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RELIGION AS LIFE

HENRY CHURCHILL KING

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RELIGION AS LIFE

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RELIGION AS LIFE

BY

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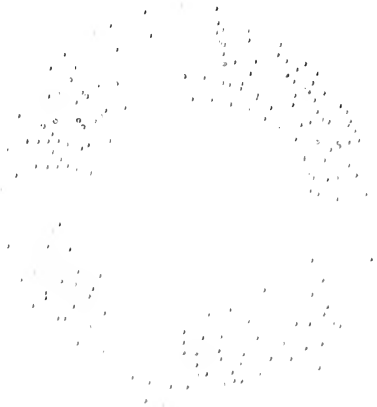

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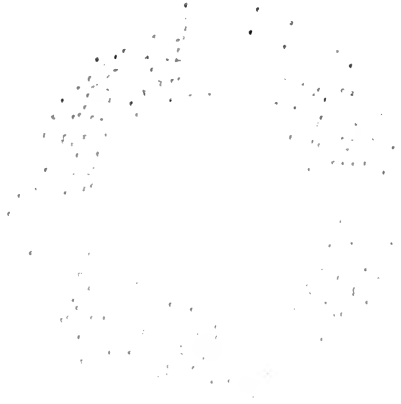

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I

THE CHOICE OF LIFE

The Peril of the Lesser Good

If one is to do justice to the breadth of human nature, he may not forget that there are always two questions to be asked concerning any of the phenomena of the world and of life: How did it come to be? What does it mean? — the question of process, of mechanical explanation, and the question of meaning, of ideal interpretation. And men cannot help asking the second question as well as the first. As Watts says, endeavoring to put into words the constant thought back of all his own work as an artist: "As long as humanity is humanity, man will yearn to ascend the heights that human footsteps may not tread, and will long to lift the veil that shrouds the enigma of being; and he will most prize the echo of this longing in even the incoherent expression of literature,

music, and art." The ideal interests are here all at one; for they all seek to find meaning in life, and they all voice an underlying faith, which, it may be suspected, finds its natural and inevitable culmination and justification in religion. One probably has nowhere fathomed the mysterious power of beauty, for example, until he finds in it, as Lotze has suggested, the prophecy and promise of final and universal harmony — an essentially religious conviction.

The very conception of religion as life, implies that religious faith is thus basic, and has the power everywhere to give meaning and value to life; that it stands in every realm for the largest, richest, most rewarding life. Even when religion is so conceived, the question that first arises is this: Does one really want life, the largest life, though it appear in the guise of difficulty and self-denial? Does one decisively choose it with his whole being? — the question of the choice of life. The second question then follows: Can one get some clear view of the method of life, and see here the essential unity of religion with all life, in the double demand for inner integrity

and fellowship? That method, it will be found, inevitably includes an honest facing of the facts of life, a thoughtful recognition of the outstanding realities of the spiritual world. Just because the method of life includes, also, as everywhere requisite, fellowship, men are driven to find the great sources of life, short of God himself, in the most rewarding personalities of the moral and religious sphere, and so to give special place to the great line of prophetic seers of the spiritual, culminating in Jesus. But the whole range of the moral and religious life is in the realm of personal relations, and one has not fully learned the lesson of the life of Jesus, nor squarely faced the facts of life, until he has confronted the enemies of life arising out of these personal relations. This darker side cannot be honestly ignored. But it is the characteristic message of the life of Jesus, that the enemies of life cannot finally defeat the true soul in its quest for the largest life either for itself or for others. In clear vision of the darker aspect of life, therefore, religion may still conceive the great outstanding personalities and realities of the spiritual realm as at least a partial

revelation of the will of God, and must find the essence of its life in harmony with that will of God. For religion must ultimately mean some real sharing in the life of God himself. It is such a survey of religion as life, that is here undertaken.

Our age is often called an irreligious— an unideal — age. The truth of the statement may well be doubted. The age is a realistic age, in the sense that it wants to know that everywhere it is dealing with reality — that it is not deceiving itself with even the fondest of delusions. And from that test religion has no right to withdraw itself. But that the age is averse to religious life and faith where they have the ring of reality, it would be difficult indeed to show. Men cannot so easily escape their own natures and the grip of their own birthright.

The seeming declension in religious faith is probably due in part to the waning power of authority in the religious sphere, because of the increasing demand in this realm, as in all others, for the verification of experience. But this is, in truth, an evidence of greater not less earnestness in the

pursuit of religion. For it is a refusal to substitute the mere say-so of some other for living experience on one's own part. In that result every believer in the insight of the teaching of Jesus may rejoice; for Jesus sought nothing else so persistently as this utter reality in the spiritual life. He has indeed no plea to make for any religion that does not mean the experience of a larger, richer life. He deliberately courts that test: "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." He has no criticism of men's thirst for life. He only has pity that they seek to satisfy the thirst at such unpromising springs. He could not have objected to the line of argument of a great German theologian, that the truth of religion is best shown by the fact that it alone can quite satisfy men's "claim on life." That must seem to him the most obvious inference from his own initial faith in the Father. Life — large and rich and free, increasing, inexhaustible life, because sharing in God's own life! This, religion must be able to offer, if it is to abide. For man cannot give up the quest for life. Can religion still

make good this offer even for the modern man?

All forms of frivolity and passion, even, think of themselves as seeking life. The men who yield to them say that they want to "see life"; that they want to "live while they live." And there is a certain unconscious logic in their claim; for they all seek some kind of emotional excitement. Now it is quite true that one cannot get the tang of reality in existence without some stirring of emotion. None of us has any right to forget this close and inevitable connection of the sense of reality with feeling. The claim of feeling, therefore, cannot be ignored by any interest or cause, however ideal. Unless religion, then, has power to awaken such faith and hope and love as insure profounder depths of feeling, as are able to make all the natural joys of men instinct with far richer meaning, and as can give permanent satisfaction to the greatest in us, it must fail.

The momentous building up of the sentiment of romantic love, in the history of western civilization, is a good illustration of the way in which ideal interests have

this power immensely to deepen and heighten natural feeling. And romantic love cannot come to its supreme height without full religious faith, as many of our best love songs quite unconsciously testify. Now exactly the kind of transformation that the ideal interests have brought about in the natural attraction of the sexes, religion believes that it can bring into every part of life. And it blames the devotee of frivolity and passion, because at every point he prefers the shallow and fragmentary and steadily lessening and self-centered life, to the profounder and larger and steadily growing and all-embracing life open to him. It sees, therefore, how inevitable was the yearning protest which the old Evangelist put into the mouth of Christ: "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." The thing that so stirs the soul of Jesus is, that men are so constantly striving to satisfy the quenchless thirst for life, of natures capable of endless development, with at best petty goods. So Browning in his *Easter Day* sees that no severer judgment could be pronounced upon a man, willingly

falling below the best, than that he should be permanently shut up to the goals he himself has chosen:

> The austere voice returned, —
> 'So soon made happy? Hadst thou learned
> What God accounteth happiness,
> Thou wouldst not find it hard to guess
> What hell may be his punishment
> For those who doubt if God invent
> Better than they. Let such men rest
> Content with what they judged the best.
> Let the unjust usurp at will!
> The filthy shall be filthy still!
> Miser, there waits the gold for thee!
> Hater, indulge thine enmity!
> And thou, whose heaven self-ordained
> Was, to enjoy earth unrestrained,
> Do it!'

Now the gradual building up, in all progressive civilizations, of some kind of ideal interests, means that it is the experience of the race that men cannot continuously get more life without deepening life. It is a necessarily narrow life that stays on a mere sense level. The choice of the larger life must mean, therefore, just such steady deepening of life. The very existence, indeed, of art, of science, of philosophy,

of ethics, of sociology, and of religion is evidence that man is more than a creature of the senses; that it belongs to his very nature to set aims that take him beyond the sense world; that each of these achievements is an ideal which man's own nature sets before him for accomplishment — is, in Münsterberg's language, "a child of duties." From the point of view of religion, therefore, that believes in God as Creator of man, body and soul, these ideals are all at least a partial revelation of the will of God for man; and religion may be said thus to take up into itself all the other ideals; and, alone of all the ideals, to give man's life the permanent meaning of relation to the Eternal. The religious life, therefore, should give the greatest deepening of life possible.

Our own time, with all its prodigious material and intellectual achievements and its unequaled material development, itself seems more and more to be awaking to the fact that no one nor all of these are sufficient of themselves to give meaning and value to life. The world never had such enormous resources of power and

wealth and knowledge, never so great means of all kinds. We are, indeed, in danger of finding our lives swamped by the very magnitude of our possessions. Just because our resources are so prodigious, there is the indispensable need for men of spiritual insight and vision and passion, men of assured relation to God, and therefore men of dynamic power to guide these stupendous lower forces to ideal ends. Thoughtful men, thus, seem constrained increasingly to ask themselves whether the age is to be great enough to be able to make these stupendous resources, means indeed. Eucken's protest, making just now so wide an appeal, is surely symptomatic of the time. "To every thinking man," he says, "the great alternative presents itself, the Either-Or. Either there is something other and higher than this purely humanistic culture, or life ceases to have any meaning or value." "Not suffering," he says elsewhere, "but spiritual destitution is man's worst enemy." But spiritual destitution cannot be relieved from without. It requires, indispensably, inner spiritual activity, growing insight, decision

and choice on one's own part. Any truly spiritual view of life must therefore put, as Eucken does, this free choosing and decision in the foreground. Even the intellectual inheritance of the achievements of modern science cannot come to a man without earnest labor and appropriation on his own part. Still less can the meaning of the spiritual life be his without active personal appropriation.

It is not by accident, therefore, that one is led to put at the very beginning of any thoroughgoing consideration of religion as life, the choice of life, — and that choice as made with all ethical earnestness and decision. We may well raise the question whether our time, in the reaction from abuse of mere appeals to the will — has not been ignoring quite too much the strategic place that definite and avowed decision must have in the development of the spiritual life. Dr. Bushnell's account of his own experience may suggest how vitally important such spiritual decisions may be. "A kind of leaden aspect overhangs the world. Till, finally, pacing his chamber some day, there comes up suddenly the question,

'Is there then no truth that I do believe?' 'Yes, there is this one, now that I think of it; there is a distinction of right and wrong that I never doubted, and I see not how I can; I am even quite sure of it.' Then forthwith starts up the question, 'Have I then ever taken the principle of right for my law? I have done right things as men speak; have I ever thrown my life out on the principle to become all it requires of me?' 'No, I have not, consciously, I have not. Ah! then, here is something for me to do! No matter what becomes of my questions — nothing ought to become of them, if I cannot take a first principle, so inevitably true, and live in it.' The very suggestion seems to be a kind of revelation. It is even a relief to feel the conviction it brings. 'Here, then,' he says, 'will I begin.'" That striking scene in the history of Israel, in the Valley of Shechem, with Israel divided into the two groups on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, to respond, the one to the curses and the other to the blessings, between which they are to choose, sets forth dramatically the perpetual challenge to humanity. For life is

constantly saying, as there: "I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore choose life that thou mayest live." No man chooses a curse as such. He chooses it under the guise of some kind of good, or as at least accompanied by a good that seems to him to make up for the curse. Man's peril is always, therefore, that of the lesser good. And it is this peril that demands so insistently the choice of life.

There is a section of the teaching of Jesus, in a single chapter in Mark (Mark 10), that deals with exactly this peril of the lesser good in three of the common realms of life: the realms of wealth, of love, and of ambition. These teachings may well challenge our attention when we are thinking of what it really means to choose life.

It is a characteristically compact and vivid picture which Mark gives of the young man who runs to Jesus, as he is going out into the highway, throws himself on his knees before him, out of the consciousness of a clean and upright life voices his further aspiration and wins from Jesus his look of love, only to find himself unable to respond

to Christ's full call to abandon his wealth and follow him, and goes away with fallen countenance, sorrowful.

The ordinary reader of the Gospel, it may be suspected, would underwrite this incident of the rich young ruler with the subtitle, "A Hard Test." Dante, with keener insight, calls it "The Great Refusal." For it is exactly this common inability to see that the failure to meet the hard test is a great refusal of life, that makes life's tragedy. *We* see the hardness of the test; Jesus and Dante see the greatness of the life refused. For here, in this New Testament incident, is the appeal of eager, beautiful, upright, aspiring youth. Jesus loves him and covets for him a far greater destiny than he has yet achieved — high service in his kingdom. But the young man's riches are too strong for his aspiration. He cannot rise to the height of Jesus' call. Reluctantly, indeed, but surely he puts the great opportunity aside — for it was the proffer of life in the guise of self-denial. Not, thus, in desperate wickedness, but in simple peril of the lower good, he makes "the great refusal."

The story is a perpetual parable of human struggle; for life's supreme test and challenge are never — as men so commonly think — Can you withstand the evil? but rather, Can you rise superior to the lower goods? The constant struggle is between aspiration, on the one hand, and one's already "great possessions," on the other. Everywhere life brings the challenge of the call to denial of the lower; the soul responds either with the great commitment or "the great refusal."

This figure of the rich young ruler is one fit to stir any man to serious thought. For his is no sordid soul. He is still warmly touched with the eager aspiration of youth. The spell of the "great possessions," it is true, is already on him, as Christ clearly sees; but it has not yet been fully wrought; he is no "swine of Circe" who does not longer care. And one can hardly help imagining a different issue of this conversation with Christ. Suppose the rich young ruler had risen to the occasion and the result were changed?

The test which Jesus applies seems very severe to us, with our modern love of riches,

and it is hard enough. But his "great possessions" were all too evidently coming to own him, rather than he to own them; and they were sure to corrode his life. The question which Jesus really brought to him that day on the highway was, Have you the nerve, the grit, the simple, plain, high wisdom to cut off this deeply corroding element that is eating into your very life?

It seems a hard test. But suppose he had met Christ's challenge and followed him positively, to play such a part as Paul played? Suppose he had been clear-sighted and strong-souled enough to enter into his supreme opportunity? Who would have pitied him? Would he have needed any one's pity, and not rather had deep admiration and the envy of all high souls, and given heroic inspiration, and have become one of the great life-giving forces of the world? Something like that he had before him. Something like that Jesus offered him that day in the guise of his severe test. In soberest reason, were his "great possessions" worth the price he paid? Did he not make "the great refusal"?

It is a hard test? Yes, but how great

the opportunity! For the seeming hard demand — the call for sacrifice in the universe of God — is always a call, could we but believe it, to larger life, to wider outlook, to more permanent service. And life's constant question is, Are you equal to the call? Can you rise to it? Can you meet the challenge of your best possibility? Or must you be "let off"? Can you so feel the appeal of the greater glory as to loosen the hold of the lower on you? Can you escape from the thralldom of the inferior good into life? We have great aspirations and occasional visions; have we the determination to follow them to the end, or, with fallen countenance and sorrowful spirit, must we go away from the uplands of life, enchained by our "great possessions"?

It is a hard test? Yes, but were the "great possessions" so sure a blessing? Had they so much to give? Had they rather no heavy price which they were certain to demand, and were they to take it out of the young man's life? It is this aspect of the matter that is so forced on Christ's mind as, in words of the most

solemn warning, he comments on the going away of the rich young ruler.

Three times, in unmistakable terms, Jesus asserts his sense of the tremendous peril of wealth. "How hardly," he says to his disciples, "shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." And this solemn warning of Jesus we are ready to treat almost as a joke. We are "willing," our newspaper paragraphers say, " to run the risks of wealth." But let no man think it a trifling risk, or one lightly to be entered on. For the danger of the rich young ruler, we may be pretty certain, is one of the greatest dangers that besets our own people to-day, nationally and individually. When one recalls the revelations of the recent years, beginning with the insurance investigations, and remembers the shameless willingness disclosed everywhere to sacrifice public interests to private gain, he cannot doubt the magnitude of the peril to the nation's life.

It was one of the most thoughtful of American editors that wrote of this phase of our national history: "That we are passing through a great moral crisis be-

comes every day more clear. That crisis has come not a day too soon, if the soul of the country is to be kept alive; it cannot be too severe in its arraignment of baseness, too thorough in the punishment it inflicts, too drastic in the methods of cleansing and reinvigoration which it adopts. There has never been a more shocking story of dishonor told among any people, nor one which makes the reader or hearer more indignant or ashamed. In whatever direction the light searches, instantly mean little men of great financial position come into startling light, and are seen managing affairs with great financial ability but with the moral ideas of semi-savages. An unendurable moral vulgarity stamps them as men of large brains and little souls; capable of great material achievements, but with rudimentary spiritual development. On this group of betrayers of trusts the great mass of Americans looked first with incredulity, then with astonishment, and lastly with deepening indignation. Sound at heart, but dull with prosperity, and overtaken by a kind of moral sleeping sickness, the Nation opens its eyes, looks about

with dismay, and gathers its forces for a passionate fight against the vices that have brought shame and disaster to it."

And since those words were written, how heavy has been the price paid in dishonor for simple greed for gold by a long list of men, who had been held in public esteem — some of them high in religious councils. It is a list to make a man sick at heart. Was the money worth the price? How surely this passionate pursuit of wealth becomes soul-absorbing, blinding the eyes, paralyzing the higher powers, blunting the sense of honor, a veritable disease and insanity, without compensating reward and without worthy goal! And how almost certainly must children be sacrificed in the process! Unless wealth is subdued by higher ends as only a subordinate good, unless it is made means in very truth, it insures not enlarging but steadily lessening life; we have been defeated by the peril of the lower attainment.

Our whole age, as we have seen, has peculiar dangers at just this point, because of the very magnitude of its resources. Prodigious material prosperity is with us

— and it is a good beyond doubt — prodigious enough to blind and smother all. It is not strange that we are a little dizzy-headed. But its challenge is unmistakable. We cannot evade it. Can we stand it? Or must we be drowned by it? Can we save our lives? Are we great enough, as a nation, to make the material, means only, to use it for high service? If so, only ideals and enterprises great enough and spiritual enough to dominate these gigantic material interests can save us here. We have no choice.

But the peril of the lesser good is not to be found in the pursuit of wealth alone. And in his record of the teaching of Jesus, Mark puts side by side with the perils of wealth, the perils of a false love, and the perils of a false ambition. For "the great refusal" is nowhere refusal to refuse something else, refusal to cut off, refusal to give up something of life — as the call of religion is so commonly conceived. Rather, it is "the great refusal" just because it is refusal of the highest good, the refusal of life, of service, of the greater glory. Subordinating the lower good is no end in

itself; it is only the means to making the highest dominant. The method of Jesus, therefore, is nowhere a merely negative cutting off, but the method of life, of growth, of positive heroic achievement.

In his teaching concerning divorce, thus, Jesus seeks to raise the whole conception of marriage to a higher plane. To him, marriage meant infinitely more than to the Pharisees, with their loose ideas of divorce; more than to us Americans, with our shameful record here, also, of practical unblushing trading in husbands and wives. I do not forget that this record of divorce bears witness at many points to a deepening sense of the respect due to a person. But still, I cannot doubt that we need, as a nation, to hear and to heed Charles Wagner's protest, — "All of us have need to regain respect for love"; and Tennyson's indignant witness, — "I would pluck my hand from a man even if he were my greatest hero, or dearest friend, if he wronged a woman or told her a lie"; and Ruskin's clear judgment, — "Every virtue of the higher phases of manly character begins in this: in truth and modesty before

the face of all maidens; in truth and pity or truth and reverence to all womanhood."

