

The Religion of Christ

Frederick N. Kershner



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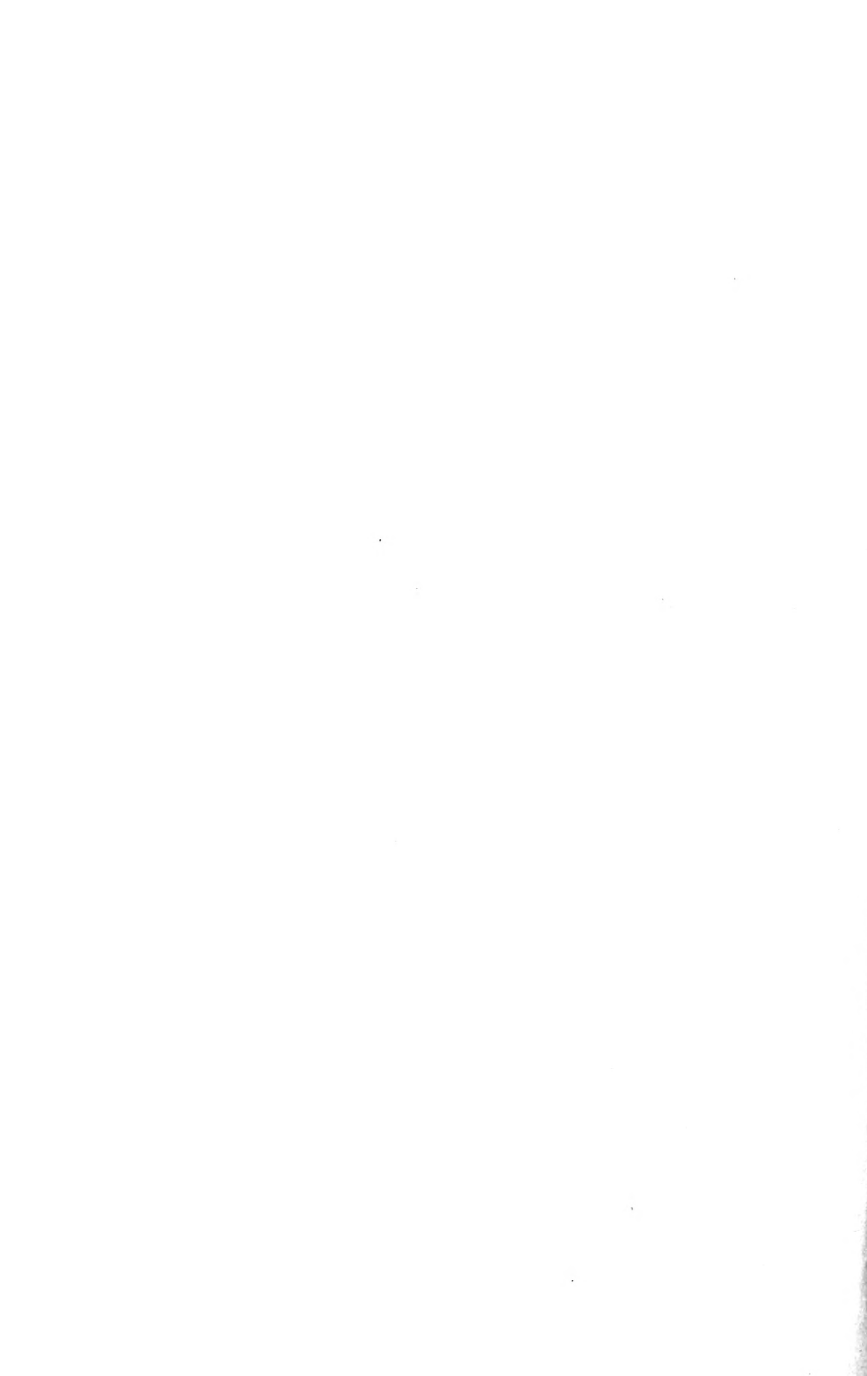
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THE RELIGION OF CHRIST

An Interpretation

By

FREDERICK D. KERSHNER, M.A., LL.D.

Author of "How to Promote Christian Union,"
"Christian Baptism," etc.



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To
GEORGE W. HARDIN
in Word and Deed
a Christian

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Introduction

THIS book is intended to present a rounded and balanced interpretation of the Christian religion. In the dual division of vital and formal Christianity many perplexing problems are, we believe, adequately solved. The division of vital Christianity into its ethical and its mystical features, grouped under the captions, "The Here and Now" and "The Hereafter," is readily recognized as both logical and comprehensive. There may be some difference of opinion in regard to the specification of Righteousness, Service and Freedom as the three supreme ideals of Jesus. Perhaps the majority of present-day authorities would comprehend the subject under the dual division of Righteousness and Service, the one as representing the individual and the other the social goal. And yet Freedom, as a necessary condition of both Righteousness and Service, and as representing the principle most often violated by theologians and churchmen, deserves, we feel sure, a place of its own.

There may be some readers who will take exception to the unique position accorded Christ in moral and religious history. Certain it is that the Hebrew prophets, especially Isaiah and Micah, possessed the ethical view of religion quite as fully as did Jesus himself. Socrates also, and divers other teachers of the ancient world, taught the same exalted ideal. And yet, speaking in a large and com-

prehensive way, we think there can be no reasonable exception taken to the statement that Jesus Christ made the ethical ideal in religion for the first time a world-wide doctrine. He summed up the teaching of the prophets in himself and he made articulate the dim foreshadowings of better things in heathen lands. Just as Jesus stands at the center of our chronology, so he stands at the center of a universal ethic expressed in terms of a universal religion.

The position taken in the book is, of course, frankly ethical, and as such in a large sense non-sacramentarian. The character ideal in Christianity is regarded as the essential thing first, last, and all of the time. Room is left for the mystical and spiritual element, but it is frankly recognized that the ethical ideal of Jesus, as embodied in practical living, is the one ultimate test of Christianity. The necessity for formal religion is fully conceded, as is the value of formal correctness in our interpretation of the teaching of Christ, but this formal element is never exalted to a place where it supersedes the vital. Christian character is bigger than the Christian Church, big as the latter is. The church exists only to produce character, and, failing in this, is valueless either to the individual or to society. Herein lies a great warning for the church. Whenever she ceases to inspire high and noble ideals in her members, she is already on the high road to decay. As the author of the Apocalypse puts it, she must repent and do her first works or else her candlestick will be taken out of its place.

It is worth considering how far the church of Christ to-day is really doing "the first works"; that is, emphasizing and developing the ideals of Jesus in her followers. Unless she is doing this, she is on the certain path to dissolution. Such decay is no impeachment of the truthfulness or power of the gospel of Jesus, rather is it a vindication of that gospel. The church may array herself in all sorts of magical robes and wrap herself about with material pomp and ceremony, but, unless she is really serving the purpose which her Founder intended her to serve, she is drifting to destruction.

The attacks constantly being made upon organized Christianity by the foes of the church always gain point by this sort of dereliction. Were the church really true to the principles and ideals of her Master, most opposition would cease. Of course, not all would disappear, for until Armageddon is fought, Jesus will have to contend with the great antichrist of human selfishness in one form or another. Jesus and Nietzsche can never be made to harmonize. But with the church as it should be, the issue becomes no longer obscure. Each side is judged on its own merits, and there is no confusion. As it stands, a good deal of real Christianity is to be found in the opposition camps, while not a little of pure Nietzschean selfishness masquerades under the banner of the church of Christ.

The developing consciousness of humanity is hungry for that moral idealism which alone can feed the soul. Jesus furnishes this veritable "Bread of Life" when his real teaching is brought to the

famishing human spirit. But to stifle or disguise this teaching under any species of religious mummery is simply to destroy it. Of superstition, credulity, and the mere trappings of religion the world has had enough. For the church to adhere to these things means nothing short of destruction. Nor are these things a part of the real religion of Christ. Sad indeed is it that the greatest figure in the history of the race should so often be wounded in the house of his nominal friends.

It is high time that the real followers of Christ should cease their emphasis upon petty points of division and center their attention upon the larger aspects of Christianity. The Spirit of Formalism, which is almost inevitably the Spirit of Intolerance, on the inside, and the Spirit of Selfishness, which is the Spirit of the World, on the outside, are to-day doing their best to throttle the heart of the gospel. The unfortunate division of forces on the part of the adherents of ethical Christianity gives comfort to the foe. May we not hope that this division is destined soon to give place to the larger unity which was undoubtedly the ideal of our Master?

FREDERICK D. KERSHNER.

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PART I

Christ the Centre of World History

I

THE WORLD GROWS TO MANHOOD THROUGH CHRIST

THE teaching of Jesus Christ involved three things : first, a change of basis from that of all preceding religions ; second, the furnishing of a new moral ideal for the world ; and third, the adoption of a new method for the extension of religious truth. A new religious basis, a new ideal of life, a new method for extending the truth—these three things make up the religion of Christ. We shall treat of the first under the caption of *Christ the Centre of World History* ; the second is *The Story of Vital Christianity* ; and the third that of *Formal Christianity* or *The Church as an Organization in the World*.

With regard to the first of these divisions, it may be said that all preceding religions, not excepting the Hebrew, were religions of external ceremony, of sacrifices and burnt offerings, of temples and tabernacles, of platters and lavers, and of tithings of mint, of anise and of cummin. Men believed, in many lands, that the way to get rid of sin and to propitiate the gods was to burn their children

in the arms of Moloch, or to have them pass through the fires of Ashtaroath. Upon the blazing altars of Carthage, on more than one occasion, a hundred smiling infants, born of the noblest fathers and mothers in the land, were cast into the flames, stretching out their dimpled hands and uttering their innocent cries while the pitiless priests drowned their voices with the beating of cymbals and of drums.

Now the people who did these things believed that they were serving God. The mother gave up her boy to his awful doom, believing that God was pleased with her action. The father crushed down the agony of his heart as he thought of the terrible fate of his baby girl, because he believed that God demanded the sacrifice. We are shocked, as we well may be, when we think of these things to-day ; and yet, looked at from the point of view of sacrifice alone, there was something about the self-denial of these heathen fathers and mothers which had in it at least a touch of the heroic, a touch of the sublime.

But the human sacrifices of the Carthaginians, no less than the milder offerings of the Greeks, and the ceremonial rites of the Hebrews, were, after all, only external devices for solving the problem of sin, and the counter-problem of growth in the

moral life. The world was still in its childhood, and it had to understand things through symbols, or else not understand them at all. It had to have its building blocks and its picture books, its alphabet and its horn book, before it could be prepared for the better day to come. So also, in the incipient moral training of the race, the method was one of physical compulsion rather than of genuine moral freedom. The stern commandments of Sinai thundered the moral law into the ears of the people with the imperious "Thou shalt not" preceding every phrase, and the dread penalty of physical death awaiting the lawbreaker. There was a superfluity of regulations covering, as it seemed, every possible moral transgression, with penalties affixed to each. Nothing was left to the individual judgment. Everybody was looked after; everything, in modern parlance, was "cut and dried"; and the whole nation checked off and compelled to be good, whether it desired to be so or not. It was all the pedagogical method of childhood.

But the dawn of a new day came with the proclamation of the Sermon on the Mount. Humanity, at one stride, through the moral teaching of Christ, passes from the period of childhood to the full-grown glory of moral manhood and womanhood. The building-blocks and the A, B, C's are put

away ; the old ceremonial rites are discarded ; the formal laws of the temple and the altar are no longer regarded as the ultimate factors in religion. Most of all, the moral training of the race passes from the external restrictions of the child to the freedom of choice and the building up of a moral ideal, which alone constitute character or morality, in the true sense of the term. Instead of the imperious "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not," uttered amid the thunders and lightnings of Sinai, there is the gentle, "Be ye also perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," of the Mount of Beatitudes. The reign of personality succeeds the reign of law ; the rule of moral freedom, that of physical compulsion ; Moses gives place to Christ ; and the world grows to manhood through the moral revolution of the Man of Galilee.

The importance of this change cannot be measured in words. Jesus Christ came, we are told, in the fullness of time. He came to work the mightiest revolution the earth has ever known. The world has been slow to appreciate the full significance of the change. Time and time again, even after the light in all its splendor had burst upon the startled gaze of humanity, man has deliberately gone back to his old idols of the past. Ecclesiasticism, the worship of images, the horrors of mediæ-

val priestcraft, much even of present-day ceremonialism—these all are, and have been, only attempts to fasten the restrictions of childhood upon the full-grown manhood of the human race. But just as the child throws aside its building-blocks and its alphabet, and has no further use for them, so humanity has dispensed with ecclesiasticism and the worship of external ceremonies. Unfortunately, too often the true religion of Jesus Christ, which was responsible, in the first place, for the transition, has suffered in the reaction. Priestcraft, while not entirely responsible for the excesses of a Voltaire, a Diderot, or a Rousseau, had at least much to do with them. A formal Christianity, stifled by ecclesiasticism, is indeed as far from the true spirit and mind of the Master as a so-called “moral skepticism” which contains much of the kernel of His teaching, though failing to give credit for it where it belongs. This I take to be the meaning of those famous lines of one of the greatest Christian poets of the nineteenth century :

“ Perplexed in faith but pure in deeds,
 At last he beat his music out.
 There lives more faith in honest doubt,
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.”

These words are not intended to be a glorification of doubt. They are not an impeachment of the

right sort of creed, but they are a warning served upon the earthly guardians of the Church, to one end. That end is never to sacrifice the Christ ideal of purity of life, in exchange for a barren worship of rites and ceremonies.

