Father.

The *alpha* of the Gospel, then, is that Jesus Christ is Himself the Holiness, Righteousness, Eternal Life which He gives to the world. He is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," because that in Him is revealed "a righteousness of God from faith unto faith." The righteousness revealed in his own moral perfection, wrought, not in nature alone, nor of Himself alone, but in and by that oneness with God which it is the function of faith not so much to effect as to accept: which grace alone confers. The righteousness of Jesus is the redemption of the world because it is its at-one-ment with God, because it brings humanity into participation with the source and power of its life.

The human attitude toward God which Jesus assumes for Himself — of utter dependence and perfect oneness — He enjoins upon and would communicate to all. He is conscious in Himself of the accomplished relation and character into which that attitude brings Him. In Him there is no otherness from God, and therefore no sin. In all others there is both; but the

ground and reason of His own sinlessness can be the only remedy and cure for the world's sinfulness. If God is the only freedom of the spirit, the only holiness, righteousness, and life of Him who has found these, then is He equally the only redemption and recovery of those who have lost these. In the essential principle, Jesus puts Himself precisely upon the ground of the Publican and the Prodigal: that they were sinners, and He alone was not, were opposite operations and results of a common alternative: to be or not to be in and of God, for conduct and character, is holiness or sin, is life or death. He was human holiness, righteousness, and life — because He sought, not His own will or self, but God's only and God: He did nothing and was nothing of Himself: His Father worked, and He worked: He and His Father were One, and their common work was human redemption and salvation, human righteousness and life. His resurrection and ours in Him, from sin and death, was the end and fruit of that joint task of Deity and Humanity, fulfilled each in the other, and so made One. All we the rest are sinners insomuch and so long as we seek ourselves and not God, or until we find our life in Him and not in ourselves.

Jesus does indeed use the imperative: He warns us that not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass away until all be accomplished: He bids us be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect; because He knows that nothing short of that is our salvation and our life. But He does not (with Wrede) regard human obedience

to and fulfilment of so divine a law as a matter of personal decision with us, and leave it so. Enunciation of their law is separated from actual righteousness and life by a wider chasm than mere human decision.

The doctrinal system of St. Paul, upon which practical Christianity has so largely been built, covers mainly the following subjects: Sin, the Law, Grace, Righteousness through faith, including justification by faith; the part of Jesus Christ in relation to all these, including Incarnation, Death and Resurrection, Redemption and Completion. Upon all these points, underneath the great differences of representation and exposition, there is an actual identity of mind with the Jesus of the Gospels.

Jesus does not teach the sinfulness of human nature as such, nor of human selfhood or personality as such; but He does teach the sinfulness of all men in their nature and in themselves: the fact or possibility of a righteousness in and of these He repudiates as absolutely as St Paul does: sin is as universal and as humanly incurable with the one as with the other. The very term salvation implies a universal condition to be saved from: Our Lord is healer of the sick, sanctifier of the sinful; and He is so because He is God in them, their health, their righteousness, their life.

Human righteousness, with Jesus and with St. Paul alike, is unattainable and non-existent because of the absolute spirituality and divineness of its Law. The law of man is the spirit and the mind and the life of God Himself; how can he acquire these but from God,

or possess them but in God? Jesus and Paul are at one as to the matter or content of the one law of God and man: it is eternal, infinite, perfect Love. To have this is to have everything — but how are we to have this? It is not a mere matter of “personal decision” on our part. We can love God only as He first loves us: we can be in God only as He is first in us: we can only apprehend that for which we have been first ourselves apprehended of God.

A man therefore does not love, is not righteous, by law. The law, as such, only calls upon his part, it does not contribute God’s part, in the common act and life of love and righteousness. He has a part, and the function of the law in calling it out is a very essential one; but in doing so the uttermost reach and benefit of the law is, not to make him righteous, but to reveal to him his own personal incapability of righteousness: by the law is the knowledge of sin, and, with it, the need of God, which is the necessary condition and beginning of religion. This is wholly the mind and attitude of Jesus, told in the language of Paul. What does our Lord Himself say? — “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners:” He knows not the righteous; they are of all men the most repellent to Him, and He to them. The types most acceptable to Him are those whose language is, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” and “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son.”