Now it is quite true that any pleasurable emotion at the height of its intensity does seem for the moment to be its own excuse for being. It may often honestly seem justified forthwith, and be inclined to scout all other considerations in the powerful sweep of its passion. It can then say with mistaken pride, in the words of a poet of the day:

Be thine that white engendered spark,
And nought can feed it, nought can make it less.
Virtue and vice, nobility and shame
Are rags that drop away, while you sweep on
Stripped as a flame, with arms about your star.

No doubt there is a natural reaction of the soul, eager to test the full meaning of life, against the tame limitations of the conventional and prudential, that may often make one feel like saying with Walt Whitman:

Oh for something pernicious and dread,
Something far away from a puny and pious life,
Something unproved, something in a trance,
Something escaped from the anchorage and driving free.

But nevertheless, let not one lose the distinction which belongs to him as man, of being able to think, to discriminate, to exercise his kingly power of self-control, and not be swept off his feet in any realm by mere tempest of feeling. This is indeed just what should distinguish the civilized man from the barbarian. The thoughtful man is likely to have a sense of disgust when the novelists begin to talk about the "red blood" of the hero, just when he is most disgracing himself; as though it did not require far more grit to conquer passion than to yield to it.

Now, what are this "virtue and vice," this "nobility and shame," that are to "drop away like rags" as one yields to the onrush of passion? They stand, it is well simply to remember, for the deepest discriminations that the human race in its development has been able to make. They concern the eternal loyalties upon which all conceivable decent society must be based. Love cannot be this heedless, utterly selfish, reckless, treacherous, and spoiled thing here represented, and be love at all, or remain love at its best, even for one, though that one be called a "star."

If we are to come to the largest life in this realm, we need to come up to the high call of Christ's thought of marriage. And when he thought of marriage, he thought of an unselfish, reverent love, that made it forever impossible for a man to treat a wife as a thing, as property to be kept or bartered at will. He thought of a deep and sacred and lasting community of soul with soul. He thought of marriage as no mere compact of two individuals, dissoluble on any caprice, but as a solemn covenant with society and with God, fraught with interests precious beyond all estimate. And so he must say: "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Jesus does not chide men that they love too much, but that they love too little. His appeal is an appeal to rise to the possibilities of the most intimate of human relationships. He sees in marriage, physically based though it is, the possibility of a high friendship that can steadily transcend the physical and last beyond it. In effect he says: "Do not throw away the best and most sacred thing in your life for a passing desire. Do not make impossible the sweetest and

highest, that shall grow with your growth, deepening as your life deepens, a love beyond all aging, of eternal quality, knit up indissolubly with all that is best in you." It is such a love that Mrs. Browning has worthily conceived, and that one may dare to place beside the other conception of love as ineffably more significant and worthy and satisfying, a love of which a man has no need to be ashamed in any hour.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways,
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints — I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! — and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Here, too, is to be found the peril of the lower attainment — of "the great refusal," that cannot discern under the demand for seeming self-denial the call to larger life.

How desperately have men sought here what they called freedom and found only slavery, and fought as slavery the highest freedom.

And ambition, too, has its peril of the lower attainment. The two disciples who came seeking for themselves the chief places in Christ's kingdom, are met with his sobering, chilling challenge: "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" You are very ambitious. Is your ambition great enough? Do you really aspire to sacrificial service? They make, it is true, the highest prayer: "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy glory." But they do not highly mean it. For they have no desire to share Christ's real glory.

It is the picture of all ambitious self-seeking, always misconceiving true greatness. We find it hard to rid ourselves of the notion that glory lies in conspicuousness, and is measured by large financial returns. We easily persuade ourselves that the more conspicuous and the better rewarded place

is the place of greater service. And yet so judging, one may have given up the larger service and taken the poorer opportunity. He may have given up his own highest growth and consented to do the cheaper kind of work, thinner, less quickening, dealing more with externals and organization, and less with personal life, serving men in less vital ways, and giving less of his own best life. For the peril of ambition is like the peril of riches, everywhere challenging you with the question in the midst of it, Can you save your life? Can you keep deep the zest of work? Can you keep unselfish love in yourself and others? Can you keep taking in great draughts of life, knowing how to "take time to be alone" and to "be silent unto God"?

The peril of the driven, conspicuous life is great, for it is likely to find all too little leisure or desire to think, or to pray, or to live deeply, — to make sure that it has a worthy self to give. Can you stand it? Can you maintain in it the highest service? If God lays it on you, you must bow under it, and go humbly forward in deep sense of the need of God. But "seekest thou

great things for thyself? Seek them not." Such places may give great opportunity, in the chance to bring about the control of great ideals in wider spheres. But they have this opportunity only for the man who can withstand the "devastator of the day" — only for the man who is making steady, earnest fight for time to grow, to be his best self. For the only deliverance from the glamour and corrosive power of the selfish ambition is the still mightier power of the glory of unselfish ambitions, wide as the kingdom of God. And the peril here, too, to be feared above all, is "the great refusal," the peril of the lower attainment, the danger that the meaner and smaller ambitions may thwart the greater.

For he has dealt very superficially with the teaching of Jesus, who has failed to find in it, in the face, apparently, of certain and absolute defeat, the simple, calm insistence upon the sole omnipotence of self-sacrificing love as the law of life and the way to glory. It is his central, fundamental, revolutionary, distinctive principle, of which the plain historical results of his own cross and of even the very partial practice of his

teaching are the proof. The future belongs "to the Lamb that hath been slain." The spirit of self-giving is on the throne of the universe. But have men ever really taken it in? Do we really believe that now and forever, for self and for others, for character and influence and happiness, for this world and for the next, the one great supreme condition of greatness, under a self-sacrificing God, is service, — self-giving? Here lies the only Godlike life, the only way to glory. And we are just so far saved, we have just so far learned the lesson of life, we have just so far reached the end of our being, as we have learned the lesson of love — of self-sacrificing service. To turn from this is "the great refusal" — the losing of one's life.

Thus it is, that day after day, the thoughtful man feels like saying to those whom he most loves: I sum up all my desires for you in the single prayer, that you may be kept from the peril of the lesser good. I do not much fear that you will be swept into outbreaking evil; I do fear that you will fall under the spell of the lesser goods. I am not anxious concerning your success

as men count success; I am anxious lest the smaller success jeopardize the greater. I do not expect you to prove arrant cowards; but I dread for you that subtler cowardice that cannot choose largeness of life in the guise of self-denial. I would not keep you from all sorrow, if I could, for that were to shut you out of life itself; but I would save you from the sorrow of high aspiration defeated by "great possessions" — the deep and abiding sorrow of "the great refusal." I could covet for you the vision of all life's values; but though your eyes be holden to every lesser value, may they not fail to catch the vision of "the life that is life indeed." I expect from you great convictions along many lines; but underlying them all may there be the conviction of convictions, that if God is such a God at all as Jesus revealed, then plainly the hard test is always a call to life, the demand for service and sacrifice, always an invitation to share the life of God himself in his highest glory and blessedness.

It is not too much to say of those who are entering active life to-day, that it is their privilege to come to it in a new period

of the world, when new standards are already set up. Under these new standards, they may count upon it, the tribute of greatness is increasingly certain to be denied to the man who has not mastered his own flesh, who has not mastered his possessions, who has not mastered his selfish ambitions. Steadily there is being pressed home upon men the imperative demand for reverent personal relations everywhere. Steadily is growing the conviction that the man whose income surpasses the service he renders is not to be envied, for he has not earned what he has, and an unearned "special privilege" is not an honor but a disgrace. Steadily upon even the selfishly ambitious is borne in the persuasion that "whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all."

Within the lifetime of those entering active life to-day, it may be confidently expected that the same great powers that are now employed so largely in the building up of private fortunes and of selfish ambitions, will be dedicated far more generally to transcendent public service and to the world-wide interests of the coming

civilization of brotherly men. In the bringing on of that new and better time, when love and wealth and ambition shall take on their true honor, because they have risen to their highest possibilities, the true man must hope to have his share.

We ask for life; God answers with larger life. "He asked life of thee, thou gavest it him; even length of days forever and ever." All real life begins with the choice of the larger life.

II

THE METHOD OF LIFE

The Way into Life's Values

If one has honestly faced the challenge of his existence, and is ready to make the decisive choice of life, in the preference ever for the larger life, the question still remains: How is one to come actually into this larger life? What is the way into life's values? What is life's method?

It is one of the chief ends of education to enable one to enter with conviction and appreciation into the great spheres of value; into æsthetic and intellectual and spiritual ideals; into the beautiful, the true, and the good: into music, and literature, and art; into the scientific, the historical, and the philosophic spirit; into the riches of friendship; into moral and religious ideals. Now it is particularly suggestive that it may be said that the way into all these values of life is essentially the same way.

For to see that this is the case, brings to one anew the sense of the singular unity and simplicity of life, and helps one to discern the great direction for significant living.

One may approach the matter from several angles with a like result. First of all, the fact that the Master of the art of living conceives of his disciples as "the salt of the earth," suggests at once the ruling method of life. His method is simplicity itself — keeping a few men in companionship with himself, until they catch his spirit and so become fitted in their turn to become centers of life for others. His words, — "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" — assume two things: the method of the contagion of the good life; the indispensableness of the integrity of the individual spirit.

The words of Jesus find only an accurate modern echo in Herrmann's deep-going summary of the moral law: "Mental and spiritual fellowship among men, and mental and spiritual independence on the

part of the individual, that is what we can ourselves recognize to be prescribed to us by the moral law. Each of the two is a particular expression of what is morally good. We ought at every moment to make the rule of our conduct this: Thou shouldst throw thy whole being into the effort to attain the profoundest and most far-reaching fellowship with other men that is possible; and at the same time this also: Thou shouldst be inwardly independent, and in virtue of that truly alive. Both of these propositions go together. For only by willing what we ourselves recognize to be eternally the final aim of all things can we regard ourselves as independent beings, and so as free masters of the circumstances in which our existence is placed. On the other hand, the mental and spiritual fellowship which we are obliged to conceive of as the final aim is possible only among independent beings. For whoever lacks inward independence has nothing in him that he can give to others. In that case he may indeed, as a thing, serve as a means employed by others. He renders this service even without taking any notice

of it. He means to exploit others and is being exploited by others. Fellowship with them he can have none."

The analogy of æsthetic appreciation, as we shall see, would bring us finally to the same two indispensable elements: fellowship and honesty. The method of modern science, too, is essentially identical. For all scientific progress involves the cooperation of scientific workers, but requires at the same time, if this coöperation is to be of any value, honest independence on the part of each worker. We can be very sure that we are, therefore, coming here close to the secret of life in all its ranges. The method of life is the method of fellowship and of utter inner integrity.

In the first place, one is not prepared to come into any of the great values of life without dealing honestly with himself in the sphere in which he seeks achievement, whether the values are those of music, or art, or literature, or of scientific or philosophical appreciation, or of friendship, or of moral and religious ideals. In every case, any element of pretense is a positive hindrance. The value of all possible fellowship

depends on such honesty, such integrity of spirit. For that my fellowship with another who has preceded me in the appreciation of æsthetic or spiritual values should be of worth to me at all, on his part there must be honest testimony concerning what he has himself found, and on my part there must be no pretense of sharing what I have not yet come to share. One cannot build solidly on sham anywhere, and pretense in one's own original experience or in one's testimony concerning his experience alike prevents real growth.

If I am to reach, for example, genuine musical appreciation of my own, I may not allow myself idly to echo others' opinions that either grow out of insights that I do not have, or bear witness to experiences I have not yet attained. We are all tempted to take our values more or less second-hand, because we shrink from both the intellectual effort and the inner honesty required to get them first-hand. Mental and moral laziness is an immense hindrance. The discerning musical critic has much to give us, if we will use honestly what he brings. But he will only hinder our own

growth in musical appreciation, if he does not bring us to a point where we can see for ourselves and feel for ourselves something at least of what he points out. When one of my friends, more honest than most, reached in his travels the Sistine Chapel at Rome, to take in, if he might, the glories of Michael Angelo's ceiling frescoes, he had to admit a great sense of disappointment. But he did not hastily conclude that the fault was all Michael Angelo's; and, on the other hand, he was not willing simply with sham enthusiasm to catch up the opinions of the critics. While he availed himself, therefore, of the help of the best authorities, he insisted on coming back day after day until he could feel that he himself had come into some honest appreciation of his own of the beauty and majesty of the figures and ideas there portrayed.

The same law holds even more clearly in the realm of scientific appreciation. It is the very essence of the scientific spirit that one should see straight, should report exactly, should give an absolutely honest reaction upon the situation in which he

finds himself. Without this complete honesty there is no scientific facing of the facts at all. And it is, I suppose, just this utter integrity of the inner spirit that Jesus has in mind when he says, "If the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith shall it be salted?"

Insight in any sphere, that is, must be genuinely our own or nothing is accomplished. Insight, appreciation, conviction, decision, ideal, hope — all these have no meaning at all if they are simply words caught up from another, and have not become realities in our own experience. The one thing that life cannot stand anywhere is sham. And where one consents in any measure to pretense at any point in the supposed pursuit of life, he has really abandoned the method of life and involved himself in inevitable self-contradiction.

And as there must be honesty in the original experience, so too there must be a like honesty, as has been already suggested, in all testimony to one's experience. There must be no careless handing on, in any of the realms of life, of what we have not ourselves verified. The literary or art or musical critic, the scientist, the

friend, the moral or spiritual prophet, who speaks, as out of his own insight, what he has only caught up from another, is himself a fraud, and cannot help another into reality of life. The whole history of human thought, however, illustrates how often it has happened that men have taken up without verification the opinion of some supposed authority, to hand it on, sometimes for generations, to have it finally challenged by some honest soul and proved utterly without foundation.

Modern thought confirms, thus, in many ways, Jesus' conception of unreality as a root peril in every realm of life. And Jesus has no words so scorching as those which he aims at hypocrisy, fundamental falseness. Certain great notes of reality, therefore, come out repeatedly in the teaching of Jesus.

First of all, Jesus builds — as he must if true to man's nature — directly on the principle of the unity of the inner life. He knows that the whole life of a man tends inevitably and persistently to unity, to logical consistency; that any attitude persisted in tends to permeate the entire

spirit of the life, for good or for evil, as the case may be. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light," he says, "but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness; if, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness." The false, the selfish, the prejudiced taint manifested at any point, affects the whole life. And just as surely, the true, the loving, the candid spirit anywhere shown helps everywhere. It is amazing how surely and immediately this unity of the spirit makes itself felt.

This conviction of the necessary unity of the inner life carries with it at once, it will be seen, the demand for reality everywhere, — for utter integrity, even in the inmost man. Just because the life is one, and cannot possibly be divided off into mutually exclusive compartments, the spirit must be sound at every point, with no slightest trace of falseness. Jesus must, therefore, say, "If thy right hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off." "Salt is good; but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves."

But if there is to be reality everywhere, with no taint of sham at any point, the truth that I declare must be really my own truth. I must have chosen it and yielded to it. The principle necessarily involves, thus, mental and spiritual independence on the part of the individual — not in the sense of conceited denial of the indispensable need of the mental and spiritual fellowship with others, but in the sense that convictions and decisions and ideals and hopes that are effectively to count in my life, must be genuinely my own — in some true sense my own achievement. One must see for himself, and choose for himself. Truth that is vital he must himself have earned.

Jesus is constantly seeking, therefore, to bring men to insights, convictions, and decisions of their own; to real experience out of which they can themselves authoritatively speak. He would not have them echo unthinkingly even his own convictions. The spiritual life, in the nature of the case, must be purely inward. And therefore he challenges them, "And why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?" "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

His message, consequently, must be always one not of external authority, but of the authority of that inner conviction that comes from direct appeal to the reason and conscience of men. This, I suppose, is the reason why his teaching is so largely simply a series of insights with inevitable appeal. How many of his sayings are of this sort: "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do harm? to save life or to kill?" "Is the lamp brought to be put under a bushel or under a bed, and not to be put on the stand?" "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you." "If the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit."

These, then, are insistent notes in the teaching of Jesus, and necessarily involved in one another: the essential unity of the spiritual life, utter inner integrity, mental and spiritual independence on the part of the individual, the necessary inwardness of all spirituality, the direct appeal to reason and conscience.

But we are never to forget that for Jesus these demands are no mere demands as to the form of life, but as to its essential con-

tent. His application of the principle of the unity of life is that danger impends if the virus of the faithless and selfish life enters at any point. The inner integrity which he demands is the integrity of a love genuine through and through, with no least germ of treachery. The mental and spiritual independence which he seeks from his disciples is that they should come for themselves into his great unshaken convictions of the infinite love of the Father, and the possibility of the life of a like self-forgetful love for every man. Such a life must have its deep inner root, though it will have manifold outward expressions. And Jesus believes so fully in the omnipotence of the love of the Father, that he knows that his message of that love must find echo in the heart of every son of man.

Now these notes of reality in the teaching of Jesus themselves suggest the way that one must take into reality in the religious life. In the first place, it is as if he said: Settle it with yourselves that the one thing that you want is truth, to know the will of God. And this single high determination to know and to do the will of God is the

greatest possible help in finding the truth, in finding that will of God. The man who is saying after Jesus, "I am come, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," and who holds persistently to that purpose, cannot wish to deceive himself, to manipulate the evidence, to take the prejudiced view. As his one desire is to find the truth, he will welcome every ray of light from whatever source, and being utterly true himself, is on the certain way to truth and reality in his religious life.

For the earnest man cannot fail to see also that Jesus is here virtually saying to his disciples, If you would get that real sharing in the life of God in which anything that can be called religion must consist, do not begin to juggle with your reason and conscience. Do not twist the evidence. That is to smother the light, to corrupt the eye. Do not allow the beginning of prejudice. Do not be a sophist with your own soul, blinding your own eyes with smooth persuasions that at bottom you know are false. Do not hunt for excuses for doing what you know you ought not to do. As you value your soul's life and

all that is worth while in life, keep the absolutely open mind, the single eye; be utterly true to your own best vision. For no man can set any limit to that to which he may come, if he begins by juggling with his reason and conscience.

Jesus' whole uncompromising war upon the Pharisaic spirit shows how constant in him is the passion for reality. He perfectly exemplifies, in the realm of the moral and spiritual, that of which we think to-day as the very essence of the scientific spirit at its best. For he is here insisting with his disciples, in the third place, that it must be the habitual purpose of their life, as we have said of the scientific spirit, to see straight, to report exactly, to react with absolute honesty upon the situation in which they are placed. Less than this at any point means that one will be both misled himself, and will mislead others. The utterly honest reaction is the one necessity for one's own growth, and it is at the same time the one great service that a man can render to his fellow men. And few men need so much this passion for reality, this habitual honesty, as the

teachers of youth. They are blind guides guiding the blind, unless, with Jesus, the very habit of their souls is thus to see straight, to report exactly, to react with absolute honesty.