The true Christian, by virtue of his birthright as a Christian, must be first of all a moral individual, one possessing the power of choice, one who moulds and fashions his own spiritual nature after an ideal goal which he places before him, rather than one who is scourged into good behavior,—a process which, by virtue of the scourge, has no moral quality about it. It is sometimes said nowadays that there is a species of unconscious prejudice on the part of the average man against what may be styled “churchly things,” and the ecclesiastical habit. Like a good many other unconscious prejudices, it is well founded. Its basis consists in the fact that the world has grown beyond the rule of external forms, and too often these are substituted for the moral content and heart of the religious life. Now the Church has only herself to blame if she has allowed others to interpret her message better than she has chosen to interpret that message herself. That there is and must be a formal element in all religion, may well be conceded ; but it should always be remembered that this formal element can

never take the place of the true heart and core of Christianity, which is *a voluntary transformation of life, due to the influence of the Christ ideal upon the soul*. St. Paul has put the whole question adequately and magnificently in those superb words of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. "But we all," he says, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Moreover, the Christian life, as embodied in the religion of Jesus, means not only freedom from the bondage of external ceremonies, but it also means something more than a mere tissue of beautiful dreams or aspirations towards the goal. Next to the blight of ceremonialism, which does things, though in an altogether useless and harmful sort of way, comes the blight of inanity, of the dreamer, of the man who is always "going to be" but never "is"—the pink-and-white moonshine of modern social faddists who would reform the world at afternoon teas, and get rid of Whitechapel by simply waving it lordly out of existence. Over against this sentimental boobyism come the clear-cut words of the Master, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work"; "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the

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harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." Jesus Christ did not attempt to get rid of sin by passing resolutions at an afternoon tea or in a richly decorated lyceum parlor. No! a thousand times, No! He went out into the highways and the byways and preached and taught and lived the God life, and the true Christian to-day must do the same thing.

“ Be what thou seemest, live thy creed,
Hold up to earth the torch divine,
Be what thou prayest to be made,
Let the Great Master's steps be thine.

“ Fill up each hour with what will last,
Buy up the moments as they go,
The life above, when this is past
Is the ripe fruit of life below.”

II

THE REIGN OF IDEALS VERSUS THE REIGN OF LAW

IF we may be permitted to speak of a world-consciousness paralleling in a measure the consciousness of the individual, then the advent of Christianity marks the transition point from the non-moral period of childhood to the adult morality of manhood or womanhood. The world was a child, to continue the figure, until Christ came. After His advent, it progressed rapidly towards manhood. What marks the transition from the non-moral to the moral period in the individual is the recognition of personal responsibility. The supreme lesson which Christ brought into the world was the value of the individual soul and the responsibility attaching to it. It is of the very essence of the Nazarene's teaching that He laid down no enactments to be obeyed. His whole doctrine was one of ideals rather than of positive statutes. Moses was a great lawgiver, but Christ gave no laws at all. As a formulator of ideals, however, His name stands unique among the teachers of the world. As the painter sees the

beautiful picture before his mind's eye and strives to spread it upon canvas, and as the sculptor sees the glowing image before his gaze and fashions the snowy marble after his vision, so Christ holds up before humanity the perfect likeness of the good life, and asks that we realize it, and transmute our lives into the likeness of His own. That was a true insight which caused good old Thomas à Kempis to style the greatest devotional book of the ages "The Imitation of Christ." Christ never formulated a code, never used the words "Thou shalt," never treated citizens of the goodly moral universe as children, but always as men. He knew that even He could not compel men to be good, that such compulsion was indeed the very opposite of that spirit of holiness which He came to proclaim. Laws for children, but ideals for men ; laws for the political world, but ideals for the moral and religious world ; laws for the old and outgrown world of the past, but ideals for the new and resplendent universe of God. So it is that Christ, with His perfect personality, His rich and abundant life, His mighty, inspiring example, constitutes and always has constituted the essence of Christianity. Amid diverse opinions and multitudinous theories, based upon that uniqueness of thought and feeling which is the secret of the individual, there has yet been a

striking unanimity of belief among the good of all Christian communions in regard to the centre of their religious convictions and belief. "Thou, O Christ, art all I want," has been ever the cry of the devout and the holy of a world-wide Christendom. Ever the prayer of the Christian has been :

" We would see Jesus—for the shadows lengthen
 Across this little landscape of our life ;
 We would see Jesus, our weak faith to strengthen
 For the last weariness—the final strife.

" We would see Jesus—the great Rock Foundation,
 Whereon our feet were set with sovereign grace ;
 Not life, nor death, with all their agitation,
 Can thence remove us, if we see His face."

To see Jesus is to gaze upon Him as an ideal, to see in Him the perfect figure which we are to fashion out of the rebellious marble of our own little lives. This is the religion of Christ, to realize Him in us, to transmute our own stubborn wills into His divine will, and to be in the end like Him. Who then is a Christian ? He who has most of Christ in him ; not he who wears a particular theological label, or he who subscribes to a particular creed, or he who wraps himself in a special vestment or robe, but he who wears Christ in his heart, who has trod with Him perchance the Via Dolorosa of suffering, and who likewise wears with Him the Crown of Light. He who has learned to love like Him, to

forgive like Him, to be humble with Him, to give all, as He told the rich young ruler, and to count it as naught. Robert Burns, in the earliest of his letters which has reached us, says in his own characteristic way, "I am more pleased with the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth verses of the seventh chapter of Revelation than with ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me for all that this world has to offer."

But the galaxy of saints and martyrs pictured in the noble passage to which the poet refers is not made up of the adherents of a particular creed or party, but of the redeemed of all ages and climes and conditions—those who lived with Christ on earth and on that account live with Him in the great Beyond. Therefore to be a Christian, once more, is to realize the ideals of Christ, to voluntarily fashion your own life after His, and to choose of your own will, day by day, to be like Him.

Many people, like children before they reach the age of responsibility, are not ready for a gospel of ideals. The only religion they can comprehend is the religion of statute and legal enactment, of commandments and laws. Mohammedanism controls a tenth of the world to-day for this reason. The gospel of Mohammed was not one of ideals, but one

of law. Compulsion, not volition, was his watchword. It is a fact recognized even now by many missionaries that there are some peoples to whom this crude interpretation of religion appeals more powerfully than the more enlightened teachings of Christ. Nations which are yet children demand a gospel of this sort, but they can grow to manhood only through a religion of ideals, through the religion of Jesus.

No man understood the teaching of Christ better than His greatest apostle, Paul of Tarsus ; but Paul constantly brings out the antithesis between the religion of bondage, typified for him by the Jewish law, and the religion of freedom, exemplified for him in Christ. The Epistle to the Galatians in its entirety is a splendid expression of this antithesis. The law was our schoolmaster, its burden, to bring us to Christ. Always, in Paul's mind, there is a superb feeling of gratitude because of his deliverance from the bondage of statute and his entrance upon the glorious freedom of the sons of God. He is very jealous of this freedom, and contends sharply for it. At the great and imminent risk of causing a schism among the newly planted churches, he strives vigorously for that change from the rule of laws to the rule of ideals which he well and fully recognizes

as the very kernel of his Master's teaching. His constant effort is that Christ may be formed in him, and he esteems all things dross in order that he may realize Christ.

The Apostle John recognized no less than Paul the value and character of Christ's mission. No finer contrast between the Old and the New could have been drawn than that which is afforded in the first chapter of his Gospel: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." In those superb figures characterizing Jesus, with which the Gospel of John abounds, we recognize the devotion of the artist for the perfect ideal of beauty which draws the best that is in the soul irresistibly to itself. Paul was the philosopher of the new religion, but John was its artist and poet. In the magnificent pictures of the Apocalypse, in the splendid poetry of the Gospel, in the limpid, mystical prose of the First Epistle, we read the devotion of the artist for the perfect vision of beauty which it was vouchsafed him to behold. John, because he was a poet, and thought in poetical imagery and revelled in artistic language, understood, with an understanding granted to the poet alone, the beauty of the new freedom which his Master came to proclaim. It is doubtful whether there are three quotations in the Scriptures which

interpret the new doctrine quite so fully as those three monumental passages from the Fourth Gospel: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; and again, "God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"; and still again, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The religion of Christ means fundamentally, therefore, a deliverance from the reign of law, and an entrance into the glorious kingdom of ideals in which the central and foremost figure is ever that of the Christ Himself. This is the kingdom of the free man, of the citizen of God, of all who share in our divine humanity. In this kingdom, too, there is a common brotherhood. As we realize Christ, we are drawn together, so that there is a fundamental unity in the common ground upon which we stand and the common goal which we seek. There have been those in all religious communions who believed, or affected to believe, that their own immediate circle contained all of the elect, all of the band mentioned in the seventh chapter of the Apocalypse, all, forsooth, who belonged to Christ. These men, however, never dared to face their belief squarely; for if they had so done, their own

consciences must have given the lie to them. Who are Christians, again? My party, or your party, or parties? Nay, nay, my brother. They are Christians who best realize Christ, and no creed holds assuredly a monopoly of such. Doubtless the right creed has indeed much to do with the right life, and yet it has sometimes been true, in past history, that the good life has been lived as it were in defiance of creed or party affiliations. Surely a man possesses the religion of Christ, who can appreciate and offer up as incense from the depth of his heart, those words of George Matheson :

- “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 sunshine 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.”

III

THE RELATION OF VITAL TO FORMAL CHRISTIANITY

AMONG all philosophers since the days of Aristotle there has been much use and recognition of the distinctions implied in the words form and content. Things are made up essentially of both these elements. The form of a thing is that which organizes and gives shape to the material which enters into it. The content is the material which fills up the empty but none the less valuable form. Form without content is empty and valueless. Content without form is helpless and without individuality. Each is useless without the other, and both are needed to make up a thing.

This philosophical distinction is of use in understanding clearly the religion of Christ. That which constitutes its form, which gives it shape and organization and individuality is the Church, with its ordinances and laws. That which the Church fosters, and for which it indeed exists, is the moral life. There can be no religion without the Church, nor can there be any true religion without the Christian life. The former is the means, the latter

the end.¹ The Church exists to produce and foster the Christ life among men. She is always a means, never an end in herself. Her goal is Christ, and through her we see Him. She it is who leads us to Him, and without her, we should soon cease to think or care for Him. The end of the religion of Christ is therefore the Christ life, or, as we have chosen to style it, vital Christianity. The means through which alone this end may be realized is the Church, or as we have elected to call it, the formal side of Christ's teaching. Vital without formal religion soon dies; formal without vital is dead already. Both are essential, and the one cannot live long without the other.

Much harm has resulted in the past from the substitution of formal for vital religion, or from an attempt to make an end out of the means. Instead of the Christ life, men thought the essential thing was the church form; instead of love or purity, they put external worship; and they went to church with their hands bathed in blood and

¹ Nothing in this chapter, it is quite unnecessary to say, should be held to mean the identification of "form" with "means," or "content" with "end," as philosophical terms. From one point of view, formal Christianity is a means and vital Christianity an end. From another, the one represents the form, and the other the content of the Christian religion. We believe both points of view to be correct, but the terms themselves should not be confused.

thought they were clean. No student of Italian history during the Middle Ages can fail to appreciate the significance of this distinction. It was said of the Medici family, many of them at least, that they were very religious, but very immoral as well. No one can enter that Tuscan castle where a scion of noble birth strangled his wife to death, despite her pleadings, performing most assiduously his devotions, both before and after the deed, without being struck by the contrast between the religious form and the religious life. Murder, adultery, theft and all manner of uncleanness have existed side by side with the altar, and even beneath the priestly stole. Not all of the people who did these things were hypocrites. One can never enter into the spirit of Italian history or life if he thinks so. There was a misapprehension in many minds regarding the true place and function of the Church, and hence arose much of the evil that makes us shudder as we read of it. People had mistaken the means for the end. Instead of recognizing the Church as the means for producing the Christ life, they had magnified her importance until she became an end in herself, and to serve her constituted therefore the end of life. This error has also been largely responsible for the persecutions which at various times have stained the history of Christen-

dom. Conscientious men put those who did not believe as they did to death with cruel tortures, because the Church, with its forms and requirements, had taken the place of the Christ life in their eyes. Nor were these things confined to mediæval times, or the history of Italy. Other nations and climes were equally guilty, and no form of Christianity is entirely free from blame. As long as people believed that a certain form was the vital thing in making preparation for heaven, or that a particular intellectual belief was essential in order to save an individual from the flames of hell, in all kindness such people were likely to torture others in order to make them accept the form, and to coerce their intellects into swallowing the belief. Whenever men realized that the Christ life, the life of purity, of love and of service, was the goal of Christianity, all persecution ceased. The most pathetic thing in all the history of the ages is the story of the misunderstood Christ. More crimes have been committed in His name even than in the name of liberty. Well might Browning say in "Fra Lippo Lippi":

" Because of Christ
Whose sad face on the cross sees only this
After the passion of a thousand years."

In the Christian economy, vital Christianity preceded formal in point of chronology. Jesus Christ

preached and taught and lived the divine life before His Church was founded, and only after He had formulated the Christ ideal was the framework set up which was to preserve it throughout the ages. The Christ life preceded the Christ Church; the end was considered before the means. Very properly, too, the Gospels are given a place in our New Testament before the Acts. The Christ ideal must come first in every study of the religion of Christ, just as we must fix our eyes on the goal before we try to discover the means by which we may hope to reach it. To consider the means without thinking first of the end is an absurdity; for while there may be an end without the means, there can be no means without an end.

Because, however, the end comes first in time, and in a certain sense in importance, this is no reason why due credit and value should not attach to the means. The Beautiful City without a road to reach it would remain an illusion, and only the baseless fabric of a dream. The Christ ideal without the Church to cherish it and keep it alive in the hearts of men would soon lose all practical significance. Were the Church to disappear, the Christ life would likewise disappear in a short time. Hence the imperative necessity for the Church, with its ordinances and forms, all of them symbol-

izing and interpreting Christ for the human heart. The sacraments of the Church speak of the life and death of Him whom they commemorate ; the pulpit is an open forum where the Christ life and the Christ ideals are constantly held up before the gaze of men. Abolish the sacraments, do away with the churches, silence the voice of the minister, and soon people would forget the Christ life, and sink beneath the waves of an unbelieving materialism.