What then is Grace? It is simply that we are not to bring our goodness to God, but to bring it from Him.

He is not our Father because we are His children; but we are His children because He is our Father. He does not love us because we love Him, but we love Him because He first loved us. In our relations with God we are to come to Him with the nothing that we are, and receive from Him the all things that He is. Rather, as our Lord teaches, God comes to us in His person, with all that He is, and makes it all ours before we have come to Him: Blessed are the poor, for before they ask, before they have known their poverty, already theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Heaven is not ours because we win it; we can win it only as it is ours and in us.

The attitude of the Publican, commended of our Lord, in contrast with that of the righteous Pharisee, as the proper and acceptable posture of man toward God, is not one of indifference to or independence of righteousness. On the contrary, it is the absolute and the sole condition of righteousness; "Blessed are the poor: for theirs, and theirs only, is that kingdom of God and of heaven," which is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other;" God's justifications are based upon reason, upon essential grounds and conditions. What He recognizes in the Publican is the very principle and condition of all human righteousness, knowledge of sin, or repentance, and dependence upon God, or faith. We have here, *in toto*, St. Paul's gospel: Righteousness not by law but by grace, not of ourselves but of God.

We have in the typical instance of the Publican

a confusion of two distinct though perfectly related questions. One is as to the immediate or present status of the sinner upon repentance and faith; the other is the ultimate result in the sinner of his repentance and faith. To say that God justified the Publican expresses all of principle that is involved in the later doctrine or justification by faith. It means that God accepts in us that elementary condition and beginning of all righteousness which He sees in our initial faith, as our sole part in the then relations between us. The earthly father takes his new-born son for what he is. The status between them is not to be determined by what the son shall be; on the contrary, what the son shall be ought in great measure to be determined by the existing status between them. We are in God for righteousness and life; but that can never be unless we are first taken into God without righteousness and life. We shall never be in Him by having these; we shall certainly have these by being in Him.

Justification has been set apart to mean our acceptance in God for righteousness upon the sole condition of faith, as the mean of the reception in us of God's righteousness and life. That initial status of grace is never to be separated from its converse truth: if we are in God without righteousness, it is only that we may be in Him for righteousness: our emptiness is for our fulness. Justification by faith as expressive of a present or initial status is only a way to the true end of actual righteousness through faith. It is through the felt want of righteousness, through hunger and



thirst for it, through faith in it in God, through hope of it in ourselves, through persevering and prevailing love of it as God has given it to us, that we, from faith to faith, from grace to grace, shall attain unto the glory which is righteousness accomplished and life attained.

The chief seeming differences between Jesus and St. Paul are not differences at all, but only harmonies too deep for shallow experiences. St. Paul never repeats Jesus' teachings or recounts His acts; he has gone behind these, and is doing what we are still trying to do, interpret Himself. He says, as we do, that Jesus is Himself what He teaches and does. He is God's love, God's grace, God's fellowship with us Incarnate: therefore He is also our holiness, our righteousness, our life. The divine righteousness revealed in Him for us and as ours is the accomplished fact of God and man at one by grace through faith, and one in the power of grace and the holy obedience of faith.

Without the Incarnation what follows is impossible; with it what follows is included and predestined. But what follows is not only an act of God in us, it is wholly also an act of us in God: and that act is the one thing on our part that effects our oneness with God and constitutes our redemption and salvation, our resurrection and eternal life. That which is at once the gift of God and the act of man in Jesus Christ is expressed by our Lord Himself as "repentance and remission of sin, to be preached in His name unto all the nations." Repentance is nothing else than that attitude towards sin which, when carried to its limit or made complete, is

the death to it which Jesus Christ Himself died. The remission of it is not only God's but also man's own effectual putting it away, by its death in him and his death to it. On the other hand, faith is that attitude and disposition towards God which, carried to its limit or made perfect, is oneness with Himself and participation in His holiness, righteousness, and life; and which as such is resurrection from the sin and death to which we are subject in ourselves alone.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the natural and necessary consummation of the miracle of His life. They but reveal Him to us as the Jehovah-Tsidhkenu, the Lord our Righteousness, Who is the end of all religion from the beginning, and the predestination of humanity in God.









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