And once more, the man who is in dead earnest to come into reality in religion, will find help in making sure that he sees things in proportion. One of the chief ends of education is the production of the thoughtful man; and the thoughtful man is the man who sees things in true proportion — who sees life steadily and sees it whole. It was the distorted vision of the Pharisees that accounted for so many of their characteristics. This it was that made it possible for them to substitute the negative for the positive, neutrality and indifference for commitment and enthusiastic devotion, the empty for the filled, the sign for the reality, the external marvel for the inner appeal, the outer observance for the inner spirit, the petty for the great, rules for principles. Now, however necessary any or all of the things for which the Pharisees contended might be, it must still be plain to the man who sees things in proportion

that they are all but of the smallest concern, compared with the greatness of the interests that they replaced. Against this distorted vision Jesus must protest, if he is to be true either to his own soul, or to the God whom he revealed, or to the men whom he loved.

Jesus cries out in all this for some real seed of life, no mere show of it, or form of it, or rule to guard it, but for life itself, abounding life — not respectable deadness. And he felt sure that he who would have this seed of life, real participation in his own spirit, genuine sharing in God's life of love, must be vigilantly on his guard against these manifestations of the blinded soul.

Why, now, is Christ so insistent upon the integrity of the inner spirit? In the first place, just because the whole progress of the kingdom of righteousness depends upon the absolute soundness of the individual life. Jesus must be insistent here. Dead seed will give no harvest.

Moreover, he felt the deadening effect of many tendencies of his own time, and he must save his disciples from that trend toward externalism, toward conventionality,

and toward mere authority, which so characterized his age. And like tendencies continue to work in every generation. The man who would be real, who would be awake, who would be himself, must resist daily the pressure of authority, of the external, of the conventional. We need the sharp, unsparing criticisms of the most ruthless prickers of bubbles, like Nietsche and Ibsen and Shaw; not, once more, that we may follow them blindly, but that we may be sure that we have not substituted the mere conventions of custom for genuine moral insights and enthusiasms. Inner integrity and individual, independent insight and conviction, — upon these depends the moral health of the world. Everything is here at stake, and the environment threatens.

But the peril of failure at this point has a still further reason. The paradoxical demands of the moral life themselves make failure easy.

Conscience demands both mental and spiritual fellowship, and mental and spiritual independence. Just because we need others so much and so decisively, it is easy

to surrender all independence and initiative of our own, easy to forget that truth is not truth until it has been earned. Just because we must modestly admit that we constantly require the witness of others who have preceded us in the experience of values, it is easy to allow ourselves simply to repeat their confessions after them, instead of compelling ourselves to see for ourselves as they saw for themselves. In another's words, "Religious tradition is indispensable for us. But it helps us only if it leads us on to listen to what God says to ourselves." "We all need moral help from others, but not the substitution of a ready-made list of duties for the results of our own thinking."

So, too, just because the inner spirit must have its external embodiment, some form of outward expression, if it is actually to work in the world at all; just because the external is, in this, indispensable, it is all too easy to insist upon the external, and be careless whether it is — what it must be if it is to be of any value — the inevitable manifestation of an inner life. We may make glass flowers so cunningly devised that we

can hardly tell them from the real blossom, but there is no life in them, no least evidence of an unfolding life.

So, too, just because one cannot bring in light without dispelling darkness, just because one cannot bring into the soul great causes and great enthusiasms without thereby casting out the evil, and even the petty; just because all positive enthusiasms involve in themselves certain negations, it is easy to mistake the negations and the subsidiary means for ends in themselves, and make negation the goal of life, and be content with the empty soul. The petty then replaces the great; "the hedge" of the law, the great ends of justice and mercy and faith. Emptiness is substituted for the engrossing enterprises of the kingdom of righteousness.

Thus, in varying forms, the paradoxical claims of the moral life themselves make it easy to fail at the vital point. For in any one of these ways there may insidiously come in the creeping paralysis of inner futility and falseness. It is because of this constant peril of failure at the center of life that Jesus is here so insistent. I sup-

pose that Jesus' insistence means that, if he were to address the graduates of our colleges to-day, the questions that would seem to him vital are such as these: Have you any vision of your own? Have you moral and spiritual insights that mean anything to you? Have you God-given convictions wrought into the very fiber of your own life? Have you any message that is yours, and that you feel that you must utter? Have you any indignations and enthusiasms that shake you to the center of your being? If your college education has left you without these; or, worse still, if it has robbed you of them and left you sophisticated and blasé, having mistaken moral and religious indifference for tolerance, and lack of conviction for breadth, then may God forgive you and the college, for no other can.

But side by side with this indispensable inner integrity, the method of life requires as equally fundamental, fellowship. Honesty is not inconsistent with modesty. It rather requires the open mind. For while one insists on that complete honesty that does not allow him to catch up, without

interpreting experience, the opinions of another, there should obviously be at the same time the modest perception that one has probably not exhausted in his own experience the meaning of any of the great values. And he may well expect, therefore, if he goes honestly forward, to share increasingly in the larger insights of those who have lived most in these spheres of value. Just as in the realm of the æsthetic and of the scientific and of the philosophical we cherish just such expectations, so in the realm of the moral and religious we have a right to hope for much more in the line of the experience of those who have given here most time and thought. We need their testimony, their leading; we may well clearly recognize it, and keep toward them the open mind. We wish to share in the deeper convictions of the great souls everywhere, but we wish really to share and not to have fellowship in name only.

The fact is that the rule in all the realms of life is that we are commonly introduced through the testimony of some other who has preceded us in appreciation of the value we are seeking. We are born into a world

in which many are already living in these values. Our insights here cannot, in the nature of the case, all be fresh discoveries of our own. The constant and immensely effective factor of imitation in human relationships makes it certain that we cannot, if we would, avoid this introduction into the great values. And he would doom himself to a poverty-stricken life indeed, who should attempt the folly of discovering all values for himself. Is it not the very business of the literary or art critic, of the teacher, of the scientific worker, of the friend, and of the religious leader to share with us their own best? Just because "art is long and time is fleeting," we may not hope that all the insights into which we come are to be discoveries of our own. And it is commonly through this introduction of some other that all the values have come to us. The books, the pictures, the interests, the friends, the moral and spiritual ideals which we have in our inner possession, have largely come to us at the beginning through the testimony of others. That this should be the rule in religion also is therefore quite to be expected. It is

natural, then, that Professor Bosworth should be able to say that the program of Christianity is the conquest of the world by a campaign of testimony through empowered witnesses. And it is no accident that in the Gospel of John, side by side with the great words Light, and Life, and Love, there is another — Witness.

The fellowship that life requires is always a double fellowship. For there are just two services of supreme value that one man can render another: he can lay upon that other the impress of a high and noble character by being the kind of man he ought to be; and he can share with the other his own best vision — that by which he himself most lives. Beyond this there is nothing of supreme worth that one can bring into another's life. And this method of the contagion of the good life, in the sharing of its spirit and of its vision, is everywhere the method of life.

Jesus has used various illustrations to make clear his sense of the only way in which society can be brought to its true goal. Only men can save men. The good life is the salt that must preserve the earth

sound. It is the light that must enlighten the world's darkness. It is the leaven that must permeate every element of the lump of society. It is the seed of life that must grow and reproduce itself. The kingdom of love can be established only through the loving life. It cannot be legislated into existence. It cannot be created out of hand. Life comes only from life. This is the theory and method of Jesus, and it does seem, at first sight, hopelessly simple and ridiculously inadequate.

And yet the method of the contagion of the good life is a hopeful method. It is with great hope in his heart that Jesus sets himself, thus, through the divine touch of his own life, to create out of the little circle about him this life-giving seed and nucleus of the world's civilization. For he has matchless faith in the contagion of the good, in its capacity for growth. If one would have a figure of what may be expected from the single good life hidden in society's mass, let him look, he says, at the million-fold growth of a single grain of mustard seed; such is the promise of the good seed of the Kingdom, divinely quick-

ened. The hidden forces of the universe — the power of Almighty God — are in the seed. The good life is the life that seeks the ends of God, and he who seeks the ends of God may count upon the power of God. Surely the Kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed; we may believe and hope endlessly. Salt will preserve, light will enlighten, leaven will work, life will grow. The good life is inevitably and mightily contagious. We may count upon it for every germ of good in ourselves, in those we love, in the world. We are to keep high our hope.

Nevertheless, men scout the forces that Jesus counted alone sufficient, as hopelessly feeble. The power of a loving life — how little, they have said, can it do! And through the generations, they have brought, for example, the whole enginery of the state to bear, with force and violence and punishment, upon the criminal, only to drive him further into crime. While claiming the name of Christ, they have scornfully abjured the methods of Christ as weakly sentimental and ineffective. It is against this infidelity of professedly Chris-

tian states, against the unspeakable folly of refusing to use the only omnipotent forces, that Tolstoy has justly cried out. And it is the greatest glory of our own time, that in it are found men, who are slowly regaining the faith of Jesus in the omnipotence of the humble, believing, loving life. Judge Lindsey's marvelous Juvenile Court record is a plain translation into a piece of modern life, of Christ's own method of the contagion of the loving life. And the increasing adoption of the "big brother" method in Juvenile Courts is only an exhibition of the same spirit. It is no cheap and easy method. But open-minded humility and trust and patient self-giving love are proving the only really effective forces for the conquest of evil. The method of the contagion of the loving life is a hopeful method.

The simplicity of Christ's method implies, further, that ultimately it is the inevitable method; that the only thing, finally, that any man has to give is himself — the contagion of his own spirit. If that self is significant and worthy, so is his service. If the self is worthless, so is all attempted service. No machinery, no

device, no externals of any kind, no magic, no miracle, can get worthful service out of a worthless self. Neither education nor religion can furnish a way by which one may trick the laws of life. Acute lawyers may find loop-holes in human legislation, but there is no way of tricking the laws of God. There is no possible manipulation by which life can be gotten from death, truth from falsity, genuineness from sham.

Both the critics and the defenders of educational methods, therefore, are quite certain to exaggerate. There is, no doubt, a choice in methods. But the one final method back of all subsidiary methods is the contact of life with life. Ultimately the one indispensable thing is a man of character and judgment, and the honest response of honest souls to such a soul. Granted that, the most faulty methods cannot wholly fail. Lacking that, the most scientific pedagogy will not suffice. The method of the contagion of the good life is the inevitable method. Finally we are shut up to that.

This method of Jesus, too, is a positive method. Jesus cares for no goodness that

is merely negative. The only goodness he knows is the goodness of a positive, ministering, self-forgetting, self-giving love. It is the very business of salt to season, of light to enlighten, of yeast to leaven, of the seed to die to itself and live again in far larger life. The stupidity of shutting any one of these up to itself, of depriving them of their very reason for being, is, in Jesus' thought, exactly the stupidity of the righteousness that exhausts itself in separation of itself from evil, in shutting out the possibility of contamination. As surely as the salt is to season the savorless, and as light is to enlighten darkness, so is goodness to penetrate the world with its own spirit and throw itself with abandon into the life of the world for the world's saving. The method of love is perforce the method of fellowship. It may not withdraw itself from association with men without losing its own identity. The disciple of Christ, therefore, knows that it is self-contradiction to talk of saving oneself in forgetfulness of others. The righteousness of the Kingdom is the righteousness of high and positive and loving conquest, the carrying through of great

enterprises of good for men. Goodness, in Christ's thought, is not only not uninteresting, it is the one most interesting of all things. The disciple of the righteous life, therefore, feels the express obligation and the high privilege of mental and spiritual fellowship, of constantly multiplying and deepening relations with men.

The method of the contagion of the good life is a positive, aggressive method. It is hopeful, inevitable, positive.

But all the values of literature, and music, and art, of science and philosophy, of friendship, and of moral and religious ideals, are after all but a partial revelation of the riches of some personality, and our one great road, therefore, into life in all realms is this road of personal association with the richest, the largest, the best lives. The greater and the more significant the values we are seeking, the more do we need to share the visions of many concerning them, and these, the best. It must be peculiarly true for the religious man, with his search for fellowship with the Infinite, that he needs imperatively the supplementary visions of all the greatest souls.

The one all-inclusive counsel, therefore, as I have elsewhere said, for attainment in all of the spheres of value is this: Stay persistently in the presence of the best in the sphere in which you seek achievement, with honest response; the rest will largely take care of itself. Hear persistently the best in music, and only the best; one need not be anxious under those circumstances concerning his musical taste; it will steadily refine, and his judgment become more and more accurate. See persistently the best and only the best in art; once again, the reaction on one's own artistic judgment is practically certain. Read persistently the best in literature; the poor stuff will fall off of itself, and one will come instinctively to prefer that which deserves his approval. Share persistently in the insights and methods of the ablest workers in science, and history and philosophy; no one can then cheat you of real participation of your own in the historical, the scientific, or the philosophical spirit. Stay persistently in the presence of the best in character, in moral and religious ideal; the richest results that life has to offer are then insured

to you. This is precisely the principle which Paul enjoins when he writes: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

It is well that we should make it perpetually clear to ourselves that, when, in any of the realms of value, we give the best, opportunity with us, we are really sharing in the personal revelation of some personal life. The supreme law of life is this law of personal association, in which we give time and thought and attention to the wealth of those personalities that have most to give. There is no cheaper road to the best in any realm. Life knows no less costly method than this persistent association with those to whom we can look in admiration and love, and who are ready to share unstintedly with us the best that they have themselves achieved. And we can count with certainty on the effects of this law of personal association. No one, perhaps, has put more impressively than

George Eliot this need of the incarnate ideal, in a passage that I have often quoted: "Ideas are often poor ghosts; our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them — they pass athwart us in their vapor, and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame."

This law of association means, further, that just as we require from those whose testimony concerning any of the great values is to count with us, that they shall themselves have undoubted conviction, character and judgment that we can trust, manifest disinterestedness, and the power to make their witness real and rational and vital; so for us also, who in our turn are to help others into the great values of life, there is need of these same qualities of effective

testimony. And there is no way to these very qualities so sure as this same way of persistent association with those who have achieved most in these realms of value.

Moreover, if in all these realms we are dealing not with vain imaginations, but with reality, we can be sure that the great law of personal association means also, that we have no need in any realm to pretend, or to put pressure upon our minds to reach a certain attitude or position. We have one obligation only, and that is simply to let the great facts and values make their own legitimate impression. The great values do not need that we should force our minds to faith in them; they need only opportunity and honest response. And if the best does not attract us, we have not so much judged it, as been judged by it.

It is true that different kinds of values make a different kind of appeal to the human personality. What an "honest response" means, therefore, varies somewhat with the realm of value concerned. But an honest response to any value requires some element of activity on our part,

either the activity of intellectual apprehension, or of warm æsthetic appreciation, or of earnest ethical commitment of will. And where character and moral or religious ideal are involved, it is plain that the appeal is made to the whole man to a degree that does not hold of the lesser values. Here, then, it is not enough that we should respond simply with intellectual apprehension or with æsthetic admiration; here we must make answer with commitment of will and the loyal response of our whole being. The ethical and religious challenge us to decision that cannot be gainsaid: Will you or won't you have it so?

But just because all the great values of life go back to the revelation of the riches of some great personality, our plain life-task, as Kaftan used to say at the University of Berlin, is to enter with conviction and appreciation into the understanding of the great personalities of history. Herrmann has already been quoted as saying: "We ought at every moment to make the rule of our conduct this: Thou shouldst throw thy whole being into the effort to attain the profoundest and most far-reach-

ing fellowship with other men that is possible." And this, both for giving and for receiving. For the strengthening of our own life, and so for greater power to give, we peculiarly need the fellowship of the best lives. Our great life-task, therefore, may be truly said to be, to come into some rewarding fellowship with the great souls of human history; with the great artists, and discoverers, and seers, and heroes, and saints, culminating in the matchless life of Jesus, until we reflect, however imperfectly, something of their character and of their vision of beauty, and truth, and God. "The prophet," Professor James says, "has drunk more deeply than any one of the cup of bitterness, but his countenance is so unshaken and he speaks such mighty words of cheer, that his will becomes our will, and our life is kindled at his own."

The method of life is the method of mental and spiritual fellowship, as well as the method of mental and spiritual independence, — the contagion of the good life. Men are to be salt, and the salt must not have lost its saltness.

III

THE REALITIES OF LIFE

Facing the Facts of Life

We have seen that the method of life includes, as indispensable, utter honesty, open-minded facing of the facts, and honest reaction upon them. And the really honest man must be willing to face all the facts, — not only the facts that lie upon the surface, but the facts of the whole man; the less obvious but deeper realities; the facts that underlie man's whole ideal struggle. What would that mean to the thoughtful man?

I suppose there are few things that the real man or woman hates more than simply to mark time — to go through the motions of things without getting anywhere. And surely, if there is any place where, above all, the real man does not wish to mark time, it must be in the region of his moral and spiritual life. It seems, therefore, pecul-

iarly worth while, at times, to call up into clear consciousness those silent assumptions that underlie all earnest moral and religious endeavor. Beneath all such individual effort, beneath all the activities and services of the Church, beneath all the labor of Christian education, beneath all the ideal enterprises of the race, there lies, first of all, the clear assumption that the supreme interests are those of character; that, as Thomas Arnold used to say to the boys at Rugby, whence have gone out so many of the leaders of English political life, "The only thing of moment in life or in man is character"; or, as another has put it, "The great soul will be strong to live, as well as to think." To have failed here, is fundamental failure, whether for the individual or the civilization. For, as Eucken says, "every culture that does not treat the ethical task, in the widest sense, as the most important of tasks, and the one that decides all, sinks inevitably to a mere semblance of culture, a half culture, indeed a comedy."

But this assumption, which underlies all effort to attain noble living, implies

another: that convictions and decisions and ideals and hopes are needed. For character does not spring up out of vacancy. It roots in certain great convictions; it expresses itself in certain great decisions; it is guided by certain great ideals; and it is inspired by certain great hopes. And the only thing that justifies the agencies of morals and religion, and all our efforts and our studies and our plans is that out of them, somehow, we expect that there shall come some producing, some deepening, some maintaining at least, of convictions, decisions, ideals, and hopes. Unless something of that is attained, we merely go through the motions of things; we mark time; we do not achieve.

But this assumption, in turn, involves another, that time and thought and attention are necessary. For no man can come by mere drifting into significant convictions and decisions and ideals and hopes. They necessarily imply that we have stood, with time and thought and attention, in the presence of the abiding truths — of the majestic facts that make for character and for reality in the spiritual life, and given

them opportunity with us. Every thoughtful appeal to men, every service of the Church and every agency of the Church, and every ideal claim go back ultimately to this assumption, that men need to give time and thought and attention, if the things of the spirit are to have for them the grip of reality. In the long run, we may not forget, the world of the spirit is likely to be real to us, in just about the proportion in which we allow it to become real by earnest honest attention.