Herein, therefore, we recognize the function of the Church, as well as the obligation of every individual to ally himself with it. There can be no salvation save as Christ is realized in our lives, but without the Church the world would soon forget the realization, and we on this account owe it to our own selves and to the world to support and adhere to the Church. No salvation without the Christ life, no Christ life without the Church, therefore no salvation without the Church—thus the argument runs, and its logic is indisputable. Not only is there an obligation upon each one of us to uphold the Church because of its value to the world at large, but every individual, no matter how pious or moral by nature, needs the constant stimulus of worship and the religious life, in order to keep his vision of the Good unclouded and whole. The man who presumably might be good

enough to get along without the Church is always the one who never wants to do without it ; whereas the man who thinks he does not need it usually needs it most. The cleanest men of to-day, whether in or out of the Church, are unconscious products of its influence. The best modern skeptics owe their power to the unconscious inheritance and assimilation of the ideals preserved by the Church. Often the Church has forgotten her mission, often she has poorly performed it, often she has misinterpreted and even slandered it, yet she remains its sole appointed guardian, and without her it would wither and die. Therefore the religion of Christ means not only the Christ ideal, the content, as it were, of Christianity, but likewise the Church, which constitutes its form. As well talk of a thing without any form as a Christian without a Church. A man who believes in vital Christianity can advance no good argument for remaining outside of the Church, which will not apply with triple force to his becoming a member of it.

“ But the Church,” some one says, “ pray tell us what is the Church ? Many claim the definite article, but which Church can make good her claim ? Or are we to infer that any and every Church is The Church, or that all churches are equally the bearers of vital Christianity ? ” Obviously, many

roads may lead to the same point ; some, however, are more difficult, some more uncertain, some more circuitous than others. Christ assuredly founded a Church, specifying its requirements, and explaining its organic structure. The unprejudiced judgment and conscience of each individual must decide in every case how this ideal Church is best realized for him, in the actual world. I have no right to judge in this matter for you, nor have you any right to judge for me. In some cases, doubtless, churches which may seem to us formally correct are apparently the bearers of less vital Christianity than others less correct in form. This, however, is no argument against correctness of form. In the long run, the church which is ideal in form will be ideal in content, just as the shortest and safest road to the goal will in the long run prove to be the best. The religion of Christ presupposes an ideal content, clothed likewise in an ideal form. Neither can be substituted for the other, and both are essential to a genuine Christianity.

PART II

Vital Christianity

(a) The Here and Now

I

THE FIRST GREAT IDEAL OF CHRIST—
RIGHTEOUSNESS

THE teaching of Christ being preëminently a doctrine of ideals, a knowledge of these ideals constitutes the very heart and core of Christianity. Much has of course been written in regard to this all-important subject. At the very outset, it may be said that Jesus Christ affirmed the moral teaching of the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic doctrine, as regards truthfulness, purity, and cleanness of life. The Sermon on the Mount states distinctly that He came “not to destroy, but to fulfill.” When the rich young ruler came following after Him desiring to be His disciple, the young man was told, first of all, to obey the commandments. Christ’s ideal of righteousness, as expressed in the Gospels, is therefore very comprehensive, embracing as it does the full substance and content of the Mosaic idea of morals. Not only, however, does it include the Mosaic ideal, but it adds certain features to which Moses made little if any reference.

Perhaps the most striking of these features is the teaching concerning meekness, or humility. This virtue, so foreign to preceding systems of ethics, was announced as the very corner-stone of the Christ ideal of righteousness. The radical divergence of Christ's teaching from previous standards comes out very clearly here. Not only is His doctrine at this point a reversal of older theories of conduct, but biologically it seems a contradiction of the very law of human development. The survival of the fittest means, if it means anything, not humility but self-assertiveness. The meek lion, or the humble tiger, would not long survive as separate species. And yet, strange as the contradiction seemed, and seems, its truthfulness becomes more apparent to every age. The meek and lowly Nazarene Himself will outlast an Alexander, a Cæsar or a Napoleon, the supreme examples of egoism. The ideal of humility is recognized more and more as the only true basis upon which to rear the life of the scholar, the gentleman or the worker. Humility is the key to knowledge, the soul of any true courtesy, and the *sine qua non* of all efficient labor. It lies at the basis of docility, and without docility there can be no such thing as either education or scholarship. The attitude of the little child is always the attitude of the

greatest scientist, of the most perfect gentleman, and of the man who learns to wield and direct the world's work.

This lesson, the first in the alphabet of Christ, has been the hardest for the world to learn. The Hebrew despised his neighbor and had a tremendous bump of religious conceit. What the Gentile was to the Jew, the Barbarian was to the Greek. Even the most cultured Hellenists, such as Aristotle and Zeno, maintained a pride of intellect quite foreign to the teaching of the Nazarene. Many of the tenets of Christ regarding practical life are duplicated in Stoicism and other forms of Greek and Roman ethics, but humility is not one of them. The good man, before Christ, knew his goodness and was proud of it. Humility he would have regarded as a weakness, and weakness was to him the worst sin of all.

But if Christ defined the right preparation for living to be the attitude of humility, no less did He assert that the proper guide for life itself was the lode-star of duty. No man ever ordered his career more absolutely in harmony with what he conceived to be his mission than the One Great Man of all. His constant conception of life was that He had a duty to fulfill, a mission to accomplish, His

Father's business to be about; and even though that mission brought Gethsemane and Calvary in its train, it had none the less to be accomplished. All the really great men of the world since His time have had the same idea. The Apostle Paul said when he bade farewell to the elders of Ephesus, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy"; and when later he wrote his farewell message to Timothy, he said, "I have finished my course." Luther thought of life as a place for the working out of purpose, and conceived of himself as one who had a mission to fulfill. Calvin pushed the idea perhaps to an extreme. Even irreligious men have sometimes held to similar views. Napoleon believed in his star, Socrates in his Dæmon. Christ's concept of duty, however, was more rounded and perfect than that of the ordinary point of view. He identified the voice of duty with the voice of God, and He kept constantly merging the human soul in the divine. It is in this sense that we perhaps most clearly understand His divinity. The man who performs his duty best approaches closest to God's will and purpose for him, and therefore approaches closest to God. No Christian can neglect his duty and remain a Christian. The underlying motive for the whole life of Christ was always this devotion

to an ideal standard of conduct. No man ever lived out as He did those superb lines of Wordsworth :

“To humbler functions, Awful Power !
 I call thee : I myself commend
 Unto thy guidance from this hour ;
 Oh, let my weakness have an end !
 Give unto me, made lowly wise,
 The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
 The confidence of reason give ;
 And in the light of truth thy Bond-
 man let me live !”

Following duty as an essential in the great ideal of righteousness, Christ enunciated the principle of kindness. This principle, as He taught it, involved two sides, a negative and a positive, an individual and a social. The negative feature alone concerns us here, as the positive will be treated under the ideal of service. On this side, two characteristics may be distinguished : first, the kindly heart ; and second, the non-resisting life. Back of all these considerations is, of course, the greatest motive power in the world—love. Love negatively expressed gives us the kind heart ; positively expressed, it yields the life of service. No feature of Christ's doctrine is more fundamental than this. Above all other things, the Supreme Teacher was kind. He who was subjected to the awful torture

of the cross would not Himself harm the lowliest of God's creatures. He dried many tears, but by His own actions He caused none to flow. The prophet had said of Him, "A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench"; and as the most striking symbol by which to picture Him, he selected the animal which is known as the gentlest of all the creations of God. The spirit of unkindness, of discourtesy, of harshness and bitterness, to say nothing of cruelty or slaughter, is totally foreign to Him. The strangest of all the perversions of Christianity was that which enabled men to torture and maim their fellow creatures in the name of the Lamb of God! Among the sins eliminated by this principle are hatred, murder, cruelty, slander, slavery, ill temper and revenge. War, with its attendant demons, will certainly disappear before the law of kindness instituted by the gentle command of the Prince of Peace. No principle of the Nazarene means quite so much for humanity; and for the world to catch Christ's vision of this one ideal would in a single day usher in the splendor of the Millennium Dawn.

The second division of the law of kindness deals with the subject of the non-resisting life. Much has been said in recent years regarding the doctrine of non-resistance, chiefly through the writings of

Tolstoi, the great Russian reformer and writer. The doctrine itself is not new. St. Francis of Assisi believed in it, as did George Fox, and hosts of others. Its basis is contained in the passages from the Sermon on the Mount found especially in Matthew v. 38-48. The seemingly impractical character of these utterances has caused a large majority of people to tacitly disregard them, without at the same time denying their validity as Scripture. Of late years a few writers and teachers, such, for instance, as Professor Foster, have denied the theoretical value of that which they could not approve in practice. We have thus a threefold attitude towards the doctrine of non-resistance. First, that of Tolstoi, who accepts literally, in both theory and practice, the teaching; second, that of the bulk of non-thinking Christians, who accept it in theory but disregard it in practice; and third, that of men like Foster, who disregard it both in theory and practice. What is the solution which the follower of Christ should reach and adopt? Obviously the great difficulty lies in a misunderstanding of the nature of the Sermon on the Mount. It is not a code of laws, but a collection of ideals. Ideals are not easily realized, and must always lead the way a long distance before actual realization. The key to the problem is found in

verse forty-eight of Matthew five: "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." The doctrine of non-resistance is ideal, and should always be kept before the mind as the goal of Christianity. Whether it is entirely practical at the present time, one may well doubt. Still, in so far as these ideals are at all practicable, they should be realized, and constant effort should be made to influence the world in such a way that each generation will see them realized to a greater and still greater degree.

Another fundamental feature of the Christ ideal of righteousness was the virtue of industry. In all the teaching of the Great Master, there is not a good word said for a lazy man. His life was in itself the incarnation of industry. Up until thirty years of age He worked with His own hands as a carpenter. His crowded three years' ministry was one of marked activity. Not only did Christ work Himself, but His sympathies were always with the workers. His sharpest criticisms were hurled upon those who attempted to make money by extortion or at the expense of the poor. Jesus was not an aristocrat; He was a proletariat. Of late years, efforts have been made in certain quarters to line up the working men against the Church. That the

Church has always been prone to forget the mission of her Founder and crystallize into a more or less aristocratic club, has been unfortunately too true. How old the tendency is may be gathered from the fact that it is alluded to in one of the oldest of all the New Testament Scriptures—the Epistle of James. The severe condemnation which it there receives has not served to crush out the evil. Very often, indeed, the Church has put herself out of harmony with labor, organized or unorganized, but fortunately this is far less true to-day than it has been in the past. One of the larger Protestant denominations now employs a secretary of labor, who recently converted an old church in downtown New York into a labor temple. Settlement colonies, and the work of women like Jane Addams or men like Stelzle and Steiner, are calculated to usher in a new order of things. It should be made clear to all men who work that Christ is their friend and brother—that above all things He was industrious Himself, and that the parasite and the drone found no place in His vocabulary. St. Paul was about the most untiring worker the world has ever seen. He had small patience with the lazy man, and pronounced somewhat oracularly the dictum, “If any man will not work, neither shall he eat.” The idle monk of the Middle Ages and

the lazy parson of to-day are far from the ideals inculcated by their Master.

One of the characteristic sayings of Christ is the well-known quotation: "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." Truthfulness was indeed the very centre, and the heart and core of His ideal of life. No word was oftener upon His lips than truth, and yet few terms are harder to define. The world has much to charge against Pilate that he "did not stay for an answer," as Bacon says, after he had propounded his momentous question. As a matter of fact, however, Christianity, here as elsewhere, does not concern itself with theoretical problems, but with practical life. Whatever truth may be, we all know what it means to lie. Of the three ordinary forms of lying—exaggeration, equivocation and hypocrisy—the last named received the most severe condemnation of the Master. "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" preceded the most scathing denunciation which ever fell from His lips. Throughout Holy Writ there is shown this same feeling towards deception. The adversary himself is styled the Father of Lies, and the part of all liars is said to be in the lake of fire. Perhaps this worst of all vices is likewise most common. Sometimes the adversary hides

himself so speciously behind the garb of truth that it is hard to note his presence. The oft debated question, Is a lie ever justifiable? illustrates this fact. The man who studies up excuses for the justification of falsehood had better be engaged in other business. No wrong is ever justifiable in the abstract sense; though, in a concrete case, between two evils the rational and moral rule is to choose the lesser. Nothing is more needed to-day than a revival of truthfulness—not only that love of abstract truth which is indispensable in the scientist, but also that practical devotion to truth in the every-day affairs of life, which makes the good citizen. Very wisely indeed did one of earth's greatest thinkers say, "No pleasure is comparable to the standing on the vantage ground of truth."

Following industry and truthfulness in the ideal of righteousness, the Great Teacher touched upon problems dealing with those monumental sources of legal and moral confusion, the relations of the sexes, and the questions of property ownership and relations. Human life as we see it, on the material side, is concerned with only two things, nutrition and reproduction; or in other words, the preservation of the individual and the preservation of the race. Progress upward in the scale of existence

has always meant greater interest in and care for the individual; but it has also, by virtue of that fact, advanced in no less degree the welfare of the race. The functions of reproduction give rise to all problems involving the home,—marriage, divorce, fatherhood, motherhood; the relations of the child to parent, and the like. In regard to marriage, Christ's teaching seems perfectly clear. He began His ministry by attending a marriage feast; He blessed little children and called them unto Him; He asserted constantly the binding character of the marriage vow. His followers reasserted and practiced the teachings of their Master. Paul, while probably unmarried himself, asserts in the main the beneficence of the institution, and nowhere condemns it. John draws his most striking picture of the heavenly kingdom from the marriage relation,—“the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”; while the culmination of his prophetic vision is the marriage supper of the Lamb. Paul uses the same figure in speaking of the Corinthian Church and its relation to Christ. In his first letter to the Church at Corinth he goes so far as to assert his privilege to marry, as the other apostles had done, designating Cephas in particular. The incontestability of the marriage of the leader

of the twelve is of course clear. After the apostolic days, attempts were made to base a celibate life upon the teachings of Christ. Considerations of prudence led one of the great churches of Christendom to this position regarding the priesthood, though it at the same time exalted marriage among the laity, elevating the marriage rite to the dignity of a sacrament. Skeptical authors, as, for example, Schopenhauer, have made much of the celibacy of Christ, as has also Tolstoi, among nineteenth century writers. A fair-minded survey of the Nazarene's teaching, however, will show unhesitating approval rather than any sort of discounting of the institution of marriage.

The position taken by Christ in regard to the binding force and solemnity of the marriage vow is likewise very clear. In the Sermon on the Mount He even went so far as to place adultery back of the act in the unclean gloatings of the mind. The Mosaic legislation regarding any violation of the marriage vow was exceedingly severe. Adultery received the same punishment as murder, and the crime was never condoned, even in the case of a national hero like David. Many of the proverbs are directed against this sin, and the prophets always used it as a type of the worst national apostasy. In modern times, the sin of adultery has

been much condoned in civil legislation, though never in the teaching of the Church. As a crime against the family, it ranks, from the Christian point of view, in the same category with murder against the individual, and treason against the state. No excuse, however plausible, can justify it.

The problem of divorce has caused much more debate than the problem of adultery. Easy divorce, it is recognized, strikes at the very heart of the home; while on the other hand, difficult divorce seems to encourage the even greater evil of adultery, or at least an unhappy home life. Christ's famous pronouncement upon the inviolability of the marriage relation must be understood, like the other passages in the sermon, as an ideal to be realized as soon as possible, but perhaps as difficult of immediate realization as the famous doctrine of non-resistance. Ideally speaking, marriage admits of no dissolution; practically speaking, such a doctrine might work in the body politic more harm than good. What God hath joined together man cannot put asunder, but not every petty squire or village parson wields the sceptre of the Almighty. The true solution of the problem lies in educating people to the dignity and sanctity of the marriage relation, throwing proper safeguards around it, and never making it a jest or a matter of careless indif-

ference. Proper care in regard to marriage will soon solve the whole problem of divorce.

Christ's teachings in regard to the home life involved the following considerations: (1) He approved the home as an institution; (2) He inculcated the primary ethical principle of justice as coming first in the ideal home; (3) After justice, and as including it, He insisted upon the higher law of love; and (4) He did not believe in that narrow conception of the family which negates the altruistic spirit. Charity with Him began at home, but it did not end there. Those who did His will were in the larger and truer sense His nearest relatives. The spiritual relationship, while above the natural, did not, however, negate the latter. In heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but on earth, marriage is divine, and bears the seal of the approval of God. The happiest home is none the less the one which is least self-centred, and which extends farthest beyond its own narrow boundaries.

One of the chief sins condemned by Christ, as well as by the later church authorities, was the vice of fornication. While regarded more leniently than adultery by the Jews, it was severely denounced. It is one of those evils which only thorough education and training can remove. Per-

haps no sin is more detrimental to the high ideals held up by Christ than fornication. No crime serves so effectually to coarsen and degrade a man as this double offense against both manhood and womanhood. All sin is essentially animal, but fornication is the most animal of all sins. Christianity teaches universally the single standard in morals, and demands that purity of heart and life from man which man has always demanded from woman. The operation of ordinary evolution makes men truthful rather than chaste, and women chaste rather than truthful. Christianity, however, says to man, "Be thou chaste"; and to woman, "Be thou truthful." Sexual purity, both of man and woman, is essential to good health, good morals, good civilization and good religion.

The Christ ideal in regard to property rights may be summarized under three divisions: (1) honesty, illustrated by His discourses against theft, His endorsement of the Mosaic doctrine upon the subject and His prompt payment of tribute; (2) the proper estimate of wealth; and (3) the proper use of material resources.

In attempting a digest of His teaching regarding the second division, we are confronted by abundant material. From the time the devil tempted Him

to no purpose with the enormous bribe of all the kingdoms of the earth, down to the time when Judas betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver, His supreme disregard for mere money, as money, becomes apparent. We are not to suppose, however, that Christ despised business, or that He condemned trade. His greatest apostle advised the early disciples to "be not slothful in business," and worked with his own hands as a craftsman; and the Teacher of Nazareth Himself began life as a carpenter. Business, to Christ, was the same as any other calling; but the purposeless accumulation of money, or of any sort of material possessions, He regarded as the supremest folly. Christ's estimate of material wealth was based entirely upon its influence for or against the development of the spiritual life.

In regard to the third division Christ speaks in no uncertain tones. Whenever wealth is used to negate the spiritual life, it is abused. Because it is so difficult to avoid this abuse, He is inclined to regard the rich man as more unfortunate than the poor man. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Dives has decidedly the more undesirable side of the bargain. And Dives's sin is not that he has been a thief, a murderer or an adulterer, but that his wealth has closed his heart to charity and

built up within his soul the hell of the selfish life. Between him and Lazarus there is a great gulf fixed—the impassable gulf between the selfish and the unselfish soul. The possession of wealth among the early Christians seems to have been rather unusual. In the first community at Jerusalem, Barnabas and others sold their property and gave the proceeds to the Church. They did this, it is distinctly stated, not in obedience to any regulation upon the subject, but solely because they believed it was what Christ would have done under the same circumstances. Christ's doctrine in regard to property and material possessions is best understood by keeping in mind His general concept of the supreme reality and worth of the spiritual life.

In the natural order of things, the question of property rights leads to the consideration of Christian citizenship. One of the most striking things about Christianity is its doctrine of civil obedience. To respect the law was among the very first of the duties inculcated by the Man of Galilee. No one could have been more punctual in his obedience to civil authority. His ideas in this respect ran parallel to those of Socrates. The early Christians were scrupulous in their observance of law, with the sole exception of religious conflict. The general atti-

tude of Christ towards civil innovations was one of evolution, rather than of iconoclasm. He hurled no polemics at slavery, despotism, cruel punishments or female degradation ; but all these things have melted away beneath the influence of His teaching. So far as any outward expression is concerned, no one can authoritatively say whether Christ was a monarchist, a republican or a socialist. Had He lived under any of these forms of government, He would doubtless have yielded quiet and law-abiding submission. Of one thing only are we assured in regard to His politics, and that is that He believed in obeying the law. Christianity was once accused of being radical upon political questions—now it is generally attacked because of its conservatism. Modern socialism opposes the Church oftentimes because of its alliance with established custom. With the red flag type of either anarchism or socialism, Christianity has indeed nothing to do. With the entrenched power of social or political corruption, it has even less. As regards political questions of the present day, the function of the Christian is first ethical, and second intellectual. In other words, every Christian is under obligation to stand first for clean morals, regardless of other considerations, and second for individual political judgment. Business comes before

party with the ward-heeler and the saloon-keeper, and morality ought to come before party with the Christian.

Perhaps the most comprehensive term included under the ideal of righteousness is that of temperance. The word temperance has been much abused. Sometimes it has been used to include practically all of the virtues of the human character, sometimes it has been so narrowed as to apply only to total abstinence from the use of alcoholic beverages. As we shall use it here, its violation will include the following things: (1) the abuse of naturally good impulses; (2) the use of artificial and injurious agencies; and (3) the misuse of artificial but, under certain circumstances, helpful articles. Under the first head come all sorts of perversion of naturally good impulses and passions, such as (*a*) the appetite for food, (*b*) the desire to care properly for the person, and (*c*) the sexual impulse. These desires are good, and tend to happiness of life, when properly controlled and regulated. When abused, however, there are no more certain avenues to misery, destruction and death. The second class includes the use of all artificial drugs which are not naturally intended for food or drink. Most stimulants and narcotics come under this class,

especially alcohol and opium. No slavery is more galling and complete than that which these agencies establish ; while aside from the injury done the body, they dethrone the will and make the man a moral wreck. The third class refers to those agencies which are perhaps not especially harmful in themselves, nor individually destructive to some who partake of them. Their general use, however, would lead to bad results, and in specific cases to destruction and ruin. In regard to these articles, which include among others the less harmful narcotics, the Christian must determine whether or not the law of liberty is overbalanced by the law of service. "If meat make my brother to offend," I should dispense with meat. My brother's spiritual welfare is worth more than the gratification of my carnal appetite. Here, as elsewhere, the higher and more important considerations should have precedence over the lower.

Two other virtues which enter into the concept of righteousness as Christ used it, but which we can do no more than name, as having been in substance already included, are the fine old doctrine of reverence, and the superb and in a certain sense inclusive virtue of loyalty. Reverence is as closely allied to humility as loyalty is to duty, so that we

need not discuss them further. The man who is humble need not be taught the meaning of reverence, and the disciple of duty will find it easy to be loyal. All true virtues are related, but there is an especially close affinity existing between these kindred excellences.

It is not to be presumed that this analysis exhausts the content of Christ's teaching regarding the individual. It is safe to say, however, that the man or woman who thoroughly understands His doctrine with reference to these things will not go far wrong regarding anything else. It is also safe to say that any approximation, even, in the way of realizing His ideals in this field would work a transformation in the world. Herein consists the supreme utility of the preacher. Upon him, more than any one else, is imposed the burden of being one who holds great moral ideals up before the people. When he preaches the Gospel, this is what he preaches, at least in very large measure. The Gospel is only secondarily a matter of church forms or theologies. Primarily, it is a teaching regarding life; it deals with men's every-day behavior; it is a great moral influence and power. The preacher who proclaims the Gospel will preach these things a large part of his time. Christ's final

word to His chief lieutenant was not evangelization, as much as He emphasized the latter, but pastoral care. "Feed My lambs." "Feed My sheep." "Feed My sheep." These words must not be held to negate the evangelizing features of the Great Commission, but must always be considered in connection with them.

As we meditate more and more upon the crystal perfection of the Christ ideal of righteousness, we are led to say with Sidney Lanier :

" But Thee, but Thee, O sovereign Seer of time,
 But Thee, O poets' Poet, wisdom's Tongue,
 But Thee, O man's best Man, O love's best Love,
 O perfect life in perfect labor writ,
 O all men's Comrade, Servant, King or Priest—
 What *if* or *yet*, what mole, what flaw, what lapse,
 What least defect or shadow of defect,
 What rumor, tattled by an enemy,
 Of inference loose, what lack of grace
 Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's, or death's—
 Oh, what amiss may I forgive in Thee,
 Jesus, good Paragon, Thou Crystal Christ ? "

II

THE SECOND GREAT IDEAL OF CHRIST —SERVICE

THE first great ideal of Christ was the supreme ideal of the individual life, the goal of personal righteousness. Next to, and of equal importance with this goal, He enunciated the great social ideal, the gospel of service. It found expression in many of the best known phrases of the Sermon on the Mount, and afterwards in such utterances as: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many;" and "He that would be greatest among you, let him become the servant of all." The rich young ruler is not only told to obey the Commandments, but he is also instructed, "Sell all thou hast and give it unto the poor"—that is, become obedient to the law of service. And it is just this ideal of service which has proven, more than anything else about Christianity, the leavening power of the world. It inspired Francis of Assisi to become the veritable saint of mediæval Christendom. It made possible

the work of Florence Nightingale and John Howard, and Frances Willard and Clara Barton, and the other servants of the world since the time of the Christ Himself. It has lightened the burdens of the poor, built hospitals for the sick, helped to soothe the misery of the blind and the afflicted, and in a thousand ways softened the sorrows of the world. The ideal of service has made physicians willing to run every sort of risk in order to discover some means of fighting disease, that humanity might be benefited thereby. It has made missionaries willing to become martyrs, and has transformed commonplace men and women into veritable heroes and heroines. It inspired the Beatrice of Dante, and the Cordelia and Desdemona and Imogen of Shakespeare, and the Blessed Damozel of Rossetti, and the Eugenie Grandet of Balzac, and the Pompilia of Robert Browning. It was the ideal of service which caused Alice Cary to write that sweetest of American lyrics of duty, the lines known to every schoolboy :

“ True worth is in being, not seeming, —
In doing, each day that goes by,
Some small good, not in dreaming
Of great things to do by and by ;
For whatever men say in their blindness,
And spite of the fancies of youth,
There is nothing so kingly as kindness,
And nothing so royal as truth.”

It was the ideal of service which inspired even so rebellious a writer as Byron to say :

“ The drying up of a single tear has more
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore.”

It was back, too, of the wild altruism of Shelley and the contemplative goodness of Wordsworth. It made John Ruskin, the greatest art critic of England, say that the ultimate test of a truly great man is always his humility—his willingness to serve. It inspired the Madonnas of Raphael and the frescoes of Michael Angelo, and it wrote itself in stone in the cathedrals of the Renaissance and the hospitals and foundling asylums of the modern age. It is back of our laws for the protection of the needy, and it is the heart and core of the best that is in our modern civilization. He who would take Christian altruism, the ideal of service, out of the world, would plunge it into chaos and darkness, and make it a hotbed of debauchery and crime.

The ground of this doctrine of service was emphasized by the Great Teacher as the essential fatherhood of God and the consequent brotherhood of man. This teaching was especially foreign and repugnant to Christ's own people. Jehovah, to the Jew, was a national Deity, who had no regard for the heathen, and showered His blessings upon His

peculiar people alone. The Canaanite, the Amal-ekite, the Gentile, the Samaritan, were not in any sense brothers to the Jew. The hardest battle which Christianity had to fight in Judea was due to this inherent racial exclusiveness. The parable of the Good Samaritan was the most difficult lesson of all for a Jew to accept. So it came about that the first schism in the early Church was due to this prejudiced racial and national feeling. Service, altruism, was, however, the lesson upon which the Great Teacher insisted most strenuously. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister," was the watchword of His life. Again, He said to the wrangling disciples, "I am among you as he that serveth." In His picture of the Last Judgment, the ultimate test is the life of service. The final requirement, as we have seen, laid upon the rich young ruler, is the requirement of service. Dives, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, is lost because he will not serve. From His first sermon at Nazareth to His last consoling words uttered to the thief upon the cross, the motto of Christ was the motto which was so worthily selected afterwards as the watchword of the greatest kingdom of modern times—"Ich Dien" (I serve).

The highest title which Christ ever claimed was that of the Son of Man. In this one phrase was

embodied His conception of the sublime dignity of service. To serve His fellow man was to Him the supreme honor of all. It has sometimes been urged that no progress would take place in the world if the spur of individual initiative were removed—that men will labor well only when each man labors for himself. But Christ put the motive of the common good far above this. “He that would be greatest among you let him become the servant of all,” was the ideal He held up before His disciples. When Satan on the Mount of Temptation held out the bribe of individual reward, he was promptly dismissed. When the mother of Zebedee’s children desired places of honor for her sons in the kingdom of the Nazarene, she was told that His kingdom was not like the kingdoms of the Gentiles, but that the highest motive and reward which it held out was the consideration, not of self-advancement, but of the common good—the service of all.