There is still one more of these silent assumptions of all the ideal activities: that these questions of the moral and spiritual life, as we have already seen, are always individual questions. No man may act in another's place. A decision is no decision, if it be not the man's own. Truth that is truth must be earned. Faith, a great philosopher urges, is a deed. One's father may bequeath to one his fortune, but he cannot bequeath his convictions. One's mother may give to one some precious heirloom; she cannot give, much as she might desire to do so, her ideals or her decisions. Convictions and ideals and de-

cisions are essentially individual, and they must be continually reaffirmed even for the same individual from time to time, and still more for every generation. One is reminded of that great picture of Raphael's, "The School at Athens," with the little group of students gathered about a geometrical demonstration on the floor. One pupil is manifestly following the teacher with full appreciation, evidently getting his own insight. Another pupil, not quite catching the point, looks up with inquiry at the one bending over him to find whether he sees. Now it is no help to the second pupil that the first sees; it would be no help to him to find that the third saw. He must himself see, if the truth of the demonstration is to be his at all. In like manner, in the whole realm of the moral and spiritual life, if we are to see at all, we must see for ourselves. "Faith is a deed."

But if the supreme interests are those of character; if, therefore, convictions and decisions and ideals and hopes are requisite; if to this end, time and thought and attention are necessary; and if these questions of the spiritual life are inevitably individual

questions — that no other can meet in our place — then, the very determination not to mark time in the spiritual life, must carry us infallibly into a steady honest facing of the facts of life — the outstanding realities of the moral and religious life. For convictions, decisions, ideals, and hopes can arise within us only by honest reaction upon the facts.

This age has been, in singular degree, an age of intellectual revolution. And yet there remain, in spite of this enormous intellectual revolution, certain great, common, human facts that are just the same, and that give abiding significance to human life. These do not vary with the trappings of civilization. Human nature remains. Our true life lies not primarily in relation to things, but in relation to persons. The outstanding realities, then, that it most concerns us all steadily and honestly to face, are those great common facts that belong alike and equally to all of us simply as human beings. They abide through all intellectual changes. They are essentially the same to-day as they were centuries ago, and shall be the same centuries hence;

the same for the West as for the East; the same everywhere.

The question, then, that chiefly concerns the soul in earnest pursuit of life is this: Am I willing to face the facts of life, or am I ignoring them — the great, common, essential human facts? I cannot forget that my own old college president used to remind us that the essence of unbelief was not denial of the truth, but refusal to treat the truth as true. That is all. We are not measured by the truths that we deny, but by the truths that, recognizing, we still are practically ignoring. That is, therefore, a momentous sentence that lies so near the beginning of Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection:* "Truths, of all others the most awful and interesting, are too often regarded as so true, that they lose all the power of truth, and lie bedridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors." Our real inner creed is not that list of propositions, short or long, that we might be persuaded to write out some day in our libraries, but that much shorter list that we are ready, steadily, day after day, to put into our life.

That is our real inner creed. But as Gladstone long ago said: "Many men know their opinions, few their convictions; but in the long run convictions rule, opinions go to the wall." And convictions come only from honest reaction on the facts. It is a matter of supreme moment, then, that a man should not ignore the fundamental facts of his own being and life.

Here, the man who means to show utter inner integrity, must be willing squarely to face, not only the facts that lie on the surface of his life, but those less obvious but deep-going facts that underlie man's entire endeavor for the accomplishment of ideal aims.

First of all, the honest man cannot allow himself to ignore the laws of life, involved in his very nature. That is a very significant definition of education which Huxley gives: "Education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of nature — under which name I include not merely things and their forces, but men and their ways; and the fashioning of the affections and the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws." Now,

it is of the very essence of the moral life that a man should thus come to know and obey the laws of life. And the thoughtful facing of the facts of life surely includes just this readiness to see and obey these laws that are involved in man's very nature. Now religion must look upon these laws of fundamental human nature as laws of God, the creator of that nature, and as, therefore, laws of enlarging life, to be taken on not reluctantly, but with joyful eagerness, as a part of the will of the loving God. The ethical and religious come here inevitably together. To refuse to recognize these facts of the immanent laws of our beings, is to run away from life altogether.

One may approach the matter from a slightly different angle, when he recognizes, as among those facts that underlie man's whole ideal struggle, the fact that the sense of beauty, the sense of truth, and the sense of duty belong to normal human endowment. Men have differed widely enough in their judgments as to what is beautiful, as to what is true, as to what is duty; but that a creature had no sense of beauty or truth or duty would seem to us equivalent

to asserting that the human plane had not been reached at all. That is, we simply cannot question man's ideal endowment. At the lowest, he is inevitably more than a mere creature of the senses. He cannot find all his life only in the change of raw sensations. Man shall not live by bread alone. To refuse to face this fact insures inner discord, — makes it certain that one must live at cross purposes with himself. What would it not mean, on the other hand, honestly to take account of this fact, that in the fundamental structure of one's being, one is made forever to seek truth, to fulfill duty, to reach out not only for the apprehension, but for the embodiment, of some real beauty of life?

To face these more basic facts of human nature would mean also to ask the question, How deep-going is religious faith? how essential is it to normal humanity? And one can hardly follow to the end that inquiry without seeing, as I have elsewhere pointed out,[1] that a faith essentially religious, logically underlies all our reasoning, all work worth doing, all strenuous

[1] *Personal and Ideal Elements in Education*, pp. 90–98.

moral endeavor, all earnest social service. I do not repeat the argument here; but even so absolutely fundamental is religion, that we must affirm and reaffirm it implicitly in every act of our lives. For in every one of the realms named we are constantly obliged virtually to assert the possibility of a goal that assumes a larger reason and plan and purpose than can be given by finite beings. We seem quite unable otherwise to bring into our lives unity or meaning or harmony or permanent value. If we may not assert the essential certainty of religious faith, we seem doomed only to fruitless agony of thought, everywhere baffled of its goal. And then it is useless to talk about the possibility of rational thinking at all. Are we facing this basic faith, involved in our very natures, and building consistently upon it? In the background of all the rest of life, thus, lies the mighty all-inclusive fact of God and of the possibility of living relation to him. If we have any access to ultimate reality at all, then, the thoughtful man will not need to feel that he must manufacture a religion for himself or for others. He

knows men's need of God, and he believes that the fact of God is so great a fact, that it will verify itself to those who will give it access to mind and life. Nevertheless, this supreme, all-inclusive fact of God and of the possibility of relation to him is not the fact first reached, and is not to be taken as a matter of course for men. Rather is it, as has been implied, the outcome of fidelity to many other facts, that themselves silently assume at each step the reality of God.

But when one speaks of honest adjustment to the facts of life, he must think not only of these deeper underlying prerequisites of all human endeavor, which we have been considering, but also of those common outstanding spiritual realities of the daily life of men.

Of these daily facts there is, to begin with, the fact of our double nature: that we have that in us which links us with the animal downward, and that in us which links us not less certainly with God upward. No man who means to live the life that he ought to live can leave that fact out of account. We are not to be spared the fight,

which that fact involves. Whatever one believes about evolution, he cannot doubt in his own experience the fact of the inner conflict between flesh and spirit. And neither for himself, nor for those whom most he loves, may the earnest man forget this fact or think the fight quickly over. There is a paradox involved, for the goal is not ascetic, and the sense good is a real good. And yet the struggle cannot be evaded. The fact of man's double nature, moreover, concerns not youth alone; for the sensuality of the older man, though more cold-blooded, may be even more deadly and deadening than the hot passion of youth. And there is a subtler sensuality that is hardly recognized as such at all. We are all tempted, under the pressure of our present material civilization, to allow in some form or other the material aspect of things to dominate the ideal, to make the sense world really supreme. But it is still as true as when the words were first written, that all of us have need to guard ourselves against the "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life." It was not for nothing that one of the world's best fighters

said of himself: "I buffet my body and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." "I therefore so run," he says, "as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air." When does a man really face the fact of his double nature? Not until he is making it sure that he is living his life on such a plan that the hold of the animal on him is steadily weakening, and the hold of the Godlike on him is steadily strengthening.

Side by side with this fact of our double nature is the fact of the fateful gift of will. We can choose with God, we can choose against God, and this choice can be made by no other. It is no merely metaphysical question which is thus raised. Whatever one's philosophical formulation of the perennial question of freedom and necessity, no one doubts that men have much to do with the shaping of their own characters. It was one of the least sentimental of our poets who compared this fateful fact of will with that other fact, that men often think so solemn — the fact of death, to remind us that this is still more solemn:

Men think it is an awful sight,
To see a soul just set adrift,
On that drear voyage from whose night
The ominous shadows never lift;
But 'tis more awful to behold
A helpless infant, newly born,
Whose little hands unconscious hold
The keys of darkness and of morn.

And he goes on to make the man who has come down to an unworthy end say:

Mine held them once; I flung away
Those keys that might have open set
The golden sluices of the day,
But clutch the keys of darkness yet;
I hear the reapers singing go
Into God's harvest. I who might
With them have chosen, here below,
Grope shuddering at the gates of night.

What would it be rationally, squarely, honestly, to face this fateful gift of will? Not less, one must think, than this: that one should make it certain, once more, that he is living his life on such a plan as to insure that the righteous will is gaining in steadiness, in breadth of application, in depth of application, and in skill and tact and delicacy of application. It ought to be true, that is, as the years pass over our

heads, that we should find it more and more second nature steadily to do that which we believe we ought to do. There should be less feeble vacillation of will. It ought to be true, with our widening knowledge, that we should now be awake to whole spheres of human life in which we have obligations, to which we used to be blind. It ought to be true as a man deepens the meaning of life for himself in his own experience, that there should deepen at the same time a sense of his obligation to his fellow men. And it ought to be true as he comes into a sense of what fine, reverent, personal relations mean, that he should be capable now of a tact and skill and delicacy that his youth could not know.

With the fact of wil, the honest man must recognize, also, the fact of responsibility, — that we are members one of another. For this is of the very essence of the moral universe. This conviction should peculiarly characterize this age, that glories in its claim to be called the age of the social consciousness. For if we have become convinced that economically, socially, and politically we are members

one of another, we can hardly fail to draw the certain inference that we are not less members one of another in the highest ranges of our lives. And no man belongs truly to the age of the social consciousness who does not recognize the fact of this mutual responsibility as not alone inevitable, but as desirable and indispensable; who would be willing if he could, to have his life cut off from these rich relations to other lives. The man who refuses to face this fact of responsibility, who can say of himself — "I do not care to influence anybody," needs to be reminded that the inevitable relations of his life make it certain that he cannot go up or down alone; that he has no choice as to whether he shall influence others; he can only choose what kind of influence he shall exert. Steadily, hour in, hour out, day in, day out, we are all tending to bring to our level, with the whole power of whatever personality we have, those about us, pulling them down to our level, or raising them up to it, as the case may be. We are inextricably members one of another.

And how powerful a motive this inevitable

connection of one's life with others' lives may be, William Canton suggests in the poem addressed to his little daughter, in which he compares her influence to the power of the angels.

God's angels, dear, have six great wings,
Of silver and of gold.
Two round their heads; two round their hearts;
Two round their feet they fold.

The angel of a man I know,
Has just two hands — so small!
Yet they're more strong than six gold wings
To keep him from a fall.

In his own darkest and weakest hours, when it seems to him that he does not care at all for himself, let a man use with himself this powerful motive; let him make it clear to himself that it is utterly impossible for him to go down alone or to go up alone. One cannot fail and not make the fight harder for every other life that is touched by his; and one cannot conquer and not help thereby every one of these related lives. The moral and religious life of one city of one of our great central states received a deadly thrust, because two men widely known and greatly trusted proved

utterly false. On the other hand, it is our great privilege, by simple fidelity of life, to make another's fight less bitter, to make it easier for him to believe in truth and honor and purity and God. We are members one of another.

The earnest man cannot fail to face, also, the fact of men's capacity for indefinite growth. Breathing through the whole life of the earnest man, there is to be the conviction, that there came a time in the history of the world, when there was introduced a creature in whom psychical changes meant more than physical; a being once for all made capable of endless progress in knowledge, in power, in character. Browning has emphasized for all this generation that it is the great single characteristic of man that he is a growing creature, and that to that growth no limits can be set. A man is turning his back, therefore, upon his destiny as a man, unless he is making sure that he is laying foundations broad and strong for endless development. He must lay claim here to his destiny as a man, and make sure of the glory of life through certain and steady growth. For

the opportunity of this endless progress for man lays upon him at once the universal obligation of growth. He owes a steadily developing life to himself, to his friends, to the world, to God. He owes it to himself to plan for persistent growth. In the words of President Jordan, "Your first duty in life is toward your after-self. So live that your after-self — the man you ought to be — may in his time be possible and actual." Only through such a growing self, too, can he meet the obligation he owes to his friends, to the world, or to God.

No one can claim, therefore, to be facing squarely and honestly this momentous fact of his capacity for indefinite progress, unless he is making certain of constant development. In the last analysis, as one has so often to see, we none of us have anything to give but ourselves, and those selves must be steadily richer and more significant. It may well stir in any man an endless ambition, that he is made on so large and divine a plan that to his growth no limits can be set. One large element, too, of a man's courage in his work must be, that he recognizes that he works for others,

also, who are capable of this same endless progress into likeness to God, and therefore for those who are abundantly worthy of the faithful exercise of every power he has, and of all needed sacrifice.

But if the honest man is to recognize, on the one hand, as undoubted, this capacity of men for endless growth, he cannot shut his eyes, on the other, to the equally certain fact of sin, which our modern novels and the daily paper, as well as the ancient religious literatures of the world, are forced to admit as an abiding fact. It is quite as imperative that one should not forget that sin is a growing fact, as well, in a man's life, unless he is steadfastly setting his face in the right direction. With his faith in God, and his faith in man's capacity for endless progress, the man who is to throw himself with earnestness into the struggle of the race for character and spiritual achievement, has to recognize the fact of sin with absolute honesty but not with discouragement. The optimism of Jesus is no blind and shallow optimism. It is able to take into account the darkest facts. Nor can the honest man deny in his own

experience the fact of sin. He knows how often he has seen far better than he has done. And the unfulfilled vision is his unanswered accuser. He needs to be vigilantly watchful, therefore, not so much against the onsets of overwhelming attacks, as against that subtle, gradual, deadly deterioration that damns himself and damns those for whom he would labor. One need not fear for those whom most he loves, that they shall suddenly, under some tempest of temptation, be swept over the precipice of outrageous wickedness. That practically never happens. Long before the gross defiance of righteousness arrived, the battle was lost within, the inner guard had been broken down; the man had failed in the inner citadel. In confronting frankly the fact of sin, therefore, our chief fear must be of that subtle and gradual deterioration that sets in and goes on almost unconsciously to the man, until it eats out the very heart of his life. This is the lesson of that terrible book of Harold Frederic, *The Damnation of Theron Ware.* For the damnation of Theron Ware, the young minister, was that he had laid down his inner guard,

and had started so gradually upon the down plane, that he could still think of himself as sleek and prosperous, while in fact he was false and hollow and corrupt. No one is honestly facing, then, the fact of sin, unless he is making it certain that he is living his life on such a plan, as insures that, so far as in him lies, sin shall be for him and for all those committed to him, a steadily lessening, not a growing, fact.

Moreover, it is given us to set side by side with this dark fact of sin, the endless, glorious miracle of unselfish human love. Let a man give this fact its full weight. In spite of pettiness, and falseness, and selfishness, what a wealth of human love the world contains! No man can have seen even a little of love's marvelous capacity for joyful sacrifice, and feel that he can have deserved such a love. At its best, this unselfish human love is a rebuke of our own smallness and a challenge to a nobler self-giving, and at the same time a great ground of faith in the Love back of the universe. What can more surely steady a man's faith in God, and strengthen the desire for some share in his eternal self-

giving, than this perpetual witness of daily human love?

Among the outstanding realities of life, also, there cannot be left out of account, for the man who means to face the facts, the fact of death. One may quite sympathize with his generation in the feeling, that the best preparation for death is to think upon living, not upon dying; and yet in his more thoughtful moments be compelled to confess that the reaction from the older point of view has gone quite too far, if it has come to mean that the thoughtful man is to leave quite out of account that one inevitable experience that comes to all. The thoughtful man cannot wish to go like a dumb brute into the experience of death. Rather will he prefer to say with Browning:

I would hate that Death bandaged my eyes and forebore
And bade me creep past.

He will wish with open eye and mind to face that inevitable experience of death, to get out of it all that God has in it for him. That will mean that he will need to forecast the memories that will be his in

that hour; that he will need to anticipate how life is going to appear to him as he looks back over it from its end, and to ask himself whether that backward vision is going to show that in the years of his life he has seen things in anything like their true proportion. In that retrospect will the manifestly greater interests of life loom large, or be seen to have played an insignificant part in the earthly years? The thoughtful man must wish to make sure, too, who his visitants are going to be in this experience of the closing of the earthly life. And it is a part of his business as one who lives not for himself alone, to secure not only for himself, but, so far as it lies in his power, for all those whom his life touches, that the faces that front them in the final hour shall be friendly faces, and that no soul committed in any way to him shall have then to say:

> There my dead Youth doth wring its hands,
> And there, with eyes that goad me yet,
> The ghost of my Ideal stands.
> God bends from out the deep and says:
> "I gave thee the great gift of life;
> Wast thou not called in many ways?
> Are not my earth and heaven at strife?"

Oh, glorious Youth, that once was mine!
Oh, high Ideal! all in vain
Ye enter at this ruined shrine
Whence worship ne'er shall rise again.
The bat and owl inhabit here;
The snake nests in the altar-stone;
The sacred vessels molder near,
The image of the God is gone.

The fact of death leads, thus, at once to the fact of accountability to God for life intrusted. One may set aside as simply pictorial, if he will, the Biblical representations of a great single solemn assize; still, so far as I can see, the essential fact of accountability forever abides. I did not bestow my nature on myself, and I cannot deny, therefore, the trust of that peculiar individuality that has come into my hands. For that individuality I am accountable. I cannot resist the sense of calling, of divine vocation so involved. These plain facts of my nature themselves make me feel that, in some high sense, I am "sent" into the world. And in this calling of my own individuality, I catch some glimpse, at least, of a Good Power back of all, to whom I must return account of my stewardship of this unique personality, not self-be-

stowed. For if there be any rationality in the universe at all, then the life into which we go must be the logical and inevitable outcome of the life lived here. In this sense, at least, some judgment must always be passed upon the life, and accountability must always stand. In its essence, therefore, it remains as true to-day as when Paul wrote it, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." When one faces, then, with any real thoughtfulness the mysterious trust of life, and the sobering challenge of his divinely given individuality, it cannot seem to him strange that a great American statesman should have affirmed, that the most solemn thought that ever occupied his mind was the thought of his personal accountability to God. For we are not animals, who can live content on the sense plane. "A spark disturbs our clod"; and when we would quench it, our own self-contempt seems but the prophecy of a still diviner judgment.

The fact of accountability implies, in turn, the fact of the future life. We cannot be overwise concerning it, however thoughtfully we have studied all that we

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can know about it. There are manifestly many interesting and curious questions concerning it, to which no answer has been returned. There is plainly much here that we cannot know. And yet there is not only the assurance of the insight of Jesus and of the whole spirit and atmosphere of his life for the reality of the future life; but the further fact that many of the most thoughtful in all generations have felt the imperative need of the future life to give any adequate meaning to this life. And, moreover, so tremendous is the bare possibility of the future life, that, rationally, we can only build as though it were going to be. But if there be any future life at all, there is one thing concerning it that we may know: every man must live it out with himself, and he will wish to make certain that he is going to be decent company for himself. He will wish so honestly and wisely to face the endless future, as to make sure that he has laid such foundations here, that the self with which he is to spend the eternal years is to be good company — a self rich and interesting, inspiring and noble. The very meaning of the earthly

life must be that men are here to learn to live; that here and now they are to live a growing, steadily deepening and enriching life, and so lay indeed foundations deep and broad for that endless growth of the future life. The great rewarding factors of the future life, too, as of the present life, must inevitably be in personal associations and significant work. But how much either work or personal associations can mean to a man, must depend on the quality of the self which he brings to them.

There is still one more fact that the man, who means to live in any degree for others besides himself, may not forget: the fact of his need of help for other men. No thinking man can face the sin and suffering and ignorance and weakness of men, the cramping, deadening conditions in which many lives are lived, and not see that he has no need so great as the need of being able to give adequate help to the inner life of other men, — to open to them the abiding springs of being. Have we any message of life quite large enough and deep enough to fill the need of men? Have we ever made it real to ourselves that somewhere down the

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years, time and again, we shall find ourselves face to face with souls at a crisis; souls desperately in need? It will not always look so on the outside. No observer may be able to tell of the inner struggle, or of the despairing appeal that is made to us. The common things will seem to go on. But here and there, there will be given to us a glimpse into the depths of another life, and we shall a little understand how great the need is. And if that other is some one for whom we greatly care — a son, a daughter, or nearest friend — how sternly must come home to us our spiritual destitution! If for us, then, our great convictions are all in the past, our great decisions unrenewed, our ideals dimmed, and our hopes buried, what can be our word of help? Here again every thoughtful man must be driven back to God, to the sources of life, to make sure that there his own life has been refreshed, enriched, and deepened, so that he may now speak out of his own experience and with convincing authority of the "good news of God." There is one prayer that the earnest soul, who wishes to live in any degree

outside himself, it would seem, must be perpetually offering to God: Lord, speak to me, and then speak through me. For it is perfectly certain that we cannot bring home to another soul with the grip of conviction, a truth that has not first of all gripped us, and God must first have spoken to us that he may speak through us.

In this search for adequate help for other men in sorrow and sin and desperate need, the thoughtful man will find himself coming back of necessity again and again into the presence of the great prophetic souls as the most important facts of human history. Here are facts never to be ignored. Here are insight and courage and faith and love. Here is deep experience of the spiritual world. Here is assured relation to God. Nothing else conceivable can throw such light on the meaning of life and the nature of God, as the great personalities of history. And the greatest have never been satisfied on the sense plane. They bear witness to ideal aims, and disclose a faith in something greater than themselves. Even when the immediate ends of their religious struggle are mistaken ends, as

in the long history of asceticism, they still testify to the reality of the unseen and eternal. Are we taking these transcendent facts of the great prophetic personalities of the race fairly into account, and giving them their due weight?

In the line of these preeminent, prophetic personalities of the race, stands transcendent the figure of Jesus. If persons must always be for us the most significant facts of history, Jesus cannot fail to be history's supreme fact, — a fact that deepens every other fact of life. At the end of every inquiry one finds his majestic figure looming up, shedding light where else were darkness, and hope and joy where else were despair. For, setting aside every theological proposition, here at least in Jesus, as judged by the highest standards that men are able to apply, is the best life that the earth has seen, the surest word of the God of all being. Here, as proved out of the experience of the centuries, are the world's best ideals, the best insight into the laws of life, the best dynamic for life. Because here are embodied the greatest convictions and the highest hopes. The least inference, it

would seem, that the thoughtful man may draw, either for himself or for others, is that no man can pretend to be in dead earnest in the attainment of character for himself or of the message of help for other men, who is not putting himself steadily and intimately into touch with that central life, to take on as of second nature Christ's thoughts and feelings and purposes; to allow him to be to him all that he can. Not until then will a man have proved himself in earnest either for himself or for others.

And through this transcendent fact of Christ the thoughtful man looks out with other eyes upon all the other facts of life. Through him he sees the heart of God. Seen in the light of the great personality of Jesus, he can face with cheer and courage and mighty hope in his heart all these other fateful facts of life: those deep underlying prerequisites of all human endeavor — the laws of our natures, man's sense of beauty and truth and duty, and the inevitableness of religious faith; and those other outstanding spiritual realities of the daily life — the fact of man's double nature,

of the gift of will, of the inevitable way in which he is bound up in the bundle of life with all other lives, the fact of man's capacity for indefinite growth in knowledge and power and character and fellowship with the living God, the dark fact of sin, the irradiating fact of human love, the inevitable fact of death, the fact of accountability, and of the future life, and of the need of help for other men. It was something like this, I suppose, that was in the mind of Browning when he makes the aged John say:

Then stand before that fact, that Life, and Death;
Stay there at gaze, till it dispart, disspread,
As though a star should open out, all sides,
Grow the world on you, as it is my world.

These facts — these abiding, common human facts — need no exaggeration. They need only to be squarely faced. Whatever other changes may take place, their truth makes life endlessly significant.

IV

THE SOURCES OF LIFE

The Abiding Significance of the Bible, and of Jesus

We have already seen that the method of life includes as indispensable, honesty and fellowship. The demand for such utter honesty compels a frank facing of the realities of life, just reviewed. And the greatest of even these realities were found to be personal lives. The method of fellowship, too, impels us to seek rewarding personal associations. We have also seen that the two supreme services that any man can render to another are, to lay upon him the impress of a high and noble character by being the kind of man he ought to be, and to share with that other the sources of his own life. This means, of course, that the greatest needs of us all are the contagion of high and significant personalities, and the opportunity of sharing in their best

visions. It is on these two lines that we are driven so surely, even in this twentieth century, to find the great sources of our moral and religious lives in the Bible, and in its supreme personality, Jesus.

First of all, is it mere tradition that sends us back to the Bible in the search for spiritual life? Or is there here a real survival of the fittest? If a man's greatest discovery, next to the discovery of God, is the discovery of himself, and if the complete discovery of himself in all his spiritual possibilities involves the discovery of God, we may perhaps get a new light on the significance of the Bible for our spiritual life if we think of it as an aid to self-discovery.[1]

Has the Bible any preeminent place in bringing the man of the twentieth century to such deeper self-discovery? Especially can it help him to that highest self-knowledge that implies conscious relation with God? If so, it must be because in preeminent degree it makes available a

[1] Use is here made of a portion of an address by the author, contained in the transactions of the Religious Education Association.

wealth of complex experience, puts us in direct contact with the most significant personal lives, and challenges our every power even more by the depth than by the breadth of its appeal.

It is worth noting, from the beginning, that the question has been already tested for us in history. As a simple matter of fact, it was the Christianity of the Bible that awoke men to real self-consciousness and made forever impossible the simple, satisfied attitude of antiquity toward life and the world, and compelled the bringing in of the modern romantic spirit. As another has said, for us modern men "the fever of man's conflict has passed across" the face of nature; "the shadow of humanity falls wide, darkening the world's playground." In the words of a great philosopher, "Christianity had demolished this calm self-sufficingness of the secular world" in which the ancient rested. "There began then to be developed for the first time that personal consciousness which thenceforward, with all its problems — freedom of the will and predestination, guilt and responsibility, resurrection and immortality — has given

a totally different coloring to the whole background of man's mental life," and which no modern can wholly escape. The Greek artist, compared with the modern man, Kedney has said, "was asleep and wrapt in the lovely visions of the Enchanted Ground, as though there were no cavernous depths and fearful declivities, no river of death beyond." To the same intent, Paulsen makes "the longing for the transcendent" one of the truths which "Christianity has engraven upon the hearts of men." "Antiquity," he adds, "was satisfied with the earth; the modern era has never been wholly free from the feeling that the given reality is inadequate."

Now, the book whose influence has been thus powerful enough to draw the dividing line of demarcation between the ancient and the modern worlds, and to awaken the modern man to that which is most characteristic in his consciousness, can hardly fail of preeminent power in bringing the individual to any deep discovery of himself. It cannot be spared by the most modern of men.

No man, certainly, is likely to come to

full self-knowledge independently of those influences which have streamed forth from the Bible. It both suggests the laws of our life and tests our powers in too concrete and telling a fashion, to be wisely ignored.

In the first place, the Bible is a most deeply and broadly human book, and so furnishes that appeal of complex experience so necessary to full self-consciousness. It touches unerringly the whole gamut of the deeper human emotions and aspirations, and embodies them in figures that mankind will not willingly let die. The experience of the race increasingly confirms the testimony of Lotze, who says even of the Old Testament, that "for the most faithful delineation of the ever-recurring fundamental characteristics of human life . . . the Hebrew histories and hymns are imperishable models." And he adds, concerning this universal human appeal of the Scripture: "The treasures of classic culture are open to but few, but from that eastern fountain countless multitudes of men have for centuries gone on drawing ennobling consolation in misery, judicious doctrines of practical wisdom, and warm enthusiasm

for all that is exalted." A book with such breadth of appeal cannot fail to stir to larger self-consciousness any man who will face its phenomena with attention.

Moreover, it is of vital importance as an aid to self-discovery, that the Bible should be in such rare degree a personal book; for persons are chiefly stirred by persons. And the Bible is so instinct with life, that it is hardly possible to put the point of a needle into it anywhere without drawing blood. It brings us face to face with what must be counted, I judge, — when estimated as to its value for the highest life of men, — the most significant line of personalities which history anywhere presents. And it is the great glory of the historical and critical study of these later years, that it enables us to see these prophetic men as living personalities, facing precise problems in a strong developing career. So the free critic Cornill can say of Amos: "Amos is one of the most marvelous and incomprehensible figures in the history of the human mind, the pioneer of a process of evolution from which a new epoch of humanity dates." And Hosea he counts

"among the greatest religious geniuses which the world has ever produced"; and he says of Isaiah: "In Isaiah we find for the first time a clearly grasped conception of universal history." It is into the presence of such personalities that the modern historical study of the Bible introduces us. They become for us warm realities, and touch us as never before with the inspiration of a personal life in which God works. And nothing so stirs and fructifies our own life, nothing so brings us to glad sense of our own higher possibilities, as even this partial but appreciative and responsive sharing in the visions of the higher man. Like children, we grow best by trying to measure up to things beyond our present capacity. And this splendid vision of another — moral or religious — which we have partly shared, haunts us perpetually, until we have tried to make it our own in deed as well as in thought. We come to a new self-consciousness. Can the most modern of men afford to miss the contagion of this line of spiritual seers?

For it is only true to say, on the one hand, even of the Old Testament, that it is the

one great moral book of antiquity. As I have elsewhere said, "it is not a mere collection of moral aphorisms, but shows the developing moral sense everywhere, in everything. Character is really the supreme interest in this book. Among all the ancient peoples, in truth, only the Jews have the modern sense of sin, and the Bible is in this particular the only ancient book with a really modern tone. Compared with these sober Jews, even the gifted Greeks are but playing children in their sense of sin and character. This clear and constantly developing ethical tone marks out the Bible distinctly from all other ancient books."

And when one passes to the New Testament, this powerful ethical impression is only increased. One may well say with Sabatier: "What other book like this can awaken dumb or sleeping consciences, reveal the secret needs of the soul, sharpen the thorn of sin and press its cruel point upon us, tear away our delusions, humiliate our pride, and disturb our false serenity? What sudden lightnings it shoots into the abysses of our hearts! What searchings of conscience are like those which we make by

this light?" And all this means that in sober fact we must concede to the Bible unrivaled power in bringing a man to moral self-consciousness.

In a similar sense it must be said on the other hand, even of the Old Testament, that it is, if I may quote myself again, "the one great religious book of antiquity. Religious books in abundance of course the ancient world had, and we need not underestimate any of them. But for the actual life of the civilization of this twentieth century only the Bible is of prime significance. These Old Testament writers have been, as a matter of fact, among all the ancient writers, the world's great spiritual and religious seers. In even higher degree than we owe art and literature to the Greeks, and law to the Romans, do we owe religion to the Jews. Here in this ancient literature, whatever the critical results, is contained the record of the preeminent meetings of God with men, down to the time of Christ."

And if this can be said even of the Old Testament, how much more is it true of the New, with its vision of the supreme personality of Jesus. And for spiritual self-

discovery, this is most significant. For, just so surely as religious interest is deeply laid in the very foundations of man's nature; just so surely as religion is the supreme factor "in the organizing and regulating of our personal and collective life"; just so surely as it brings us into the highest personal relation of which we are capable — the relation that gives reality and meaning and value to all other relations; just so surely as religion is thus the deepest experience into which a man may enter; — even so surely must that book which is the transcendent religious book of the world, stir our whole natures as nothing else can stir them, in just the proportion in which we lay ourselves open to its influence and enter with appreciative understanding into the experiences there laid bare. For the unity of our natures makes it impossible that this highest appeal should be responded to, without profound influence upon all the rest of our life. As does no other book, therefore, the Bible brings to consciousness the whole man.

As the record of the progressive seeking of men after God, and of the progressive

revelation of God to men, moreover, the Bible offers peculiar help in the development of our own highest consciousness; for it enables us to relive, as it were, in our own personal experience this whole religious life of the world, to apply thus, to our own deepest life-problems a real historical method. And hardly any procedure could be more helpful in bringing us to intelligent consciousness of ourselves than this retracing of the most important steps in the working out of character and faith in the world.

But the Bible is all this, finally, because it is above all else a book of honest testimony to experience. Its supreme value lies just here. For the testimony of another, as we have seen, is our chief road to enlargement of life. Most of all, it is through such simple honest witness that the New Testament puts us face to face with the redeeming personality of Jesus. Whatever our theories about the Bible, it is not as compelling authority, but as simple honest witness, that the New Testament brings us emancipating power. In Herrmann's words, "The inner life of Jesus is

stamped on the testimony of men who have been set free by him. In this way has it become a force in history, and in no other way was that possible. Hence we can lay hold on it and make it ours only when we let the witness of his disciples lay hold on us." And that witness the Christian "finds in Scripture as nowhere else."

Now if this is the priceless and indispensable service of the Bible, it would seem to indicate that man's greatest source of spiritual life is still the personality of Jesus. And we are brought, therefore, face to face with the question of the abiding significance of Jesus.[1]

President Harris of Amherst College said, four or five years ago, "I venture to say that the Protestant Reformation itself did not work a greater, though perhaps a more violent, change than the last quarter of a century has marked in religious thought, belief, and life." In this short twenty-five years — it is a commonplace to say —

[1] Another line of treatment is followed in the author's *Theology and the Social Consciousness*, pp. 184–201. Cf. also *Letters on the Greatness and Simplicity of the Christian Faith*, pp. 179–199.

religion has felt increasingly the influence of natural science, of the conception of evolution in particular, of the new psychology, of the new science of sociology, and its practical accompaniment — the social consciousness, the application of the historic spirit to religious ideas and doctrines, the whole consequent work of higher criticism, the great movement of study that we denominate "comparative religion," the more and more searching investigation of New Testament sources, and a great new practical emphasis and test in philosophy. Is it possible that the meaning of anything can be the same in the face of a union of movements like these? Let us ask it frankly, Has Jesus still supreme meaning?

And yet, Adolf Harnack, speaking as Rector of the world's greatest university, in this twentieth century, and in the face of all these movements, can begin his famous book, *What is Christianity?* with the sentence, "The great English philosopher John Stuart Mill has somewhere observed that mankind cannot be too often reminded that there was once a man of the name of Socrates. That is true; but

still more important is it to remind mankind again and again that a man of the name of Jesus Christ once stood in their midst." It seems like an echo of the apologetic of the New Testament writers. And it is indeed only another man trying to say, as honestly to his own generation as they to theirs, what significance this man Jesus has for him.

What significance has Jesus for us? Has his personality still indispensable help to give us? That depends upon the answer to another question, What do we want? The shortest and truest answer to that question probably is in the single word — life. We want the fullest, richest, largest life that men are capable of; and that would at least require answer to certain great, insistent questions of the race, like Kant's famous three: What can I know? What ought I to do? For what may I hope? Few of us would doubt — what these three questions imply — that the largest and richest life cannot be lived without convictions and ideals and hopes; and the answer to these questions must be an answer, too, that gives power to

live this life of convictions, of ideals, of hopes.

Now if we are to come anywhere into larger life, the method, as we have seen, is mental and spiritual fellowship, and our greatest need, thus, is always the touch of significant lives. The continuous miracle of the centuries is the miracle of individual personality. Large and rich and varied have been the lives of earth's greatest ones, and we are still, in the daily education of the schools, sharing the visions of many an ancient Jew and Greek and Roman; and our lives would be poorer without them. But, in spite of all the questions and enlargements of knowledge, and change in points of view of this whole revolutionary time, is there any reasonable doubt that, for the living of that larger life which we modern men demand, and for any significant deepening of our life, no personality has any help to give comparable with that of the Galilean Jesus? Is there, even today, any surer road to the satisfaction of the thirst for life in all its profounder meanings, than that a man should count himself — with whatever questionings — first and

foremost, a disciple of Jesus? In the light of all that modern research has brought to view, let us put to Jesus Kant's three questions: What can I know? What ought I to do? For what may I hope?

And, first, has Jesus still power to help the modern man to answer the question, What can I know?

Under this question, the most insistent inquiry of all, for the human race, is, What can I know of God, and the consequent meaning of my own life? And upon the answer to that question, more than upon any other, depend the significance and peace and joy of the life of men. And for the man of to-day who wishes to build his faith not upon ingenious argument, but upon assured and well-recognized facts, there is no ground so sure for belief in the existence and in the love of a real living God as this single great fact of Christ himself, and of the results that have flowed from his life. The argument goes upon the simple assumption that if we are ever to discern the real nature of the ultimate World-Ground, our best light must come, not from the lesser, but from the greatest

and most significant facts. For myself, I see no way to doubt that, as the supreme person of history, Christ is the most significant of all facts known to us, and therefore the best basis for direct and decisive inference to the nature of the World-Ground — to a God of character like his own.

And so Paulsen, present-day philosopher, after speaking of various dogmas and opinions often asserted to be of the essence of Christianity, says for himself: "But if I am allowed to say what I mean, and to believe what I can understand and conceive, then, unmindful of the ridicule of the scoffer and the hatred of the guardian of literalism, I may, even in our days, confess to a belief in God who has revealed himself in Jesus. The life and death of Jesus make plain to me the meaning of life, the meaning of all things in general; but that which enables me to live and shows me the import of life, I call God and the manifestation of God. The most upright, truthful, and liberal-minded man may subscribe to all that to-day as openly as ever before."