Was not therefore the coöperative, rather than the competitive principle, the basis of Christ’s teaching? Our answer must be here as in our study of the Sermon on the Mount—as an ideal, yes. Are we ready to substitute coöperation for competition? That depends. This much, however, is certainly true. “The survival of the fittest” is

not the law of Christ's kingdom. The most fundamental revolution which His teaching involved was due to His substitution of the law of altruism for the law of selfish competition. The world up to Christ had developed along the lines of egoism and the struggle for existence. The world from Christ on to the Millennium will develop along the lines of altruism and the common weal. Christianity is essentially individualistic in philosophy, but altruistic in life. It puts man first in the universe ; it makes his soul worth more than a material world ; but it teaches likewise the solidarity of men. From its point of view the individual soul that is worth while is the soul that lives for all. God is the one great soul because He lives thus in the fullest sense ; and we become Godlike just in proportion as our souls grow larger and embrace the service of all.

That the ground of service and the dignity of service are fundamental principles of Christianity admits of no dispute. When, however, we come to the question of the proper expression of the altruistic spirit, we have a different problem before us. Good intentions alone never afforded permanent help to any one ; and good intentions, backed even by material but misdirected resources, sometimes do more harm than good. It is no easy matter to give away money properly, as many wealthy and

well-intentioned men have found out. As a prerequisite of all true service, Christ demands the spirit of love first of all. Any other motive renders the service, if not valueless entirely, at least profitless to the giver. In addition to the true spirit of service, He demands a rational and intelligent direction of effort. No specific laws are laid down to govern this direction, it being essential that it should change in its expression from age to age. In Christ's time, individual relief, such as was afforded by the Good Samaritan, was, in a material way, the only means by which service could be rendered. It would seem that with a more enlightened civilization, individual charity might well, in large measure, give place to coöperative relief. In any case, it should not be forgotten that the true service is always, not simply providing for physical needs, but rather in helping to build up nobility of character. The charity which makes a man less a man is almost if not entirely as great a sin as the altogether uncharitable spirit. No greater crime can be committed against the soul of a man than to make a pauper of him. To do so, with whatever good intentions, is not to serve him, but to injure him. Society has much for which to answer because of mistakes in this direction. Maintaining too often a false system of feudal supremacy

which gave unjust privileges to the few, and deprived the many of their just rights, it has striven to make up for the wrong by a mistaken system of benevolence, which builds almshouses for victims of injustice, and feeds soup in winter to people unable, but anxious to earn their bread. The world has at times played both knave and fool. Having climbed out of knavery in the matter of service, it is time also that it should cease to play the fool.

We find, therefore, that two principles must govern our efforts if we are to serve the world as Christ would have us: first, the spirit of love; and second, the spirit of rational direction. In endeavoring to help others we should always remember that soul values have precedence over material considerations; but that bodily relief is the necessary prerequisite of everything else. It is useless to preach to people when they are hungry or lack the physical necessities of life. We should remember also that the best way to help others is to enable them to help themselves; and that there is no warrant in Christ's teaching for indiscriminate, that is unintelligent, charity. Such charity is indeed the poorest service of all. Finally, we need to remember that all schemes of social reconstruction are valuable only in so far as they guarantee individual betterment. The individual is the unit in the

Christian economy,—the unselfish individual it is true, but still the individual. Only the soul whom the spirit of service and love has made one with the universe, so that every sorrowing creature of God has his interest and sympathy, is completely a Christian.

“ He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things, both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

III

THE THIRD GREAT IDEAL OF CHRIST— FREEDOM

THE gospel of service, however important, does not of itself exhaust the content of Christianity. To the Mosaic code, the moral teaching of Moses and of Sinai, Christ added not only the ideal of service, but also the ideal of freedom. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," He told the early disciples who thronged about Him. There was no theme dearer to His heart than that of the glorious freedom of the Sons of God. It had been said of Him by the prophet of old that He should come to "proclaim liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Our free institutions, the great doctrine of the world-wide brotherhood of man, the germs of truth which sprang into life with the overthrow of the Bastille and the Revolution of '76—these all are but scattered rays from the great central sun, the ideal of freedom proclaimed and inculcated by the Christ. Back of the Peace Conferences, recently in session at the Hague, lies the parable of the Good Samari-

tan ; and back of the Constitution of the United States lies the Constitution of the Man of Galilee. It is true that despotism has sometimes ruled in the name of Christ, just as more than one tyrant has committed incest and murder in the name of religion ; but it is likewise true that the world has steadily advanced to freedom under the banner of the Nazarene. The freest nations upon the face of the globe to-day are the Christian nations. Freedom, therefore, no less than service, constitutes a watchword of Christianity.

When Christianity came, the world was largely a slave camp. Greek civilization at its best presupposed the institution of slavery, and Roman culture was little if any better. With the disappearance of slavery as an institution in Europe, came the rise of the feudal system and the story of the serf. The misinterpreted Christianity of the Middle Ages and of the early Modern Era forged new shackles for humanity, and built dungeons instead of opening the doors of the prisons. The Bastille was reared upon the fabric of a professedly religious monarchy, and the torture chambers of the Inquisition were ruled over by priests. No tyranny in the history of the world has proven more unbearable than the tyranny of ecclesiasticism. The French Revolution, with the parallel movements in

other nations, finally burst the shackles of the serf and brought genuine freedom to humanity. Nowhere has the fundamental distinction between vital and formal Christianity, when the two are once separated, become more apparent than in connection with the ideal of freedom. Forms by nature tend to enslave, and hence the slight attention paid by Christ Himself to ecclesiastical organization. Enslavement brings with it a certain power; but it is a weaker power than the force of united free men. Armies composed of slaves, when well directed, have accomplished a good deal; but armies composed of free men will always accomplish more. Christ fought an ecclesiasticism all His life, attempted to found no ecclesiasticism for Himself, and was put to death by an ecclesiasticism at last. Notwithstanding these facts, after His death His name became the basis for one of the most gigantic ecclesiastical tyrannies the world has ever seen, a tyranny which at one time in its history would have crucified Him summarily, or at least burned Him at the stake, if He had appeared in His own Church and preached His own doctrine.

No question has been more widely discussed than the much vexed topic of the "freedom of the will." John Milton, in "Paradise Lost," pictures the

fallen spirits debating freedom in the realm of Pandemonium ; and it holds a place, along with the immortality of the soul, as one of the two great problems in the philosophy of the world. It is quite needless to say that with the metaphysical question as such, we have nothing to do. Our only concern is to find out what Christ taught in regard to practical life. This would seem to be easy enough. It is the simplest truism in the world to say that the Man of Galilee never in one recorded utterance discounted the full measure of human responsibility and accountability. When He said, "Come unto Me," He implied that men could come. When He said, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life," He implied again that "whosoever" included all who heard the words and willed to accept them. When He said "Go ye into *all* the world and preach the Gospel to *every* creature, He meant that *all* and *every* were fitting and proper words to be used as He used them. The Christian, then, whether layman or preacher, is fully justified at all times in assuming three things: first, that men need to be saved; second, that they can be saved; and third, that it is his business to try to save them. Metaphysical discussions in regard to human accountability and the like are entirely out of place. The assumption of

all religion is that men can be saved if they will, and it is also its assumption that they can will to be saved. Much futile argument has been indulged in regarding the relations of will and belief. A man cannot believe or will to believe that which his reason pronounces false; but a man can and must will to believe in those things which are essential to his moral life, and in regard to which reason cannot pass. Ingersoll's dictum that the most cruel words in the world are "He that believeth not shall be damned" arose from a misapprehension of the nature of belief. Salvation or destruction in this world and in the next depends and must depend upon an act of will. To will to accept a high ideal of life means to will salvation. To refuse to will thus means to accept destruction. Supremely true it is that in the last analysis "We are the masters of our fate," and "the captains of our souls."

Intellectual freedom is the last phase of the last great ideal of Christ. Even to-day there is much confusion regarding its province. Every attempt to bind the mind by dogma violates the principle, and many attempts have been made in the history of Christianity. The question of creed more properly belongs to formal Christianity, and will be treated

when the latter comes under discussion. Nothing can be clearer, however, than the fact that Christ laid down no philosophy as a test of Christianity, and that He carefully avoided all questions of speculative dogma. He asserted that men must believe in Him, but never in any theory of Him. He knew that the essential principle of His religion was decision of will, and not speculation concerning life. Hence He was a religious teacher, and not a theologian. Had He based His religion upon a particular philosophy, it would either have been unintelligible and therefore useless to all but the last cycle of men, or else it would have been outgrown in the onward march of human development. Therefore He proclaimed no creed save an affirmation of will as regards His ideal of life—something which will be intelligible to the last man who will live upon the planet, and which has been intelligible since He first preached it by the shores of Galilee. It is sufficient, and it cannot be outgrown. His followers, however, were not so wise. From the very first, they began to interpret His message philosophically, and demand unhesitating obedience to each successive interpretation. Hence the long list of weather-beaten and storm-shattered creeds which strew the shores of Time. To-day, we are surely outgrowing the creedal

stage; and it will not be long before that absolute freedom of thought which Christ came to proclaim will be guaranteed by all of His followers. A caution at this point should not be neglected. Thinking and decision are by no means one. A man should think a great deal and decide comparatively little. Much thought will hurt no one, so long as he carefully controls his will and selects only with the greatest caution the roving ideas which range before him. He must think freely and honestly if he is to think in the true sense at all; but he will utterly ruin his career if he attempts to precipitate his life and destiny in the direction of every wandering thought. *Multum non multa* must be his rule as regards decision and action.

We are inclined, I think, at times to forget that the Christ ideal, the building up of the lives of purity, of service and of freedom among men, is the real essence of the Master's teaching. Nothing is clearer, however, than that this is the object and goal of the Christ, and that other things, matters of organization and the like, are only means to the end proposed. And to-day, no matter how many names a church may count upon its roll, it has only as many Christians as it has people who are trying to develop the ideals of righteousness, of service and

of freedom in their lives. These are the ultimate essentials, and other things are necessarily subsidiary to them.

The religion of Christ has had many martyrs. Some have died for the cause of righteousness, some have won their crowns trying to realize the ideal of service; but the sacred name of freedom has claimed the greatest host of all. Axe and fagot and rack have been used to crush this latest and fairest flower of the ages, but it blooms securely, despite all efforts to kill it.

“ They never fail who die
In a great cause. The block may soak their gore ;
Their heads may sodden in the sun ; their limbs
Be strung to city gates or castle walls ;
But still their spirit walks abroad. Though years
E lapse, and others share as dark a doom,
They but augment the great and sweeping thoughts
That overspread all others, and conduct
The world at last to freedom.”

(b) The Future

IV

THE FUNCTION OF THE SUPERNATURAL¹ IN CHRIST'S TEACHING

CHRIST'S teaching, while supremely practical, and in no respect other-worldly, using the term in the monastic sense, looked constantly to the future. Future and present were indeed one to Him. He saw everything in its eternal relations, or as Spinoza long after said, "*sub specie eternitatis*." To one with this point of view, the present, while important in its bearings upon the future, possessed little significance considered by itself. What were thirty-three years of life worth, when compared with an infinite past, and a no less infinite future? Hence the trivial things which usually cause men so much anxiety never disturbed the equanimity of the Nazarene. What did it amount to whether He had a bed or not, for one night out of one year out of an un-

¹ The word "supernatural" is now much tabooed. We have found no other popular expression, however, which quite takes its place. The sense in which the term is used is fully explained in the latter part of the present chapter.

counted number of years? Still less important than a bed was the idea of accumulating money, in a world which existed to Him for only thirty-three years. Material money does not circulate in Eternity, and hence the significance of the passage, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Christ's teaching in regard to the future world has, however, proven the crux of His system with many. Over against the credulous man, who delights in miracles for their own sake, is the dyed-in-the-wool skeptic who, like David Hume, argues that no amount of evidence can prove a miracle. Very few people outside of the ultra-ignorant or the ultra-perverse will dispute the logic of Christ's teaching in regard to practical living; but many people who accept this will not believe that He walked on the water, or rose from the dead. But even for these people, the question of the future life will not down. Every time they stand beside the grave it occurs; and not a single day passes without some suggestion of its presence. Christ's answer may not suit them, but *some* answer they must give to the question. The gloomy solu-

tion of the agnostic recognizes the validity of the problem no less than the teaching of the Gospels recognizes it. At least one-half of the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John deal with it, and the proportion is certainly not beyond what it deserves. There can be no vital and permanent Christianity which does not include its doctrine of the future life.

Many theologies have been based upon the references contained in the Gospels to the supernatural, and to the life beyond the grave. With these, as was stated in the section touching upon moral freedom, in a speculative way, we have nothing to do. The religion of Christ does not theorize in regard to the supernatural at all. Very positive assertion is made concerning it, but there is no attempt at any specific explanation. Paul very wisely left the third heaven wrapped in mystery. The folly of attempting to explain the inexplicable was very apparent, not only to Christ, but also to His closest followers. But although unexplained, the idea of a belief in the supernatural is vital to the Christian religion. Take this away, and Christ sinks at once to the level of Plato or Socrates, or Zeno or Confucius. But were He no greater than these, He could not have built the mighty fabric of modern Christendom. The miracle of Christianity without

the miraculous is greater by far than any miracle it contains. The differentiating quality of all religion is indeed its belief in the supernatural. A purely naturalistic religion is in all essential respects a contradiction in terms. Naturalistic ethics there may be, as well as naturalistic metaphysics, and naturalistic science of every kind; but a naturalistic religion is as contradictory a phrase as the English language contains. Religion in its essence deals with this life, but also with something beyond. The existence of a Power mightier than we are, and to which we stand in some way related, is a fundamental postulate of all religions. Religion, deprived of this postulate, becomes either a species of ethics or metaphysics, in accordance with the manner in which the practical or the theoretical has previously predominated. It was one of the greatest merits of Mr. Herbert Spencer that he clearly saw this fundamental characteristic of the religious concept. Mr. Huxley, too, was never more completely at his best than when puncturing the "Religion of Humanity" as fathered by Comte and Frederic Harrison. No attempt at formulating a religious movement was in fact a more grotesque failure than Comte's worship of the "Grand Etre." Positivism as a religion appealed to the human race far less than Mormonism or Christian

Science, or even the Zionistic movement of John Alexander Dowie. This too, in spite of the fact that many brilliant men and women lent their support to the new system of Comte. But Positivism did away with the supernatural, and in so doing, completely gave up the case for any sort of real religion. Comte's system contains some ethics, and may with a degree of caution be styled a metaphysic; but it is absurdly incorrect for it to regard itself as a religion. There can be no real religion without a supernatural content, and when that content is eliminated, such religion as there was dies with it. The Polynesian who worships idols, and the Chinaman who burns joss have yet in a crude way some sort of religion; but the most refined Positivistic Society in the world, however superior in ethics and culture, has none.

We would not for a moment detract from the value of whatever contribution the followers of Comte, or others, have made to the world's betterment. We would not, either, attack or fail to give credit to the man who acknowledges the content of Christ's message as regards the here and now, but refuses to go any farther. Much of the substance of the Christian religion is purely ethical, and the man who accepts the Christian ethic without accepting anything else can hardly fail to re-

ceive some benefit thereby. All that we care to emphasize at this point is that Christ's ethics, while included in His religion, does not by any means exhaust it. The Christian religion is essentially based upon a belief in the supernatural, not only because it is Christian, but also because it is a religion. Had Christ spoken no word concerning the future, the consoling power of the Christian symbols would have been swept away, and that halo of light which Christianity has thrown around the grave would have been entirely dissipated. The consoling and comforting features of the religion of the Nazarene have been among the greatest blessings it has conferred upon the human race. If the physician who discovers a great anæsthetic, which relieves bodily suffering, or the surgeon who finds some new means for the perfecting of his art, deserves the plaudits of humanity, assuredly a religion which has soothed the mental anguish of millions and which provides the only effective balm in the most extreme cases of despair and suffering, is worthy of consideration and respect.

The supernatural is obviously a difficult subject to discuss. We are fully aware that the very title opens the way to all sorts of mental vagaries, and that it covers the most fantastic absurdities. Where science no longer treads, there is great

opportunity for the imagination to play. But our human life, as we have seen, is hemmed in by the supernatural; and the existence and reality of the latter are even more patent than those of the natural itself. Mr. Spencer recognized this in his assertion of the reality of the Unknowable, though he fell short of any proper appreciation of the nexus between what he styled the Unknowable and the Knowable. The natural is indeed only a part of the supernatural, and the two are concentric circles rather than separate spheres. More and more of the supernatural is being conquered as the world marches on; and were not the conquest an infinite task, we should say that at some time it will all be conquered, and the two circles coincide. God, the supreme reality, is, however, infinite, and so the realization of Him becomes the infinite problem of the good life. Ever our horizon broadens, ever we come to know more of Him, ever the known pushes on into the unknown, ever we voyage on into those "strange seas of thought" which Wordsworth mentioned in his characterization of Newton.

Thus it becomes us to realize that relation with the infinite which is our divine inheritance, and which alone constitutes us men. Because the Teacher of Galilee recognized as no other authority

the supreme reality of the spiritual life, because He saw the glory of the ideal and gave it the foremost place in His thought and conduct, because He taught as no other ever taught the true relationship of the human and the divine, therefore, the religion of Christ has won that high position which it occupies in the thought and the affections of the world. Amid the shifting scenes of our material existence, He stands aloft with His calm brow and the surging tide of the infinite welling up through His words, proclaiming to all the world, in the message of one of His later disciples,

“Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure.”

THE NATURE AND CRITERIA OF MIRACLES

THERE are at least six different Greek words used to convey the idea of miracle in the New Testament. These words simply look at different aspects of the same thing. At one time, a miracle is a "glorious," at another a "strange," at still another a "wonderful" thing. John uses almost exclusively the word correctly rendered in our American Revised text as "sign." In their essence, miracles were signs of God's power, and credentials of Christ's mission. Jesus Christ did not heal the sick simply to help them physically, nor did He raise the dead in order to give them a new lease on material existence. It was necessary that, coming as He did, He should have such credentials as would establish His position, and display such power as would fully accredit His claims. Hence the necessity for miracles, and hence their presence in the text. No better definition of a miracle has been given than that of Bishop Warren: "A miracle is an effect in nature not at-

tributable to any of the recognized operations of nature, nor to the act of man, but indicative of superhuman power, and serving as a sign thereof."

Miracles were very necessary as "signs" during Christ's presence upon earth and during the early history of the Church, but they are no longer needed for that purpose. Christianity has so justified itself during two thousand years of history that it requires no further credentials. Miracles, indeed, present a decidedly lower order of evidence than examples such as are found, for instance, in a book like Harold Begbie's "Twice Born Men." But because we do not need the testimony of the miraculous now is no reason for our attacking and sneering at it. When a child reaches Latin or Greek, he does not despise his alphabet or his first English reader. He no longer needs them, but without them he would not be where he is. So with the question of miracles. The Church no longer needs them; it has outgrown any necessity for an appeal to them as evidence; but we should not forget that there was a time when without them there would have been no Church, and that the whole magnificent fabric of Christianity could not have been built originally without some such credentials. The conceited man may deery and look down upon the stages by which he reached his position of promi-

nence, but the profound and reverent man will have only respect for the first steps in his progress upward. To make fun of miracles is cheap and easy, but it is no indication of either wisdom or profundity.

If we grant the possibility of miracles, as based upon superhuman power, and the necessity for them as credentials of such power, we do not by this admission open the gate for the entrance of every sort of credulous imposture. That there are true banknotes in existence does not imply that there are no false ones, and that such a thing as a miracle actually took place once does not imply that it took place at a dozen other times. After granting the possibility and even the necessity for miracles as evidences of divine power, we do not in the slightest degree remove the need for the most careful scrutiny in regard to specific cases of their manifestation. It is readily admitted that the evidence here must be of the most thoroughgoing character. Credulity probably does, on the whole, at least as much harm as skepticism. The man who can accept all of the marvels recorded of the mediæval saints is as much damage to society as the man who refuses to believe in miracles at all. As between the positions of Newman and Huxley, there are small odds for choice.

The whole question of miracle, like the question of Christianity itself, rests upon an appeal to reason and truth. God forbid that the time should ever come when reason shall abdicate her throne as she has upon occasions in the past, at the dictation of any so-called religion! Miracles are rational evidences of God's power; they have been needed, and they have taken place. To deny their possibility is to say that the Creator of the world is subjugated by His own creation; to deny their necessity is to assert that the whole fabric of Christianity is absurd; while to dispute their having occurred is to give the lie to the most unimpeachable historic testimony. Conceding the possibility of miracle, let us hear the evidence impartially and accept no given instance of miraculous manifestation without such testimony that only a jury prejudged in the case could decide against its occurrence. Steering between the Charybdis of credulity and the Scylla of skepticism, let us hold firm to the anchor of a true faith, grounded both in reason and love.

Modern scientists have at times attacked the theory of miracle; and it is not to be denied that, from a purely materialistic point of view, a miracle is an impossibility. But the purely materialistic point of view does away quite as effectually with

God as it does with miracle. We have no idea whatever, as previously stated, of trenching upon metaphysics in our study ; but it is undoubtedly true that some metaphysics the Christian must have, and that the purely naturalistic metaphysic will not square for a moment with the teachings of Christ. The religion of Christ, therefore, can never be a materialistic religion, if we may be permitted to use such an expression, but always a spiritualistic or idealistic one. Materialism was, in fact, the point of view which the Nazarene attacked most vigorously. The world, meaning thereby the materialistic concept of life, the life of eating and drinking and sensual appetite, was His constant antithesis to the kingdom of God. In His last superb farewell to His followers, He elaborated this antithesis in the words so frequently quoted : "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." His prayer for them was not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil which it contains. The Apostle Paul draws the distinction very beautifully in his well-known definition in the Epistle to the Romans : "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The powers of evil, to Christ, were embodied almost, if not en-

tirely, in the fleshly appetites. His constant teaching was that the goal of the higher life could be won only by crucifying the lower in the interest of the higher, and that the path to virtue lay along the line of sacrifice and self-denial. Out of the material to fashion the ideal, out of the human to bring forth the divine, out of nature to realize nature's God—these were the ideas which constantly occupied His attention. For the purely animal life, He had only the supremest contempt. His idea of that life was embodied in His parable of the rich fool, as well as His picture of Dives in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

This point of view is coming to be recognized more and more as the true one by the scientists and investigators of our own time. The biologist, no less than the theologian, sees in the brute side of our human nature the incarnation of that evil which constantly bars the progress of good. He sees that there can be no upward movement in society or morals which does not presuppose the crushing out of the "ape and the tiger" in our dispositions and appetites. That world which Christ opposed and stigmatized has likewise received his censure and disapproval. He, no less than Paul, realizes that to be carnally minded is death, and that the material appetites and the material goal

are the chief hindrances to progress in the moral universe.

The spiritualistic concept of the world, that concept which finds a place for God and the spiritual life, which opens to the soul a vista of its own splendid possibilities, which raises man from a helpless clod of earth to a seat at the table of the immortals—this is the postulate of a true science as fully as it is the postulate of a true religion. Without it, life is barren, negative and full of despair. Without it, conscience is a cheat and existence itself a delusion and a mockery. Without it, man's outlook shrivels and dwarfs and narrows into nothingness at last. With it, on the contrary, there is a new and splendid horizon opened for the humblest citizen of earth, an inheritance which is unfading and eternal, for the sake of which all of the blots and blurs of our human history become abundantly worth while. We who accept this concept may well say with Rabbi Ben Ezra :

“ Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive !
A spark disturbs our clod ;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I
must believe.”

To believe in miracle, one must believe in God. To believe in God, one must believe in a spiritual universe. The man who deifies matter and accepts no ultimate beyond the range of our human life and experience, cannot of course believe that Christ healed the sick or raised Lazarus from the dead. But the man who believes in God, that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek after Him, will be willing to believe, upon sufficient evidence, that death is no barrier to the King of kings; and that nature herself obeys the voice of nature's God. This is all that a proper doctrine of miracle implies, and surely this is neither irrational nor inconsistent with such an interpretation of the universe as is both scientific and sufficient. A true science is forever one with a true philosophy and a true religion.

VI

THE MORAL VALUE OF CHRIST'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE BELIEF IN A FUTURE LIFE

AS man progresses in intelligence, his interest in the future becomes more intense. Presumably the lower animals concern themselves with little beyond the immediate present. It is true that certain of the less highly developed forms of life possess instincts which cause them to provide for the future—the ant, as an example, lays by its store for the winter, as does the bee, and many other and less highly developed organisms. That there is any conscious knowledge of the purpose of these instincts on the part of the animals possessing them is exceedingly doubtful. It is certainly true that at the very farthest any idea of the future is limited to a future in time. Only man forms the concept of an eternal hereafter. The progress of civilization may be very accurately measured by observing the influence which a belief in the future life has had upon the world. The deterrent value of such a belief is

great, but its stimulative value is still greater. It cannot help ennobling a man for him to believe that he is the bearer of an eternal destiny. Victor Hugo has indeed advocated the somewhat fantastic idea of the creation of immortality. According to this view, man by his own will determines whether he shall live hereafter or not. The man who has no faith will be rewarded for his lack of faith by having his name stricken out of the goodly circle of the Immortals, while the man who desires and believes in a future life will have it as his reward.

There have been some great men who have not believed in a future life, but they are decidedly in the minority. The profoundest philosophers—Plato, Socrates, Kant, Hegel, Berkeley, Locke; the foremost poets—Homer, Vergil, Dante, Milton, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning; the best-known scientists—Bacon, Newton, Galileo, Kepler; the greatest statesmen—Burke, Pitt, Washington, Lincoln, Cromwell, and others entirely too numerous to mention, believed in a future life. The moral influence of a belief in personal immortality cannot help being prodigious. Some highly imaginative souls, like George Eliot, may wax enthusiastic over the immortality of fame; but there is a touch of gloom in even

their enthusiasm. There can be no true optimism without a genuine belief in a direct personal hereafter.

The deterrent value of belief in a future life has been given due attention at the hands of economists and philosophers. That such a belief lessens crime and encourages virtue will hardly admit of dispute. Humanity at large is not made up of metaphysicians or scientists, and the positivistic experiment ought to show the futility of trying to better conditions by an appeal to a "social future" alone. Deeply rooted in every individual is the desire for personal existence; and the consciousness that the future of that existence is dependent upon the present gives a serious coloring to life, a coloring which nothing else can give. We would not for a moment underestimate the value of the altruistic spirit as applied to the future, nor would we advocate an egoism which is not in its very essence altruistic, even for the individual; but we do assert that such an egoism is back of all true altruism, and that to serve others and destroy one's self is surely not the end of life. If this were true, just at the moment when the soul becomes most valuable it would be lost, and nature would constantly cheat herself as regards moral values. Christ realized fully the sobering significance of a firm

belief in the future life. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" is the question which has sounded in the ears of many a would-be criminal and caused the sober second thought which closed the gates of crime. The world is a more decent place in which to live because people generally have some sort of faith in a future life. Let that faith be seriously shaken, and our criminal population will largely increase. The jail, the penitentiary and the gallows are of far less deterrent value than the belief in a future accounting before a Judge of infinite knowledge and unimpeachable justice. The conversation between the two murderers of Clarence in Shakespeare's "Richard III" is a fine testimony to the deterrent value of religious and moral considerations, even in the case of the most hardened criminal.

But the deterrent value of a belief in personal immortality is, as already stated, of less significance than its stimulative function. The great utility of the former applies only to the bad, but the value of the latter appertains to the good. Browning has well expressed what this belief meant in the dawning of the Christian art of the Renaissance:

“ Is it true that we are now, and shall be here-
 after,
 But what and where depend on life’s minute ?
 Hails heavenly cheer or infernal laughter
 Our first step out of the gulf or in it ?
 Shall man, such step within his endeavor,
 Man’s face, have no more play and action
 Than joy which is crystallized forever,
 Or grief, an eternal petrification ? ”

The significance of life when seen under the “ form of eternity ” is indeed tremendous. Such a point of view is vitally essential to any true optimism. Our material existence is so brief and uncertain that the Cyrenaic gospel of “ Eat, drink and be merry, ” with its attendant explanation, “ for to-morrow we die, ” becomes the only word of wisdom. But Cyrenaicism has never maintained any serious hold upon the leaders of thought or action in the world. The significant things which have been accomplished have been achieved by reason of a belief in the permanent existence of the soul. No man cares much for the transient ; what interest it really evokes is due to a sort of illusionary permanence which, for the moment, is attached to it. The point of view of the “ Gram-
 marian ” is always the legitimate one for great achievement :

“Others mistrust and say, ‘But time escapes !
 Live now or never !’
 He said, ‘What’s time ? leave Now for dogs
 and apes !
 Man has Forever.’ ”

And when man believes he has Forever, and that it depends largely upon the Here and Now as to what that Forever shall be, he is the more apt to give attention to how he comports himself in the present stage of his existence.