Have we adequately measured the great-

ness of the gift to our modern life of the personality of whom these words may be truthfully spoken? Quite aside from any doctrine of Messiahship, and unaffected by the Greek theory of the Logos, must not the modern man who truly understands himself still say unfeignedly, with Paul, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift"? For it is here implied, it should be noticed, that there is much more in Jesus than bare evidence of the existence of God. There is "that which enables me to live," says Paulsen. The greatness of the gift of Jesus is not merely that he points, thus, however convincingly, to the fact of God, but that he means to bring men into real fellowship with God.

Here, I venture to think, the modern age needs Jesus as no other age has ever needed him. The road into assured communion with God for earlier generations was far easier than for ours. For our age has come in such preeminent degree to scientific and moral self-consciousness that for men to-day the previous easier roads into the religious life are in large degree closed. The psychological treatment, for example, of mysti-

cal experiences has made it impossible for us to take at their own valuation all kinds of ecstatic states; and we can feel no surety in these short cuts to communion with God by means of a religious experience that cannot bear the rational and ethical test. It is just at this point that Christianity has its supreme gift to make to the man of to-day. For the deeper our moral consciousness, the greater our sense of moral need. In Herrmann's words, "We feel ourselves to be separated from God, and consequently crippled in our faith by things which troubled the ancients very little. . . . Therefore, the only God that can reveal himself to us is one who shows himself to us in our moral struggle as the Power to which our souls are really subject. This is what is vouchsafed to us in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ." Christ does not merely tell us of God and of his holiness and love; he does much more, — he makes us able to believe this. He, and no other as he, searches, humbles, assures, and exalts us at the same time. "When once he has attracted us by the beauty of his Person, and made us bow before him by its exalted

character, then, even amid our deepest doubts, that Person of Jesus will remain present with us as a thing incomparable, the most precious fact in history, the most precious fact our life contains."

What language can measure the greatness of the gift that Jesus thus makes to the present work-a-day life of the man who thinks? What language can measure the meaning of the simple fact that there has once appeared among us men a life that can call out absolute trust, a life into the presence of which we may come, out of any experience, to find renewed within us our deepest faith, our highest ideals?

In all this there is implied that in the life and spirit of Jesus we have the best light, also, on our ethical ideals, that human thought and experience know — the best answer to our second question, What ought I to do? Ranke only expresses the common judgment of men when he writes: "More guiltless and more powerful, more exalted and more holy, has naught ever been on earth than his conduct, his life and his death. The human race knows nothing that could be brought, even afar

off, into comparison with it." Here is for us a genuine "personalized conscience."

As to Christ's contribution to human life at a single point of ethical significance, Harnack can say: "Jesus Christ was the first to bring the value of every human soul to light, and what he did no one can any more undo. We may take up what relation to him we will: in the history of the past no one can refuse to recognize that it was he who raised humanity to this level." And Wundt and Lotze confirm this judgment.

There has been printed in editions of many thousands and translated into several modern languages a plain little story with the subtitle "What Would Jesus Do?" We may contend that the question is not accurately phrased, but we cannot doubt that the asking of that question has a significance for men that the substitution of no other name for Jesus would permit it for a moment to have. It was John Stuart Mill who wrote: "Not even now could it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to

endeavor so to live that Christ would approve of our life."

Moreover, though one sees clearly that Jesus is not dealing primarily with questions of modern culture and civilization, it remains true that the modern social consciousness, in its most earnest endeavor, can do nothing more than apply the spirit of his teaching and his life to the newer problems of our own day. And that higher civic virtue, for which we wait, is the embodiment only of his principle: "He that would be first among you shall be servant of all." It is not too much to say, in the words of a modern historian, "The image of Christ remains the sole basis of all moral culture, and in the measure in which it succeeds in making its light penetrate is the moral culture of the nations increased or diminished."

With these answers to the questions, What can I know? and What ought I to do? Jesus enables the most modern of men to turn to the question, For what may I hope? with an assurance nowhere else to be gained.[1] The greatest proposition of re-

[1] Cf. the author's *The Seeming Unreality of the Spiritual Life*, pp. 237 ff.

ligious faith to which the human race has attained, or to which, so far as our highest ethical imagination can see, it ever may attain, is the simple affirmation, God is like Jesus. And if God is like Jesus, life cannot possibly prove a mockery for any soul who has been true to the inner light. If God is like Jesus, it is not true that men have been made on a plan so large that ages cannot suffice for growth equal to their capacity, and still must find themselves snuffed out like a candle in the dark, after a few vain years of aspiration, of cherished ideal, of hard-fought struggle, of deepening friendship. No, it is not true! Doubtless our best human achievement is faulty enough; but his life and vision are poor indeed, who has not caught glimpses of other lives, redolent of the grace and mercy that we would fain ascribe to God; and God knows, if there be a God, that they deserve to go on and not to die.

Here, again, we are driven directly back to Christ for our strongest assurance. So Matheson speaks, in a passage I have elsewhere quoted, of "the impossible consequences of a denied future." "If there be

no immortality, Christ is dead — the purest, the fairest, the loveliest life that ever breathed has become less than the napkin, less than the grave-clothes, less than the sepulcher. It is to Paul an impossible consequence. He cannot think of Christ as dead. He says, 'If Christ be dead, death must be a delusion.' Did you never feel this experience? You parted with a friend an hour ago, and the next hour you heard that he was dead; you said, 'Impossible!' And when it was confirmed, you said again, 'Impossible! If he be dead, then death is not to die. I must have misnamed it, misread it, mistaken the inscription on its doorway. Death henceforth is a gate of life to me.'" "Son of Man, whenever I doubt of life, I think of Thee. Nothing is so impossible as that Thou shouldst be dead. I can imagine the hills to dissolve in vapor, and the stars to melt in smoke, and the rivers to empty themselves in sheer exhaustion; but I feel no limit in Thee. Thou never growest old to me. Last century is old, last year is old, last season is an obsolete fashion; but Thou art not obsolete. Thou art abreast

of all the centuries, nay, Thou goest before them like the star. I have never come up with Thee, modern as I am. Thy picture is at home in every land. A thousand have fallen at its side, but it has kept its bloom; old Jerusalem, old Rome, new Rome — it has been young amid them all. Therefore, when oppressed by the sight of death, I shall turn to Thee. I shall see my immortality in Thee. I shall read the possibilities of my soul in Thee. I shall measure the promise of my manhood by Thee. I shall comfort myself by the impossible conclusion, 'If there be no immortality, Christ is dead.'" The real ground, that is, of faith in immortality is Jesus himself, his character, his teaching, his death.

It is written of one of those fateful crises in the life of Jesus, when was fought out, under the leadership of Peter, one of the world's "decisive battles," that, in the sifting out of his following, Jesus finally turned to the Twelve to ask: "Will ye also go away?" And the fourth gospel makes Peter answer in words often since wrung from human lips in like crisis hours: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words

of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." And this answer of a struggling soul in a Capernaum synagogue in the far-away years remains still, so far as I can see, the best answer that the human heart, reaching out for God and right and hope in answer to the challenging questions of our own day, can make: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."

The situation described in the gospel was not an easy one for the Twelve. They, too, understand but partially what Jesus means, though he has made it all too clear that many of their conceptions of Messiahship are doomed to disappointment. But still they have been long enough with Jesus to know that there is no one else to whom they may better go. If the secret of the spiritual life, they are saying through Peter, if the true life with God, if the assurance of the Father, are not with thee, surely they are with no one. If there is any hope at all, it is with thee; to go back from thee and to give up our faith in thee,

is to give up all faith in truth, in righteousness, in God. A situation very like this is the exact situation to-day. Questions and difficulties and doubts we may have, but we cannot have less of them away from Jesus. Such light as we have gathers right here, about him. "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

And we too, with Peter, pass on, through the troubled, half-bewildered questioning and struggle, with gathering strength and assurance, to the positive ground, and say with him: "Thou hast the words of eternal life." We have found new life with thee; little by little, as we have stayed with thee and heard thy words and felt the touch of thy spirit, our point of view, our desires, our ambitions, have changed. And now that you force the question upon us, the answer is ready, and we can see that "all the springs of our life are in thee." We cannot give thee up. We live in thee; and the quality of this new life we have found with thee verifies itself as eternal. Thou bringest us into the very certainty and sharing of the life of the eternal God. Thou canst not pass. "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

With faith tested, thus, by experience of Jesus in life, Peter is able to go on to say: "We have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." Whether this was a Messianic title or not, he can hardly have used it here with the full sense of it as such. He is simply speaking out of his heart what he has found Jesus to be, and naturally drops into this sacred confession. In this hour of questioning he has hardly gone far enough yet for any theological formulations; he is only answering the heart-searching inquiry of his Master, and he finds that he can say, and must say that — as never before, and as nowhere else, as no prophet has been imagined by him — he has felt in Jesus the living touch of God. Jesus has made him feel his sin and God at the same time. The words indicate, too, the source of his feeling — "the Holy One of God." His great argument, that is, finally, and ours too, is the character of Jesus. With the prologue of this fourth gospel, we still may say: "We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This is the great miracle of the history of the

race, and if this is true, we can easily grant or spare all the rest. And it is true — the one great fact of this history of our earth. "The Light is come."

Thus, even in our hours of crisis, Jesus answers our insistent questions: What can I know? What ought I to do? For what may I hope? And, face to face with him, we may say with Peter: "If the solution is not in him, there is no solution. He meets the test of life. And the great ground of our confidence is his character and the inner appeal of God in him." So surely has Jesus abiding significance for the entire spiritual life of men. He is still the great source of life.

V

THE ENEMIES OF LIFE

Opposing Personalities

Our previous discussion has already indicated that life finds most dangerous enemies in the peril of the lower attainment, and in the lack of honesty and fellowship with the best; and so in refusing to face the outstanding facts of life with an honest reaction upon them, and in turning away from the supreme sources of life. Here, however, we are thinking not of these impersonal perils, but of the dangers lurking in those essential personal relations from which we cannot turn aside. The spiritual life is so entirely a life ultimately of personal relations, that we cannot ignore the dangers that lie here. In simple honesty, too, we have no right to be oblivious to this darker side of life. The consideration of the perils in our personal relations peculiarly concerns, also, those whose calling

is largely personal in its nature. Moreover, few lessons are so valuable to any of us as those that may be learned from studying our own lives side by side with the lives of far greater souls. There is a great wealth of suggestion for the man who is willing to put his life, thus, alongside of that of the great Master of life, to learn the lesson of its parallel experiences.

It is Matthew who has made most plain for us in the central section of his Gospel (Matt. 11–14) the personal elements of opposition in the life and work of Jesus. He sees Jesus confronting the doubt of John, the shallow and unappreciative response of the Galileans, the prejudiced and malicious opposition of the Pharisees, the attempted spiritual dictation of his kindred, the contempt of familiarity of his fellow townsmen, the opposition of Herod, the constant breaking in on his sought retirement with his disciples, the slowness and dullness of this inner circle, and even their disloyalty. How much of all this concerns us? The thoughtful observer of his own life is certain to find, it may be suspected, experiences running quite parallel to these of Jesus.

First of all, in loyalty to truth and to his own growth, and in the inevitable difference of ideals, every earnest growing man, and especially every leader and teacher, must expect what Jesus found in his relation to John — growing distrust of previous warm friends. These friends may be, like John the Baptist, those who believed in you first and most, and those who perhaps started you toward your present ideals, or encouraged you in them. Or they may be those who began with you and have not gone on, or have gone another way, and, in any case have lost touch with your point of view and with your way of approach to things spiritual and divine. They are those who miss, perchance, the old phrases, or who had mapped out your course for you and you have not followed it, but have grown away from them. It is not easy to face, as a practically certain element in one's life-work, this growing distrust of previous warm friends. But one can hardly expect to be spared it.

How, now, is one to meet, with calm and courage of spirit, this growing distrust of friends whom he has loved and whose

faith he would gladly sacrifice much to keep? Because he cannot be as sure as Jesus was with reference to his own position, he may well, in the first place, make this growing distrust of old friends an occasion for carefully reviewing the grounds of his own position again, for making sure that he has not, in heedlessness or haste or prejudice, drifted or rushed into positions which he cannot justify. He may not assume without question that he is certainly right and that these who distrust him are certainly wrong. But when, in modesty, he has made such a resurvey of his position, he is sure, in a number of cases, still to find that he cannot hope, in loyalty to the truth, and in obedience to his own conscience, to take a position which can satisfy these old friends. He will find it possible only carefully to follow Jesus' own method in meeting the doubt of John: He will warmly sympathize with their difficulty; he may gently appeal for their confidence; he will generously praise, recognizing their true worth; and he will send the tender message back with the evidence of the life and power of his work in fruits, as Jesus

said to the messengers who came to him from John: "Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see."

To bring pain and disappointment to warm friends, to gain only growing distrust — sometimes from fathers and mothers, sometimes from earlier teachers and one's childhood companions — is a sad and bitter experience, but it is a practically certain part of the experience of every earnestly growing soul.

The faithful teacher or leader in any high sphere may expect, also, to share with Jesus the experience of the shallow and inappreciative response of an enthusiastic following. It is particularly hard to be conscious of failure, where one seems most to succeed; to find the hour of one's apparent triumph in truth the hour of bitter defeat. But this was the experience of Jesus himself. It may be confidently expected, in his measure, by every real leader in high things.

For the worst enemies of a great and deep cause are its shallow friends; the friends who, because of their very shallowness, do not understand it, constantly

misrepresent it, and therefore always hinder it. They have no abiding care for the deeper riches. They offer only the shallow ground or the choking thorns, putting small comparative estimate on the great cause to whose support they are pledged. They are those who, overriding Jesus' own conception of himself, would "come and take him by force and make him king." They see in him only a bread-king, not lord of all life, and the supreme revelation of God. They have no power to weigh spiritual worth; they can measure only economic values, can count only loaves and fishes. They hear, therefore, no deep message, whether from John or Jesus. They are fickle, vacillating children in the market-place, not willing to play either wedding or funeral — unable to respond greatly to the appeal of either joy or sorrow. They can face, on the contrary, the greatest divine manifestations and be unaroused in the depths of their nature, untouched by what would move the hardest. The moral and spiritual leader becomes to such what Ezekiel became to many who heard him: "Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely

song, of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well upon an instrument, for they hear thy words, but they do them not." These shallow hearers who hear at first with prompt enthusiasm are they for whom small things are enough; who feel no great thirst, but are pettily satisfied; who refuse to accept the best one has to give.

Now this shallow and unappreciative response of a following that may be still really enthusiastic, may be, on the one hand, a grievous disappointment, or it may be, on the other hand, even greater peril. If the leader still keeps his aim high, if he knows the greatness of his message and of the kingdom of truth in whose service he is, the shallow response is bitter disappointment indeed, but it does not imperil his own life. But if he accept the shallow construction put upon his message by some who will count themselves his most enthusiastic friends, but who, nevertheless, minister not to his best, nor call that best out; if he accept as satisfactory the support of those who are willing, rather, to serve his selfish ambitions and make him

in his turn bread-king, or would like him to be their hired man in the ideal realms, like Micah's priest, and pay him well on the lower side, but who yet would wrest him from his noblest purposes to their lower ones, even "by force" — here is deadly peril. The larger service of many a life has been wrecked by this shallow response, taken as sufficient and satisfactory or even to be gloried in; because that meant that the man himself was lowered, his vision lost, his message made as shallow as the response. As the member of any high calling values his life and that calling, he may count no such shallow enthusiastic following as success, for it is in truth deep failure. He can only face its bitter disappointment as Jesus faced his — send the multitude away, retreat to the mountain to pray, bring succor to the faithful few in danger of being dazzled by this surface enthusiasm, and go back to Capernaum to sift out his following.

And he will try definitely to meet this shallow response as Jesus met the similar response of the Galileans, by showing its unreasonableness, by reproof of its blind

folly, by appeal and tender recurring invitation, while throughout refusing, nevertheless, to lower his message or his mission to the low demand of this shallow and inappreciative, though it be enthusiastic, response. But he may not hope either wholly to prevent or wholly to evade such an answer to his work.

Neither is it possible for one to escape, in any faithful ministry of the truth, the bitter, prejudiced, malicious opposition of self-satisfied and self-ordained conservators of the truth and savers of the ark. Here, too, one must walk in the way of the Master of life. The teacher and every servant of the truth must have a passion for reality, an earnestness in pursuit of the truth, that brooks no arbitrary limits. He is sure, therefore, to have to face the opposition of those who profess to judge from high standards, but yet are sticklers for hoary rules, repeaters and testers of phrases, worshipers of customs, and echoers of creeds never really their own, rather than contenders for judgment and mercy. They are so prejudiced that they may ascribe, as in the case of Jesus, the divinest works

to evil, thus perverting all moral and spiritual discernment. They are therefore able to understand only certain magical signs, not the true spiritual and moral appeal. They are empty souls, destitute of all real moral and religious appreciation and enthusiasm, and with no sense of the greatness of the spiritual call. It is still quite possible that the worst enemies of the truth and of real spirituality may be among the most zealous religionists, and those that count themselves most concerned for the truth.

Even a humble and patient and tolerant and loving ministry to the lives of others, that is nevertheless faithful, cannot hope wholly to escape such bitter and malicious opposition. And one needs all the powerful influence of the example of Jesus to be able to meet such opposition rightly. Remembering one's own need and shortsightedness and temptability, one will wish first of all to make sure that he has not deserved any part of this opposition, to see to it that if at any point he has failed herein, he does not further provoke needless antagonism. But with this point guarded,

one will have to meet the inevitable opposition which still remains, with Christ's own profound sense of the emptiness of soul involved, and with the deep pity which such a state provokes as can nothing else. For none are so hopeless as those who do not care, who have lost all power to discriminate in values.

And then, for oneself, turning from the thought of the opposition which cannot be wholly stayed, it will be possible only to gird one's soul again for this steady going forward with one's work and one's testimony to the truth, as Jesus did, while provoking no needless controversy. Truth can only so make progress. How many times in the years of every faithful life, night after night and morning after morning, will the soul have to come back to this one thought: The only thing I can do is simply to go on doing as nearly right as I know how; for I must not, in any case, allow myself to be provoked into an attitude akin to that which opposes me. "Consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls."

"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master."

Beyond the distrust of previous warm friends, beyond the shallow response of enthusiastic followers, beyond the prejudiced opposition of the self-satisfied, every highly determined soul may expect, with Jesus, attempted spiritual dictation on the part of those near and dear. In the thick of your battle, pressed on every side, because of the very strenuousness of your fight, these, with natural concern and perhaps with some wounded pride, — saying he is "beside himself," — still "stand without," hold aloof, and yet wish to dictate your course. If they come in love, it is still largely mistaken love, caring more for your comfort than for your growth and for your work.