The chief value of Christ’s contribution to the world’s faith in personal immortality, however, was not in His teaching, or in His philosophy, but in the supreme fact of His resurrection. Argument the world had had before in abundance. Plato and Socrates had furnished large contributions to the argumentative phase of the question, but what humanity needed was not argument but demonstration, not theory but proof. Socrates had said the soul ought to endure, but Jesus Christ proved that man not only ought to have but actually *has* an immortal heritage. And so the Resurrection has influenced more people to believe in a future life than any other single motive in all history. The Apostolic argument, “Because He rose from the dead we also shall rise,” is thoroughly pertinent. People will believe in a future life if they are as-

sured that one man actually and positively entered upon it, when they will not believe in it by reason of any philosophical or logical process whatever. Thought and fact are two different things, and the "ought to be" does not always coincide with the "is." It was this preaching of fact rather than theory which first won Christianity its place in the hearts of men. The world was surfeited upon theory; the Greeks had spun it out to an endless length, and Paul's words were literally true: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The "foolishness of preaching" appealed to men everywhere because it dealt with facts and not philosophies, with deeds and not simply with high-flown speculations.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ may well be styled the crux of Christianity. Paul, who was the most brilliant interpreter the new religion ever had, recognized this very fully, and by reason of this recognition, wrote the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. It is no exaggeration to say that there can be no Christian religion without faith in the Resurrection. There may be Christian morality, and Christian living, but no Christian religion. Eliminate the Resurrection, and Christ

takes His place, as already noted, with Plato, Socrates and Zeno, as a great teacher, but as nothing more. The historical phenomena presented by Christianity thus become inexplicable. The evidence in support of the Resurrection is the strongest adduced for any of Christ's miracles, and it is impossible to explain it away without doing such violence to the gospel historians as to make their record practically worthless. Paul's question to King Agrippa seems pertinent, when such attempts are made: "Why is it judged incredible with you if God doth raise the dead?" To those who believe in God, and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and King, for the Lord of life not to conquer death would be the incredible thing. Interpretations of the Resurrection are, of course, more or less varied. The vital thing is that Christ lived again in conscious personal existence after physical death, and that because He lived He still lives, and because He lives His followers know that they shall live. Questions in regard to the resurrected body are speculative, and for the most part profitless. The important point is not the "what" but the "that." "Christ conquered death" is all we need to know; just *how* He conquered it may remain for future settlement. The trend of modern science, properly interpreted, is not against such a future

existence as the Resurrection asserts, but in favor of it. While the Resurrection must always remain to a certain extent in the realm of faith rather than in the realm of exact science, its scientific basis becomes the stronger as the years pass on.

“My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live forevermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is.”

(c) Epilogue

VII

MODERN PROGRESS AND VITAL CHRISTIANITY

“**I**S Christianity declining?” is the old question of skeptics and scoffers, and will presumably be asked until the whole world becomes Christianized at the time of the Millennial Dawn. From the statistical point of view there can be but one answer. Christianity is gaining on all the other religious beliefs at an ever increasing rate. The question of the status of vital Christianity is a different problem, however, and one which statistics will not settle. There was a time when the civilized world was nominally Christian, and at that very time vital Christianity reached its lowest ebb. Measured not by statistics but by feeling the pulse of the age, we reach none the less the same conclusion. Surely and more surely Christ’s great ideals of righteousness, service and freedom are being realized in the world. Men are becoming better; politics is cleaner; the world is getting to be a more comfortable place in which to live. There are more good Samaritans in existence to-

day than ever before. No such awful barbarities as death by crucifixion, or the inhuman and revolting tortures which were every-day affairs when Christ lived, would be even dreamed of now. We have much yet to accomplish, but we are progressing with giant strides. Nor does the age show any perceptible tendency towards a disbelief in the supernatural element of Christianity. In every generation there are those who refuse to believe in a future life, or in any realm outside of the material; but they are, so far as external evidence goes, less numerous to-day than at any other time in the history of civilization. The Resurrected Christ, no less than the Teaching Christ, holds His throne as He has held it in the past. As man develops, he must develop towards, rather than away from, the Infinite; and he will therefore never lose faith in the supernatural. This which is the teaching of logic and philosophy has likewise been borne out in the actual records of history and the story of the lives of men.

One of the striking evidences of the progress of vital Christianity is the world-wide extension of the Peace Movement during the present century. That the nations are slowly but surely moving towards that day foreshadowed in Tennyson's vision, when

“ The war drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-
flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the
world,”

there can be no question. The establishment of the Peace Tribunal at the Hague, the settlement of so many recent international disputes by arbitration, the ever-increasing sentiment in favor of the disarmament of nations—these things all show conclusively the coming reign of the Prince of Peace. The ground of the Peace Movement is fundamentally the ideal of service. Men who desire to serve their fellow men will not cut each other's throats. Even those Christians who do not hold to the doctrine of non-resistance in its extreme form yet recognize its prevailing tendency. The religion of Mohammed has no more certainly relied upon war as a means of extending its borders than has the religion of Christ upon peace. The whole genius of Christianity is opposed to strife, and while it is true that certain churches and churchmen in the past have encouraged war, they have not in so doing helped to realize the ideals of their Master. When Christ came into the world, war was the normal and usual condition of a nation, and peace existed only when the people were so exhausted that they could no longer struggle for supremacy. To lose

all of one's property in a single night, to be robbed of children and home, to be enslaved or subjected to awful physical and mental torture, were things which any man, no matter how prominent or virtuous, might constantly expect as a result of war. The security of individual property and the reign of international justice have come about in consequence of the dethronement of Mars, and the enthronement of the Christ of Galilee.

Another evidence of the growing power of vital Christianity is the increased interest in benevolence among wealthy men of the modern world. Some of our great financiers and business men are still selfish at heart, but we are constrained to believe that this is not true of most of them. The richest men of the modern age are bending all of their energies to solve the problem of how they may best use their wealth to serve the world. A rich man who does not give extensively of his wealth is rare and becoming still rarer. Some of the scions of wealthy houses in America are socialists, and strong sympathizers with the proletariat element. Among the monied men of modern times there is coming to be more and more the recognition of the fact that they, like the Great Teacher, are to become the servants of all. The foremost retail merchant of our day is as notable for his interest in

the work of the Sunday-school as he is for his business sagacity and success. It is sometimes said that the modern industrial system is but a transposition of the ancient feudal régime, but it is certainly true that there is a temper about the modern baron which is very different from that of his ancestor of the olden time. In the older age there were many cases of individual charity; and much emphasis, most of it, however, after the beginning of the modern period, derived from Christ, was laid upon isolated benevolence; but the modern spirit is one of a desire for general amelioration, and has in it a great deal more of the element of sympathy. The present-day business man is or has been, as a rule, himself a laborer; he sympathizes thoroughly with the men under him, and thinks of their convenience and comfort perhaps more often than his own. The spirit of love and service which is the spirit of Christ is in his soul and is manifest in his life. This type of man is of course not yet universal, but it is becoming larger and larger in its influence and power as the years pass on. Its presence in the world is a striking proof of the extension of vital Christianity.

Still another indication of the progress of Christ's teaching is to be found in the higher moral tone exhibited by political leaders of the present gener-

ation. Politics is still far from what it should be, but it is immensely better to-day than at any previous era in the history of society. Bribery is no longer condoned, and while isolated examples of corruption are to be found in certain communities and municipalities, as a whole the nations are politically cleaner than at any time in the past. In the United States, great reform movements, led in our largest state by the son of a Baptist clergyman and in the nation at large by a Dutch Reformed lay preacher and a Presbyterian elder, have been the striking features of the day. These men are all of them orthodox Christians of the highest type; they are also men of unimpeachable integrity and moral courage. Never in the history of the American people have the destinies of its citizens been in charge of men representing a higher type of religion than is true to-day. Vital Christianity has, seemingly, at least, captured the rulers of the world; and as a consequence the moral tone of all nations is growing constantly better. Occasional lapses from the reform movement are of course to be found, and it is not to be asserted for a moment that the principles of the Nazarene constitute the core of modern politics; but it is none the less true that these principles are more powerful to-day than at any previous time in our history. The "Era of

Good Stealing" is a thing of the past in the United States; and it is dangerous to be dishonest, even in so corrupt a political municipality as that of the City by the Golden Gate. Tweed and his followers constituted a type which is looked upon with abhorrence by the bulk of the American people, and this abhorrence grows as the years pass on. Clean politics is surely an indication of the presence of vital Christianity.

Few things are more gratifying in the onward march of decency and Christianity than the disappearance of cruelty from the world. The darkest blot upon past history has been its awful disregard for human misery and suffering. The story of the legalized means of execution among the nations is a record so shocking that it haunts one like a hideous nightmare. When one thinks that for hundreds of years the most enlightened nations of the ancient world habitually punished criminals by crucifixion, and that it was the lot of thousands and thousands of wretched beings to agonize for days in this way before death brought relief, he can scarcely realize that the people who did these things belonged to the same race with himself. The records of the French criminal system and of the frightful atrocities, which were perpetrated in the prisons of Paris up almost to the Revolution, are so terrible

as to cause the strongest and most hardened nerves of modern times to quail when the history is read. The names of Damiens and Ravailac alone recall enough. One can scarcely help feeling that of all the demons which have ruled the earth, the most inexcusable and awful has been the demon of cruelty. No sin was more thoroughly denounced by the Christ than this. His spirit was the spirit of kindness, and the very idea of cruelty was foreign to Him. Modern nations are slowly learning His lesson. The gallows has been abolished as an instrument of punishment in the leading and more influential American states, and the guillotine is but little used in France. Wherever practiced now, capital punishment is meted out as humanely as possible, and there is no effort to punish the wretched victim with additional tortures. The spirit of Him who died by the awful death of the cross to free men from the demon of cruelty is abroad everywhere in the world to-day.

An interesting and important testimony to the growth of the Christian spirit in the world is the modern tendency towards toleration of religious differences, and the desire for religious unification. Among the Protestant churches the universal desire, now that individual freedom of conscience has been secured, is for a united Christendom. The ideal of

service had been beautifully illustrated in the lives of men like Francis of Assisi and thousands of others of similar temper, long before the days of Protestantism. It is the glory of the Reformation that it plead for the last great ideal of Christ, the ideal of freedom. But since freedom has been secured, the extreme individualism which followed in its train has helped to thwart the triumphant march of the religion of Christ. Everywhere to-day there is a desire for Christians of every creed or party to join hands and to present a solid front against the powers of evil. Greater toleration in regard to opinions, and greater breadth of sympathy for all mankind, are the prevailing characteristics of present-day Christendom. Great movements in both the social and the religious world are presaged by this undercurrent of sympathy which is bearing all of Christ's followers more and more towards Christ. Baring-Gould's stirring hymn expresses the vision of a practically unanimous Christendom :

“ Like a mighty army,
Moves the Church of God ;
Brothers, we are treading
Where the saints have trod ;
We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity.”

PART III

Formal Christianity

CREED

THE question of formal Christianity, or the organization and nature of the Church as an institution, involves three things: first, the subject of creed, or what one must believe; second, the subject of ordinance, or what one must do; and third, the subject of polity, or how one must be governed. These three items, creed, ordinance and polity, cover practically the whole field of church organization and relations.

The question of creed, by common consent, stands first of the trinity, both in time and importance. What must a man believe in order to belong to the Church? is a problem over which there has been endless argument and which has caused the most wide-spread dissension. It is not in any sense our purpose to attempt an analysis of the historic creeds of Christendom; still less is it our purpose to attempt the defense of any particular one of them. Certainly the Church as originally established must have had some creed. We find, for example, in the Acts of the Apostles, a number of instances of conversion to Christianity. The people who were

thus converted must have professed some belief before their admission to the Church. If, therefore, we discover the standard of faith which these people professed, surely such a creed should be sufficient to serve as the bearer of vital Christianity to-day. Our one purpose, then, must be to discover just what in New Testament days a convert was compelled to believe in order to be a Christian. Any creed containing less than this will assuredly lack Apostolic authority; any creed containing more than this will bind to a greater degree than vital Christianity demands. Assuredly the creed of the Apostolic days may well be regarded as the ideal creed of the religion of Christ.

The problem, looked at from this point of view, is both easy and difficult. Easy, because the confession of the early Church is frequently given in the New Testament; difficult, because it is always given in such brief compass. The first confession of Christianity was that of the Apostle Peter, as recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." The apparently interpolated confession of the eunuch in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles says practically the same thing. In a number of other cases, it is simply announced that converts were asked to believe "in," or "on," "the Lord

Jesus Christ." The Philippian jailer was thus told, along with the Ethiopian eunuch and the Roman centurion. Very clearly, then, the creed of the early Church was the simplest possible profession of a belief in Jesus as the Christ, or the Anointed One of God.