In this attempted dictation on the part of those one loves may lie a dire and deadly temptation, all the more so because of its source. It was not for nothing that Jesus said, "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." There is a point beyond which you may not allow even love itself to tempt you. Love makes it hard to refuse to listen. And yet you had not

loved them half so much, loved you not honor more. One must therefore straightly, though tenderly and reverently, face this opposition and this peril. We must make it forever clear to ourselves that no other may dictate in our inner life, in the ultimate decision of our duty. No other may decide for us, no other may force our decision; and they are not true friends who would do it. They make, rather, the mistake of the companions of Socrates, who would deliver him from prison to bind him over to continuous self-contempt.

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." "And there is meaning in Christ's words," as Ruskin says. "Whatever misuse may have been made of them, whatever false prophets — and heaven knows there have been many — have called the young children to them, not to bless, but to curse, the assured fact remains, that if you will obey God, there will come a moment when the voice of man will be raised, with all its holiest natural authority, against you. The friend and the wise adviser — the brother and the sister — the father and the master —

the entire voice of your prudent and keen-sighted acquaintance — the entire weight of the scornful stupidity of the vulgar world — for once, they will be against you, all at one. You have to obey God rather than man. The human race, with all its wisdom and love, all its indignation and folly, on one side, — God alone on the other. You have to choose."

Every leader in the pursuit of the truth and in spiritual endeavor is sure to find one of the most common and certain elements of opposition, as Jesus found it, in the further fact that "the prophet is not without honor, save in his own country and in his own house." The unreadiness to recognize the message of the known man may be assumed, as well as the very common failure to support the prophet as prophet and for what he really is until after his death. The building of the tombs of the prophets, rather than following their living voice, was not confined to Christ's day. All real leaders may expect, therefore, something of that contempt that belongs to familiarity from those for whom the familiar, just because it is familiar, seems of small account; and

who, for this very reason, are the more ready to run over to the strange voice and the novel message. There will always be many in any community who find it difficult to recognize greatness or worth in itself. They are able to see it only when it has been properly indorsed by others from outside. They repeat again the old questions of the contempt of familiarity: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"

While this obstacle is by no means the most serious that a man must meet in his life-work, it is still a real hindrance, often leading to a quite unjust overestimation of the outside strange voice or message, that may be hard to bear because one cannot help feeling the essential injustice of the judgment. And this very fact may lead one to yield to the temptation either to strive after the merely novel and strange, or popular, rather than the true, — straining for effect, —or to press for public recognition outside, in the treatment of calls, in public

exploitation of one's self in the press or on the platform, and so to force recognition at home. In either case, the man has consented to some lowering of himself; and the straining for effect is especially likely to give a false note to one's own work and message, and to react on one's mood and feeling, so that he is no longer a true man with a God-given calling. Every true man will need rather to stay his soul with Paul's conclusion, "It is a very small thing that I should be approved of man's judgment."

When a man asks himself how he is to meet in a high and unselfish spirit, and with real dignity and success, this element of difficulty in his life-work, it is plain that he must first of all, in simple fairness, recognize a certain justice in the difficulty he confronts. He must plainly admit the value of different points of view and of the fresh putting of things, and allow himself neither to oppose nor to be jealous of any gain that may so come. Least of all is he to yield to the involved temptation to "stoop to conquer." He is to keep himself high and noble, and to be sure that the appreciation of the seemingly more successful work or

messages of others drives him only to seek a stronger, deeper, truer work and message himself, in order to keep true to his own best ideals. For the unjust judgment which still remains after all possible allowance, the spiritual leader needs to remember that, as in Christ's case, popular response is no full proof of truth and wisdom, no adequate measure of the value of the work done. And he must simply keep steadily on in the faithful proclamation of the best vision that God gives him. Nothing else, in any case, is open to him.

It is Herod, in the conception of Matthew, who, moved by Herodias in her exposed wickedness, puts an end to the more public ministry of Jesus and drives him into comparative retirement. And in every age there is always a strong tendency on the part of the regular authorities, the powers that be, the forces of society, to crush the unwonted, to deprecate anything that essentially changes the routine of the customary, to block any more serious changes. The prophet's voice, on the contrary, must often be a disturbing voice, and the persistent call of our own generation for "the

sane," it is to be feared, quite often means only, "Leave us undisturbed, don't call the conventional in question."

Of course the real leader in any ideal realm must expect the uncompromising opposition of those whose evil is challenged and who resent the high standard which condemns them, who would silence the prophet's voice and gladly appeal to the authorities against "this stirrer up of the people," this "disturber of the peace." From the days of Socrates and of Jesus, it has been easy to make the established authorities find an enemy of society in the prophetic messenger. The danger of the spiritual leader is that he will not be willing to be a real prophet speaking out his message; that he will love peace more than purity, and be unwilling to say the demanded word. Some of the best men I have known have been tempted to failure at this point. It is the peculiar temptation of the public man to keep his popularity and his reputation for sanity, at the expense of real cowardice. He yields to the prophet's temptation, — "Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." To be

a prophet is no holiday task. A spiritual and moral leader must lead, and he must often subject himself to severe criticism on that account. A prophetic ministry to a community or nation must fear God rather than men. And the more such professions as preaching and teaching and writing become regularly organized functions in human society, the greater is the danger that they will not remain untrammeled. The spiritual leader must never for an instant admit, either to himself or to any one else, that he is the hired man of either few or many. He is called to be a preserver, helper, inspirer, warner for men's moral and spiritual life. He is put in trust with the truth, with great community interests and with men's souls, and as he is true to that trust he must speak some things, though in meekness and in charity, that men do not want to hear. The danger at this point in any life-work is very great.

How, then, may a man meet, in Christ-like spirit, this opposition of the customary and of unveiled wickedness? First of all, he must make his own position unmistakably clear, though with charity and

meekness, and courageously stand for it. In the second place, he is neither to seek conflict nor to provoke it needlessly. He is not to pursue martyrdom, nor to pose as a radical reformer. The best reformers the world has ever known found their work forced on them reluctantly. The true prophet can as little covet martyrdom as he may allow himself in cowardice. And when, through such public opposition, his work seems hindered and narrowed, he is to turn, as Jesus turned, only the more earnestly and fully to his deeper, though less conspicuous, work. The shutting out of the more public opportunity may mean the fruitful shutting in to more significant work.

But even when you have turned with full heart to that deepest work given you with a few, you must still expect the difficulty of the constant breaking in on your sought retirement and on that deepest work. It is sure to come. As men who are trying to accomplish some significant and solid work, the "devastator of the day" will be always with you. There are few things that earnest men need more to make clear

to themselves from the beginning of their life-work, than that they will have to fight for time to grow, for time to do solid enduring work, for time to do especially the particular definite piece of work which God has laid on their souls to do. High achievement is possible to no man who does not carry to his work deep reverence for it, as given him of God. One must count on the constant interruption and multitudinous unforeseen extras that always crowd the life of the busy public man. One will be, thus, in constant danger of frittering away himself and his work and his deepest service.

It is most important, therefore, that one should face definitely and fully this further enemy of his life — the constant breaking in on his sought retirement and his deepest work. Here, too, one needs the inspiration and the counsel of Christ's own example. One may not allow himself to make the monk's mistake; you cannot withdraw from life if you would minister to life. You must live in the very midst of it. These interruptions, it is true, may be either temptations, or calls of God; and one must learn to discriminate. You cannot do every-

thing, and you will find yourselves obliged to cultivate vigorously Dr. Trumbull's "duty of refusing to do good." One may well confront himself, in the face of multitudinous opportunities, with the persistent question, Have I just here a real message? Is this God's opportunity for me just now? or does it, rather, mean leaving more imperative and immediate obligations? If the threatened interruption is for you truly God's opportunity, then you are to use it to the full, gladly, and with abandon, and to get back promptly to your regularly given work. For your greatest work must always lie with that small inner circle whose lives you may touch most closely. But even the few, it must always be remembered, one is training not for their own sake alone, but for the service of the larger number beyond his immediate reach.

Even in this most fruitful work, with the few nearest to him, the leader cannot escape another persistent obstacle. In the work with this inner circle particularly committed to him, he will be compelled to feel often their slowness and dullness; for they are giving, and can give, much less time and

thought to the themes of the ideal world than he. It will often seem to him as if exceedingly small progress were being made, and he will chafe under the constant need of adaptation, of accommodation to narrowness and prejudice and false education and different temperaments. And he will especially feel, in what will prove to be some of the darkest hours of his higher life-work, the painful lack of full sympathy and complete response to his best, even on the part of those who stand closest. He will know what it is in much to be left quite alone, and he will enter, in his measure, into the experience of the solitariness of the Master of life.

One will be able to meet this most interior obstacle of his life-work, only as he definitely aims to cultivate patience with what must often seem to him slowness and dullness. This greatest work that it is possible for any man to do — the giving of himself fully to a few — in its very nature requires much time and continuous association. But as surely as Christ's greatest work was not his miracles, nor his public preaching and teaching tours, but his

close personal training of the little inner circle, so surely must any man's greatest work lie in the same sphere. This most significant opportunity one can meet only as Christ did, with time and close association and the steady putting of the truth, while he keeps firm in his heart the spirit of high hope, because he understands that as this intimate work with a few is one's most significant and fundamental work, as the ends here sought are supremely great, so he need not begrudge the greatest pains. One must often come back for the staying of his soul to the fact that it seems quite probable that the larger part of even the so-called public ministry of the Master of life was devoted chiefly to the training of the Twelve; and one will seek to come into the sharing of his own infinite patience and hope.

There is yet one further bitterness which the earnest soul may not be spared. It is hardly possible that any true leader in a large work should be wholly without the experience of disloyalty on the part of some, even in the inmost circle. There will be some betrayals on the part of those who

belong only nominally to the inner group, but there will be at least the temporary denials of those who really are of the inmost circle. That within this bond of intimate fellowship disloyalty should appear, must always give the sharpest pain of all. No considerations can make that experience easy; none can make it other than an abiding sorrow.

Nevertheless, it is open to every learner of the Master of life to drink even this bitterest draught, in the spirit that Jesus showed, — to face the certainty of coming defection — "Ye shall be scattered every man to his own and shall leave me alone" — with the quiet firm faith in God that makes it possible still to say, "And yet I am not alone because the Father is with me." He may connect, too, with this faith in God, Christ's own conquering, towering faith in man, which can look forward even past denial and desertion to the assurance of the return, and urge, in confidence in that work of God already begun in these men, "I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren."

To attempt any really spiritual service of men — and none of us can be satisfied to do nothing here — is no lackadaisical calling. It demands, rather, the most virile and heroic qualities, coupled with the deepest and most spiritual insight. It invites one, as we have seen, to face misunderstanding, shallowness, pride and prejudice and malice, spiritual dictation, the contempt of familiarity, the opposition of the customary and of unveiled wickedness, the thwarting of one's quiet hours, slowness and dullness and even disloyalty in the inner circle. And one may find them all within the bounds of a very small community. All classes are represented in these enemies of one's life, all degrees of intimacy — previous warm friends, enthusiastic followers, open bitter enemies, intimates and kindred, authorities, common acquaintances, true followers, casual claimants on time and thought. All kinds of temptations, too, — plain and hidden, subtle and direct, — here confront one: the appeal of previous warm trust to his loyalty and his desire not to pain; the appeal of shallow followers to his love of success and his desire not to

disappoint; the appeal of bitter opponents to his love of fight and his possibility of prejudice and of hate; the appeal of kinship and love to the tenderness of his affection and to his love of ease; the appeal of one's familiars to his desire for popularity and to his spirit of envy; the appeal of institutional opposition to fear and to obstinacy; the temptation, in the casual meeting, to thoughtless and careless neglect of opportunity; and with one's intimates the temptation to impatience and short-sightedness, sometimes even to bitterness and resentment, to discouragement and to doubt of the love of God and of the possibilities of men. The appeal is made, thus, to motives the lowest and almost the highest; for the very heights which one is called to walk in his highest service themselves prompt to giddiness.

All these enemies of life, too, are not only difficulties, but, as we have seen, personal perils as well. Can one maintain, in the face of them, his faith and hope and love? With large tolerance and with tender sympathy, can one still keep his convictions firm, his own ideals high? The prophetic

life, dedicated to the highest service of men, just because it is of the prophetic spirit, must face all this. On the way to life one must face the enemies of life.

VI

THE ESSENCE OF LIFE

Life in the Will of God

We have found the ruling method of life to be honest response to the highest realities and personalities of life, regarded as the completest manifestations we have of the Source of all life. In pressing our way to the most significant of these personalities, we have found ourselves again and again impelled to give the supreme place to the personality of Jesus. It cannot seem to us, therefore, of small moment, what he thought of our relation to the will of God. For it seems plain that that ultimate harmony of life to which religion looks cannot come to a man while he feels himself still at war with the universe, constantly baffled by the eternal purposes that he sees at work in the world. The deepest condition, then, of fundamental peace must be, in the language of religion, the union of our will

with the will of God. At the center of that most universal of the vital religious documents of the race — the Lord's Prayer — Jesus places, thus, most naturally the petition, "Thy will be done." It is the very heart of religion, the heart of ethics, the center of humanity's highest aspiration. We have a right to expect that its thought will range wide.

Yet it may not be forgotten that the prayer, "Thy will be done," has seemed to many to be the end of hope rather than the assurance of hope. Strange as it sounds, it seems almost true for most that this prayer is said with a gasp, and connotes only bitter trial, deep sorrow, despairing outlook. Our hymn books quite universally put all hymns gathering about this great theme of the will of God under such headings as submission, resignation, discipline, and trial. The old test of conversion — that paradoxical "willingness to be damned for the glory of God" — was a legitimate climax of this view of the will of God. Indeed, there is a singular lack of hymns or of other writing that connect the note of hope and triumph with the

thought of the will of God. Are these things, now, an accurate reflection of the thought of Jesus? Are they signs of a genuinely Christian spirit? or do they come far short of such a spirit? Can we reverse the seemingly dominant conception at this point, and change the atmosphere of this petition from one of gloomy, corroding foreboding to one of confident hope?

In the fulfillment of this purpose we may well consider three things: What this prayer meant to Jesus; how it confronts and transcends all the inadequate conceptions of religion that have marked the progress of the centuries; and the necessity that modern Christianity, in line with the thought of Jesus, should enlarge and deepen its conception of the will of God to meet the need of the modern world.

Remembering that the teaching of Jesus is never to be separated from himself, a threefold assumption plainly underlies this petition, and each assumption is a great ground of hope: first, that there is a heavenly Father, of character like Christ's own; second, that there is a heavenly life, in which God's will is already perfectly

done; third, that God's will is pledged to a like heavenly life here on earth. Out of these assumptions is born the prayer "Our Father, thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." God's will, that is, backs up with its infinite resources every such petition, and every corresponding endeavor.

First of all, then, for Jesus there is at the heart of the world a personal will — for even our later philosophy can hardly carry through an impersonal, or subpersonal, conception [1] — and that personal will is the will of a Father, with a character like that of Jesus. God is like Jesus; that is the very essence of the Gospel, the source of all hope for every worthy aim and desire in the heart of man.

Secondly, this will of the Father has an eternal outlook upon another life, for which this life is but a training school. There is a sphere where God's will is already perfectly done, into which this life emerges. There is the immortal hope. This so-called eschatological element in the teaching of Jesus is unmistakable. It is not to be

[1] Cf. the author's *The Seeming Unreality of the Spiritual Life*, pp. 74–78.

blinked at nor apologized for. The view of Jesus would be quite too small, if it failed to take in another life and the activity of God. This faith is needed, deeply needed, if the hearts of men are to be satisfied. If death ends all, it is mockery to talk of a satisfying hope; for no jugglery with pretty words and phrases can fill empty hearts or make good extinguished lives. If we must give up the hope of personal immortality, let us do it, at least, with self-respecting honesty, and not befool ourselves or others with substitutes that are not substitutes at all. I confess I much prefer on this point the blunt honesty of John Stuart Mill to the ingenious befogging of some modern altruists. That some men seem to themselves to have discovered that they have no need or desire for the immortal life may be true; but it is not a thing to be said boastfully, and it is small proof for those of us who have both desire and need. For us it must seem that such men have not awakened to full self-consciousness, or at least not to the logical thought of what such self-consciousness means. One wonders if they have ever had aims not to be

snugly packed within a few years, or if they are aware of what even one friendship may involve.

Jesus, at least, is in no uncertainty here. He does not so much assert, or assure, as assume. The atmosphere of his whole life is that of the eternal. He walks in the midst of it; his thought, his spirit, are nowhere else fully at home. And, therefore, he delivered "all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

But, in the third place, Jesus is not thinking in this petition merely, nor mainly, of another life. The language is directed unmistakably to earth and to this life. "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." The attempt on the part of some modern scholars to make the aim of Jesus merely eschatological and miraculous is wrecked on this petition alone, as well as on the whole sweep of his ethical teaching. Unless this petition and this ethical teaching are quite to be emptied of meaning, or an absolute break is to be made between the different parts of his teaching, Jesus is steadily thinking of an increasing reign of

God on earth. Indeed, the reign of God, in its very nature, must look to all men wherever they are, and to all that concerns them. This prayer, therefore, looks in the mind of Jesus to the great goal, the one ambition of his life, — the reign of God in the individual and social life of all God's children in heaven and on earth — the bringing of heaven to earth, and the training on earth for the great goals of the heavenly life. Other men set as their goal some one good, some single aspect of this will; Christ's goal is universal, all-embracing: "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." In the coolness and calmness of careful deliberation, this Galilean peasant — just as other men decide to be farmers, or lawyers, or physicians — takes on as his earthly calling, as his reasonable life ambition, the full reign of God on earth. For simple audacity and vitality of will, the world knows nothing comparable with that ambition. Into the splendor of that audacity and vitality of will all who would name themselves after Christ are asked to come. For to this purpose he soberly commits his disciples, every one, in this

central petition of the prayer that was always to characterize them — "Thy will be done."

It is, then, no cringing cry; it is no slave's submission to superior strength; it is no plaintive wail; it is no outcry of an enfeebled, broken will, as we may be sometimes tempted to think. Rather is it the highest reach of a will superbly disciplined to a world's task, enlightened by a reason that can think the thoughts of God, inspired by an imagination that sees the ultimate consummation, warmed by a heart that feels the needs of men, and glows with the greatness of the Father's purpose for them, — "Our Father, thy will be done."

This petition includes every good for every son of man, — all high enterprise and all great goals. All justice, all truth, all beauty, all merciful ministry, are here enclosed — all the triumphs of science, of literature, of art, of music, of philanthropy, of highest spiritual endeavor — the vision of the city beautiful, the city honest, the city serving, the vision of a redeemed humanity sharing in the very life of God. For all these are but expressions of men's

God-given natures. All this, then, we may believe this prayer means for Jesus.

The history of religion — nay, the history of humanity itself — may be said to be the history of the varying conceptions of the will of God; for religion grows with growth in that conception, and religion, we may not forget, is life's supreme factor. We are to consider, therefore, in the second place, how Christ's thought of this prayer, with his clear sense of a God whose purpose includes all good for all men in both lives, at once confronts and challenges and transcends all those wavering, inadequate conceptions of the will of God that have marked the progress of the centuries. In line with one of the deepest trends of our own time, we need to put the will in the foreground and to confront these defective interpretations of the will of God with Christ's own thought in this prayer.

Religion is, therefore, first of all, no matter of ceremonial, of ritual distinctions of clean and unclean, no pleasing of an arbitrary God with sacrifices and offerings, as most pre-Christian religions thought, — no external observance of any kind. A

holy God of character can find satisfaction in nothing short of inner obedience. The Father finds delight only in the filial spirit. Even the Old Testament prophet knew that "to obey is better than sacrifice." It has been a long and toilsome evolution of humanity, this sloughing off of the ceremonial conception of religion; and many are still in bondage to it. But when Jesus put in the hearts of men the prayer to a God revealed in his own life, "Our Father, thy will be done," all external observances slipped away from essential religion, as having all their significance, only as being absolutely insufficient expressions of an inner life. "Thy will be done" in the inner life.

Religion, again, is no merely beautiful thing for æsthetic admiration, as Hellenic thought, and many a modern echo of it have tried to conceive. Its life is beautiful, but with a beauty no mere æsthete can ever take in. For it is beautiful with the glory of the most majestic of all possible aims — those of the will of God — aims that do not balk at precise and prosaic manifestations on earth, and do not stop short of

the sweep of the ages. "Thy will be done as in heaven, so on earth."

Religion, too, is no merely true doctrine for intellectual apprehension, as Greek and Roman philosopher or orthodox or rationalistic modern would have it. Its teaching is true, but with a truth no mere scholar can ever reach; for its truth is the truth born of experience and wrought out in the laboratory of life. "Thy will be done."

And religion is no mere seeking of mystical experiences, either that half swoon and half ecstasy, for which, as Nash says, the Jew forsook his prophets with their social vision, and the Greek his philosophers with their rational pursuit of truth. The sweep of religion's emotional life is, indeed, widest of all, just because it has to do with the unsearchable riches of the divine personality. But its prayer is not, "Give me great emotions," but "Thy will be done." Underneath the thought of that will of God lie, it is true, peace and joy unfathomable, and nowhere else to be found; but the emotion is incidental to the will, not independent of it, or an end in itself. "Our Father, thy will be done."

Religion, once more, is no practice of ascetic self-mortification, as the monk, ancient or medieval, thought it. It is good tidings. It rejoices in life. It aims to bring continually larger life. It does pay gladly the price of unhesitatingly subordinating all lesser goods, for it knows the cost of high attainment, even in small enterprise; and it takes joyfully what so comes in the greatest endeavors. But it seeks "the life that is life indeed," in union with the will of God. And it knows that whatever self-discipline, whatever surrender of lesser goals are involved in that will, that will of God alone is largest life. Therefore, not in abandonment of life, but in secure possession of it, it prays, "Our Father, thy will be done."

Nor is religion an idle longing for heaven, or an awaiting for some miraculous deliverance from heaven, as the ascetic and world-weary have ever tended to think. It knows, indeed, its need of a goal more than earthly. Its vision is age-long, and it stays its soul with the immortal hope, but it is the hope of a life of ethical content. It cannot, therefore, be indifferent to the

triumph of righteousness right here on earth. It faces the earthly life, therefore, in no despairing, pessimistic mood. Earth, too, is a room in the Father's house; his will is here too, to reign. To that, every child of the Father is pledged. As in heaven, so on earth, thy will be done.

The prayer of Jesus means, too, that religion is no bare adoption of abstract ethical principles, as Stoic philosophy conceived. It is the great contribution of religion that it is able not only to unify all ideals, but to make these all, living, warm, tender in their union in the personal will of a personal God. And that will, in the conception of Jesus, is a Father's will, that says to each child:

> O, heart I made, a heart beats here!
> Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
> Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of mine,
> But love I gave thee, with myself to love.

"Our Father, thy will be done."

And conceived even as response to a personal will, religion is not something arbitrary laid upon man from without, external and foreign to him, as the Pharisee

in all generations has conceived. God's will is laid down in the structure of man's very being, and we cannot be true even to ourselves, and say "No" to him. The deep, far-reaching questions of our own time are driving us back irresistibly to the thought of God as working in us. It is as though God were himself saying to us, in all these questions concerning miracle, supernatural birth, and bodily resurrection of Jesus, — "You shall not believe in me on any of these external grounds." It is Christ's insistence that men shall follow him not because of the signs, but for what he is in himself. It is the providential demand of our own time, God's own voice to us, — "You must have an inner religion, if you are to have one at all." It is not a light error in Jesus' thought, this laying the whole stress upon external, marvelous sign; for it involves, he believes, rejection of the highest in him; and he will be followed for what he is, not for marvels that he works. To our generation, even as to his own, he seems to be saying, "There shall no sign be given to it." And by this very path, perchance, we shall find our way

back to faith, where faith now is difficult. For, in the words of another, "You can never compel moral admiration by physical power; but you can understand that the lower ranges of life may be subservient to one whose greatness lies in the highest, — that is, in the moral order of life." External authority has its undoubted function in the history of the race and of the individual. But it is temporary and provisional always. Its end is the doing away of the need of itself, for it seeks the establishment in each soul of an inner life of its own. Authority itself means nothing where it does not make an inner appeal. And, once more, therefore, with Jesus we pray to the Father of our spirits, whose will is in our very being, "Thy will be done."

And finally, religion is no merely negative aim of any kind, as the Pharisee again and all mere fighters of evils have often been tempted to think, but the fulfillment of a great divine, positive will. The religious man is not to thank God that he is not as other men are. The history of mankind shows all too plainly appetites so dangerous as easily to seem best extirpated altogether.

Nevertheless, it is no emptied soul that can satisfy the thought or desire of Jesus. It is not mere absence of evil, but the kindling of great new enthusiasms, devotions, associations, and causes, that can alone fulfill the will of God. It is this that makes the relation of Christ's teaching to the previous age so revolutionary. He sees clearly that this new spirit of rejoicing sonship cannot be put into the old forms — the new wine into the old bottles. The new spirit necessarily breaks through them, if it is really honest and true to itself. Even of evil there is no final expulsion but by the new affection. And the disciple of Jesus must therefore pray, not the negative prayer, "Empty my soul of evil," but the positive prayer, "Thy will be done," — the prayer for the reign of God within, as well as without.

In all this, Christ's thought of religion as union with the will of God is able to take up into itself every element of truth in all these inadequate conceptions, and yet to transcend them all. There is fullness of life in the will of God, as Jesus conceives it. Here is the essence of life.

In exact line, now, with Christ's own

thought, we men of the modern age must enlarge and deepen our conception of the will of God, if we are to meet the real demands of our time. For certain great convictions have been forcing themselves in upon the minds of men in this modern age, that cannot leave our religious conceptions unaffected.

We live in a world enlarged for our thought quite beyond the possibility of conception by earlier ages: enlarged in the infinite spaces of the revelations of astronomy; enlarged in the mighty reaches of time, measured not only by geological, but by physical, research; enlarged in perception of inner, endless energy, microscopic as well as telescopic, and compelling our admission even far beyond all possibility of vision. We find ourselves living not less in a vastly larger social environment, wide as the earth — every part of it tributary to every other, every part sharing in the life of every other; there can be finally no exclusions. A man cannot help asking himself in such a world, "Is thy God adequate to this enlarged universe?"

We live, too, in a unified world: unified, too, beyond all possible earlier conception; unified in the thought of the universal forces of gravity and magnetism; unified in the principle of the conservation of energy; a world that acts as one world, as though permeated with one will. It is so permeated. For our time, as for no other, the thought of unity dominates. The world is one, past our denial. Man is one, in spite of his seeming duality. Man and the world are akin, and man is the microcosmus in a deeper sense than the old Greek philosopher could guess. Man and man are one in great central likenesses back of all racial differences. And man and God, too, are akin; and our key to the understanding of God is to be found within, not without. No age so certainly as ours should be able to say of man, with the Psalmist, "Thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honor." Is thy God adequate to this unified world?

Moreover, whatever changes come in the great conception of evolution, mankind will never escape again from the idea of an

evolving world. Physics, biology, embryology, psychology, sociology, make it impossible for us to forget that man is, in some real sense, the goal of the whole physical universe, containing within himself the promise of endless progress. And men have dared to dream that, in this evolution, physical, individual, and social, they could even catch the trend of the ages, the direction of the mighty ongoing of God's purposes. Is thy God adequate to this evolving world?

Once more, with the emphasis of the whole of modern science on the conception of law, men look in upon themselves and out upon the universe with other eyes. For the perception of law means discernment of the ways of the universe; means, therefore, insight into its secrets and power to use its exhaustless energies. It means insight into economic and social as well as natural laws, into laws of personal relation, into the modes of the activity of God himself. The idea of law brings, thus, the glorious promise of world-mastery and self-mastery and of conquest of our highest ideals — hope hitherto unimagined. Is

thy God adequate to this great world of law?

We men, thus, of the modern time, who live in this enlarged world, in this unified world, in this evolving world, in this law-abiding world, are forced to enlarge our conception of God and of his will, if we have not already done so, to match this greater vision of the world and of men. For we shall not long believe in a God who is not greater than his world.

When, then, we think of the enlarged world of our time, we shall not be able to make the measure of the will of God petty projects of any kind or order. Here is reason for hope.

When we think of the unified world so necessary to our modern thought, we shall not be able to doubt that the will of God cannot be shut up to small fragments of life or of the race, but must be inclusive of all goods, and of all men, and consistent throughout. Here is reason for hope.

When we think of the mighty evolving world, in the midst of which we see ourselves placed, we cannot but believe that the will of God is in it, working out great purposes

that we can at least dimly discern, and in which, intelligently and triumphantly, we may share. Here again is hope.

And when we think of the will of God, laid down in the laws of nature and of human nature, we find it no longer possible to think of him as mere onlooker in the drama of life; since he is sharing in our very life, and we in his. For, in another's words, "Even the agony of the world's struggle is the very life of God. Were he mere spectator, perhaps he too would call life cruel. But, in the unity of our lives with his, our joy is his joy, our pain is his." Here too is hope, great and abiding.

These convictions, thus, of our modern scientific age may help us to the largeness of the measure of the meaning which Jesus — and Paul after him — put into this thought of the will of God. Under these convictions, it is not too much to say, the ambitions of men to-day have taken on a titanic quality that he must be quite blind who does not see: financial and economic enterprises, world-wide in their outreach; social projects and the pursuit of social ideals that concern not one nation alone,

but all nations, and that go deep down into the heart of all living; missionary movements that, in their very nature, cannot be carried out without affecting the entire personal and social life of every race touched thereby, and changing the very face of nature. Every profession is sharing in this enlarged vision of positive achievement. The physician has begun to dream of a race physically redeemed, through the triumphs of preventive, not merely remedial, medicine. The lawyer is beginning to think he need be no mere attorney, but a servant of the public weal, put in trust with the great heritage of law. Every calling feels that it must more and more think of itself as a social servant, justified by nothing less. We seem to ourselves to be just awaking out of sleep, and out of dull lassitude of will. Now we see what life means. We live in an infinite world, and in that world we have our part to play. We live in a unified world, and just on that account we may work effects wide as the universe of God. We live in an evolving world, the direction of whose progress is not wholly hidden from us; and into the

very plans of God, therefore, it is given us to enter. We live in a law-abiding world, in which God himself is immanent; and he works in us, both to will and to work of his own good pleasure. Is it any wonder that the ambitions of men of the present day, when seen thus in the large, seem to dwarf all previous aims of common men? We build again, and with eager hope, our heaven-scaling tower, but now on foundations laid by God himself; and the confused tongues give promise of changing into a higher harmony in the unity of our wills with the will of God. Now, one cannot so see these mightily enlarged ambitions of men without a great deepening of this always sufficient prayer, "Our Father, who art in heaven, thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."

But in order that into that prayer we may put ourselves with confidence and hope, there must underlie it that threefold assumption of Jesus: of the personal will of the Heavenly Father, of the heavenly life, and of the will of God pledged to the bringing of heaven to earth. For only he can see thus greatly his own ambitions who is

able to gird and undergird his own will by faith in the eternal and all-sufficient will of God. He must know he attempts no hopeless task. And the more nearly men approach that rational, ethical democracy, which seems to be the goal of all earthly endeavor, the more clearly will they see, in Nash's words, that "every form of polity lays a certain tax upon the will. But democracy lays the heaviest tax of all. The vital relationships into which the individual should enter are far more numerous than under any other form. And with each one of them he must go deeper. So the tax levied upon the earnest will is exceeding heavy. It cannot be paid, year in, year out, and paid with increasing gladness, unless the individual be assured that the resources of eternal good are at his back. And this certitude only possesses and pervades him when he has been made whole by trust. The idea of God given to him is a missionary idea. The good is forthputting, or it is nothing. God is an infinite missionary force. There is no fate in him that hinders him from putting forth his best. And the man who touches Christ

and is touched by him to the quick becomes like God, a missionary force, making of himself a redeeming energy that relates itself to the energy of God, as a man's right hand is related to the man. Henceforth there is no fate in him, nothing which cannot be mobilized and put in the field in the service of his fellows."

He who has come into this mighty faith of Christ's in the eternal personal will of the Father, is evermore capable of mighty convictions, mighty surrenders, mighty endeavors. And in this identification of his purposes with God's eternal purpose, it must seem to him, as it seemed to Paul, that he catches a glorious vision of sons of God, come for the first time into their true heritage — a consummation so wonderful that in the glory of it all the rest of the universe, animate and inanimate, seems to share. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain with us until now." "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God."

Let us ask, now, one further question involved in this thought of life in the will

of God. What would be the natural and inevitable effect upon a man's own inner life of steadily and whole-heartedly taking on the will of God in the faith and spirit of Jesus? First of all, the man whose sole purpose is to find and to do the will of God, as disclosed in the laws of his being and in the fundamental facts and personalities of life; whose whole anxiety, thus, is to know the truth; who can say of himself, "I am come, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me"; — that man will naturally find this very purpose lifting him, as nothing else could, above personal prejudice and caprice. This will be true in the precise degree in which he has genuinely taken on that purpose. The very attitude of mind involved tends to clear the judgment, to sweep away befogging sophistries and subtleties, and to make it possible to give a judgment according to the facts. The man with this one determining purpose, in his measure, thus, can truly say, "As I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." He is, so, on the normal high-

road to the knowledge of all needful truth. His present determination to be utterly faithful to his present light is the best possible assurance of the larger light to come. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching." The fourth gospel, therefore, naturally represents Jesus as saying: "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Not only does this single all-absorbing purpose to do the will of God help the man to the knowledge of the truth; but it also affects the temper of his life, and his capacity for work. To seek solely the will of God gives a singular singleness and simplicity to a life and makes it take on something of real greatness. For the utterly candid soul has a transparency of life that seems to make it possible for the world of the spirit to shine through it with convincing power. Even in the case of the greatest, the supreme greatness is in the spirit of the service, not in the size of the task assigned. It requires the domination of a great purpose to make any life truly

great, and there is no purpose so great as the purpose to do the will of God. Large capacity for work, too, is a natural resultant, just because of the concentration of aim involved in the thought that God has for me now just one thing to do, and because of the energizing sense of God, as back of all one's work when thus undertaken. And this latter faith also brings relief from anxious responsibility. When one's will is genuinely identified with the will of God, he can leave the results with God. As Cecil says, "Duties are ours, events are God's. This removes an infinite burden from the shoulders of a miserable, tempted, dying creature."

As surely, too, as a man's life can be no more permanent than the objects to which it is given, and as surely as "the world passeth away and the lust thereof," so surely, on the other hand, "he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." God's plan is an eternal plan. What is inwrought there abides. Nothing conceivable can give such abiding worth to a man's life as that he should have identified his aims with the eternal purposes of God. How else can one be said to have

triumphed in life? To have learned steadily and wholeheartedly to take on the will of God in the faith and spirit of Jesus — this is indeed to have finished one's work, to have "overcome," in the highest sense of that great word. Jesus meant to make possible to his disciples the clearness of judgment, the privilege, the power, the rest, the freedom, the fruitfulness, the greatness and the triumph of that life.

It seems hardly too much to say that the whole battle of the race has been for knowledge of the will of God and for obedience to it. The very meaning of education, too, is the learning of that will in the laws of one's own being, and of the world. If the line of thought we have been following is justified at all, the race has achieved, and education is finished, in just the proportion in which that will of God, in all its majesty, is known and obeyed. This — and this alone — is to have found oneself, to have found one's powers, to have discovered the possibilities of one's world. Whether students have recognized it or not, their whole endeavor for a true education has been this

prayer to the God of their lives — "Thy will be done."

May we not say it out, say it boldly, say it largely, say it with reverent but mighty ambition, say it with joy in our hearts, "Father, thy will be done"? For human lips can frame no other prayer so great, none so full of blessing, of achievement, of peace, of rest, of joy, of eternal hope.

Doubtless, some hard experiences await us. We need not hesitate plainly to say so. We should hardly think any enterprise worthy of our steel that did not have its risks, its difficulties, its obstacles, that challenged and gave worthy employ to all our powers. We mean to be men and women. But still these ills are all by the way, incidents and means, not ends; and the prayer "Thy will be done," we may be sure, is not a prayer for calamities, but for greatest blessing.

Doubtless, submission there must be — hours when we shall feel capable only of bare submission; yet even that submission, when with cold chill hands we hold still to God, will prove "not a weakening denial of self, but a strengthening affirmation of

self." For the prayer, "Thy will be done," we may be sure, is not submission to an arbitrary will without us, but the assertion of the highest self within us.

Doubtless, many minor plans may fail, and we may know in them the bitterness of defeat; but in the greatest purpose we cannot be defeated except by our own consent; for we may take on God's purpose, and share in his triumph. The prayer, "Thy will be done," becomes thus no longer a plaintive cry, but a jubilant, triumphant note. For back of the prayer lies the triumphant conviction voiced in the crusades, "God wills it." For it is a prayer for the triumph of God's loving purpose in us and in all men, a dedication of ourselves to the consummation of his mighty plans on earth and in heaven, dedication to the magnificent sharing in the infinite purposes of God himself, "whose service is perfect freedom."

> I live in triumph, Lord, for thou
> Hast made thy triumph mine.

We are to dare to believe in the splendor of the plans of God. We need not doubt,

as Browning suggests in his *Easter Day*, that far beyond all the exhaustless beauty of nature, past all the wealth of art, past all the reach of "circling sciences, philosophies and histories," past even all tender ministries of human love, stretches the reach of the will of God. These all are but the glories of the earth, God's antechamber.

> The wise, who waited there, could tell
> By these, what royalties in store
> Lay one step past the entrance door.

We are brought, thus, to what sometimes seems to me the deepest of our modern hymns, just because it sounds so insistently the note of larger life, — of hope and triumph in the will of God:

> O Love, that wilt not let me go,
> I rest my weary soul in Thee;
> I give Thee back the life I owe,
> That in Thine ocean depths its flow
> May richer, fuller be.
>
> O Light, that followest all my way,
> I yield my flickering torch to Thee;
> My heart restores its borrowed ray,
> That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
> May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy, that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross, that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

No goal can be greater than that of sharing in the life of God. Here is the essence of life.


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