All this seems easy enough; the difficult problem arises when we attempt to interpret the confession of Peter, or the pseudo-confession of the eunuch. What is meant by those words "belief in Christ"? What did the Apostles mean when they used them? What concept did the early convert have in his mind when they were put to him and he breathed an affirmative reply? Obviously, all the creeds of historic Christendom have started at this point. It seems perfectly clear, however, that a statement of faith which would be intelligible to a Jerusalem Jew, a jailer at Philippi, a Greek woman at Athens, and the lower order of servants at Rome, would not be very recondite or profound. To believe in Christ, or to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, must therefore have been something very clear in meaning, very simple, and yet very comprehensive and complete. Any special theory regarding the much mooted points of theological dogma could hardly have found a place in such a concept. When one studies this early con-

fession more and more, he is irresistibly driven to the conclusion that the first creed of Christendom was not a statement of dogma at all, but rather an affirmation in regard to the Christ ideal of life. In other words, the early convert, when asked to believe that "Jesus is the Christ," was asked to accept Jesus as his Ultimate Ideal, as his Supreme Lord and King, as the One whom he pledged himself to obey in all things pertaining to life and destiny. This of course was to accept His Divinity, and it is the only practical meaning which the Divinity of Christ can have for any one. The word Christ itself, in its interpretation as the Anointed One, conveys precisely this idea. To believe that Jesus is the Anointed One is to believe that He is Lord and King of one's life, and to say that we will strive to realize His life in our own.

In the Gospels, such an interpretation of the words "belief in Christ" finds ample warrant and support. In His famous sermon on the Bread of Life, preached at Capernaum, Jesus, in the boldest and most daring imagery conceivable, asserted the necessity for realizing His ideal of life. To the crude materialistic interpretation of His words, He retorted in vain His interpretative statement, "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." Clearly, therefore, in this greatest of His discourses

after the Sermon on the Mount, He taught the necessity for an appropriation of His ideal of life by the soul, in order that it should develop and grow. "I am the Bread of Life" means "I am the Ideal which the soul must realize in order that it may live and live forever." The famous "I Am's" used by the Great Teacher upon many other occasions indicate the same idea. He is the Living Water, as He is the Bread of Life, because He furnishes the supreme ideal after which man must fashion his character and soul. Very obviously, then, an affirmation of acquiescence in His ideal of life ought to constitute the confession of faith demanded from His disciples.

In the Epistles of Paul and the other Apostolic writers, we find a similar confirmation. Paul, although distinctively a theologian in temper, nowhere obtrudes even his theology as an essential part of the Christian's creed. He is very pronounced in saying, however, that unless a so-called Christian possesses the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. By way of defining this language, he gives his famous catalogue of the "fruits of the Spirit," which is really nothing more than a condensed outline of vital Christianity. A great part of Paul's instructions as contained in the Epistles bears directly upon practical living and

behavior. Still more practical than Paul is James, perhaps the first, chronologically speaking, of all New Testament writers. Pure religion is defined by him, as it was by his Master when conversing with the rich young ruler, as the incarnation of service and righteousness; and his entire Epistle shows the tremendous emphasis placed upon vital Christianity and the practical realization of Christ's ideals in the early Apostolic days.

Much argument has centred around the Great Commission, especially as it is found in Matthew and Mark. A prominent agnostic as we have already noted has commented upon the cruelty of the words, "He that believeth not shall be condemned." Still others have attacked the idea of belief as a volitional process. To condemn a man for failing to believe that which his reason will not accept is assuredly the part of neither reason nor justice. But belief, as the Great Commission used the word, and as the early Christians understood it, did not refer to any philosophical or theological concept, upon which men might and necessarily would differ. Rather did it refer to the acceptance of a certain ideal as the guide of life, and this any one could do without in the slightest degree violating his intellectual honesty. The Great Commission does not say, for example, "He that believeth

in this or that theory of the atonement shall be saved," nor is there anything about it which would warrant such a statement. The words are simply, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

We have already referred to the significance of the creed herein advocated, as applied to the permanence of Christianity. Such a creed can never be outgrown, never need any revision, never fail to interpret properly the religion of which it is a part. As long as men are willing to acknowledge their adherence to the Christ ideal of life, so long will there be Christians in the world; and whenever men fail to do this, Christianity will disappear.

The first confession of the Church, the great confession of Peter, must be, therefore, her last confession. Upon this rock she was first builded, and upon this rock her eternal permanence must rest. When men say with the Fisherman of Galilee, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," they have accepted the ultimate and universal creed; and beyond this it is useless to go. Upon this great historic creed, not as a statement of dogma, not as a pronouncement of philosophy, not as a tenet of theology, but as a practical expression of a desire to live the Christ life, the mighty hosts of Christendom will some time be one. Here and here alone, we find common

ground. That Christianity which does not recognize the Christ Character as its goal is a mistaken interpretation of the Master's teaching and life. That Christianity, on the other hand, which does so interpret His message, can unite upon His own universal creed. Each man will retain, as heretofore, his private interpretation in regard to matters of theology, but all will unite upon the one vital creed, a creed broad enough to include all Christians, and yet narrow enough and strong enough to embrace every necessary element of the religion of Christ.

II

ORDINANCE

AS the question of creed deals with that which one must believe in order to belong to the Church, so the question of ordinance has for its province that which one must do or perform. There can be no efficient organization without at least some simple form or forms to serve as its skeleton. No secret order, for example, exists without its initiatory rites; and the plainest sort of psychology demands always that there should be some means by which to express one's belief in action. The religion of Christ, as embodied in the Church, has found the simplest possible way in which to express its fundamental tenets. Two ordinances, the one as initiatory, the other as perpetual, constitute its entire framework. We call these ordinances Baptism, and the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist. Ample Scriptural warrant may easily be found for both of these sacraments; none of significance for any other. Some Christian bodies, indeed, assert the existence of other ordinances; but in almost every case they

base the ground for this assertion, not upon the New Testament procedure, but upon the grant of superior powers presumably given the Church.

The establishment of the ordinance of baptism as the initiatory rite demanded by Jesus Christ of those who desire to become His disciples, is perfectly clear. The Great Commission, in both Matthew and Mark, commands baptism as an essential symbol of conversion for the followers of the Man of Galilee. In the opening discourse of Peter upon the day of Pentecost, the converts to his preaching were commanded—"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Following this pronouncement, it is stated, "They that gladly received his word were baptized." The Ethiopian eunuch, desiring to become a follower of Christ, was forthwith baptized. The Philippian jailer, professing a similar faith, was baptized the same hour of the night. Even Saul of Tarsus, though chosen in a special way, for a special mission, none the less was likewise commanded to be baptized, before his permanent enrollment among the followers of Christ. It may suffice, in this connection, to say that there is no record in the New Testament of admission to the Church without baptism, and

that in every specific case where details of conversion are given, the ordinance is directly mentioned. Even the Supreme Teacher Himself was baptized, although over the protest of the baptizer. If there is anything, therefore, quite explicitly taught in the New Testament, it is the existence of baptism as the initiatory ordinance of the Christian religion.

Three more or less vexing problems follow, however, upon this admission. These three problems relate to the design, the subjects and the action of the ordinance. In other words, why are people baptized? what people are fit subjects for Christian baptism? and how are such subjects baptized?

The answer to the first of these questions has been in large measure already given. Without some initiatory rite, no framework for the Church could be found, and only upon obedience to this rite could the convert be said to dedicate himself completely to the new ideal of life. Both the volitional assent implied in the creed, and likewise the practical assent implied in the ordinance of baptism, were needed in order to complete the conversion, as the New Testament writers understood the term. Anything short of this would mean an incomplete dedication and therefore an unsatisfactory one. For this reason, baptism is coupled with the "remission of sins" in the language of Peter on the

day of Pentecost, as well as in the speech of Paul before the citizens of Jerusalem, as recorded in the twenty-second chapter of Acts. Formally speaking, complete obedience to the commands of Christ was needed before the convert had fully put on the Christian faith. Of course the absurd question sometimes propounded, "Can a man be saved without baptism?" or the similar one, "Is baptism essential to the forgiveness of sins?" and the like, needs no comment here. The right-minded man will always want to do what it is clearly his duty to do, regardless of consequences. That the scheme of the New Testament Church demands baptism for admission should be clear to all. That baptism, or any rite of formal Christianity, is the whole of the religion of Christ, only those who have mistaken the end for the means will assert. It is clearly, therefore, the duty of the man who would become a Christian to be baptized; whatever significance may attach to the ordinance is not for him to question. That is an altogether wrong frame of mind which asks, "How far may I neglect my duty and still be saved?" The right-minded man does not want to neglect his duty, whether it be important or unimportant, if he be once clearly shown that, however insignificant it may appear, it is still his duty, and therefore on no account to be despised.

The answer to the second question is likewise largely involved in the first. If baptism is the initiatory rite admitting the penitent believer into the Church, if it is the final step in the process of conversion, if it is the expression in action of the volitional acceptance of the creed, if it is, in other words, the seal of an honest determination to follow Christ and His ideal of life, then very obviously its subjects are already designated. Only those who can make such a determination are eligible. That idea which puts baptism first instead of last in the process assuredly has no warrant in either psychology or Scripture. This is written in all kindness, and with the fullest possible appreciation of the value of a dedicatory service for the children of Christian parents. That a child, so far as possible, should be brought up in the Church and dedicated to her service is very apparent; but that such a dedication should be styled Christian baptism is by no means thus apparent. Christian baptism, as indicated in the New Testament, is the final initiatory act of obedience which admits one to full fellowship with Christ. So far at least as the testimony of the record shows, it should always follow and never precede that complete surrender to the Christ ideal of life which is the vital element in all true conversion.

The answer to the third question is also largely involved in what has been already written. How people were baptized when the ordinance was first established would seem to be reasonably plain from the testimony of the New Testament. It is not necessary to appeal to linguistic or technical argument to establish the character of the ordinance. Any one who will take the trouble to underscore the word as it occurs in the New Testament, in our English versions, and read the context carefully in each case, will discover that only one action will fully satisfy all the requirements of the text. To "go down into the water," to "come up from it," to "be buried," "washing of regeneration," and the like expressions, are clearly interpreted in one way and one alone. Added to this testimony of the text is the original significance of the word, and the now overwhelming weight of scholarship in regard to the matter. Very absurd here again is the question sometimes propounded, "Can a man be saved who has not been immersed?" What folly to talk of consequences, if immersion is really the act of Christian baptism! The external action may or may not be of special significance, but being a part of the ordinance, the right-minded man should always desire that every part measure up, as nearly as possible, to the correct standard. That

the action of baptism, which is a part of one of the ordinances of formal Christianity, is the whole of the religion of Christ, is quite as absurd as the idea that because it occupies such a position it should not be performed correctly. An ideal standard in religion demands accuracy, not only as regards the greatest, but also as regards every question upon which it is possible for us to secure accurate information at all.

The significant opposition to the views of the first Christian ordinance herein expressed is grounded in one theory, the theory so ably maintained by the oldest and largest of all the divisions of Christendom. This theory may be expressed in a word. That the original constitution of the Church provided for immersion as Christian baptism, we readily concede. To the Church, however, was given the power to change her own constitution in such a way or ways as should best suit her purposes and convenience. This principle, the idea that the Church herself has power to change her fundamental constitution from age to age, is back of all the significant opposition to the doctrines and practice of the New Testament organization. That power which is taken away from the constitution is thus given to the ecclesiastical organization.

That the Church has power to adapt herself in all

non-essential particulars to the needs of the age, is indeed plain; but it is no plainer than the fact that in essential particulars she does not possess any such power. Baptism is the initiatory rite of the Church; it is a feature of its fundamental constitution. Now unless specific provision is made within the constitution itself for change, it is an unwarranted assumption to presuppose such a power. But one searches the Scriptures in vain to discover evidence of such amendatory provision. There is not the slightest hint contained in the New Testament that any number of Christians constituting the visible body of the Church at any future time should possess the right to change her fundamental constitution. When Christ said in the terms of the Great Commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be condemned," there is no hint or suggestion that the baptism spoken of should mean one thing in one age and another thing in another. Only those who believe in the establishment of a great ecclesiastical hierarchy with such absolute powers as to make it supreme over all constitution and law, can justify a conclusion of the character suggested. Such a hierarchy, however, violates not only the provisions for formal Christi-

anity as found in the New Testament, but also destroys at least one of the essentials of vital Christianity, the noble ideal of freedom. Those who believe in an ecclesiasticism of this sort may, however, logically justify a departure from the New Testament standards, but we cannot see how it is possible for others to do so.

The second ordinance of the Church, the ordinance for permanent and perpetual observance, is usually styled the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist. Common consent has likewise established this rite as an essential feature of the Christian worship. Instituted by Christ, symbolic of His sufferings and death, practiced by the Church in unbroken succession since the Apostolic days, its claim to a fundamental position in any formal analysis of Christianity is undisputed and indisputable. Its significance doubtless arises from the fact that by its simple symbolism that Ideal Life, the closing scenes of which it commemorates, is brought the more vividly before the minds of the professed followers of Christ. It has therefore a very important function in serving as a bearer of vital Christianity. It preaches in undying and eloquent tones the supreme act of service of that Life which was devoted throughout to the service of all. It

strengthens the resolution taken in the initiatory ordinance of baptism, and helps to keep it alive. The early Christians were fully aware of its significance, and regarded it as an essential part of their ordinary worship. That they observed it regularly on the first day of every week is the obvious inference of the text,¹ though no specific command to that effect is recorded.

Theological interpretations of either of the two fundamental ordinances of Christianity form no essential part of the religion of Christ. Fundamentally external actions expressive of an inner purpose or decision of will, they constitute the simple framework which serves as the bearer of the Christ ideal of life. Men may interpret them in whatever mystical or philosophical way they please, so long as they do not seek to bind their own interpretations upon the consciences of others. The most cruel and unfortunate chapter in the history of the Church was written by the efforts of some men to bind upon others their own theories of the Eucharist. Such attempts of course came from a misinterpretation of both vital and formal Christianity. The latter never demanded coercion of the kind; and the former, through the ideal of freedom,

¹See Acts xx. 7—"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them."

utterly contradicted it. In all our temptations to theological acerbity over the ordinances, it is well to remember that the spirit they breathe is ever the spirit of love and service, and that unless that spirit is present in our discussions, we have observed these rites in vain. Well did the old Psalmist say, not indeed in this, but in a similar connection :

“For thou desirest not sacrifice ; else would
I give it :
Thou delightest not in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit :
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou
wilt not despise.”

Well, too, has Frederick W. Faber expressed the spirit of all the ordinances in his beautiful words :

“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea :
There’s a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.
* * * * *
For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man’s mind ;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word ;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.”

III

POLITY

PERHAPS the most difficult problem of formal Christianity is the question of polity, or church government. The creed of the Apostolic Church does not seem hard to determine, and although there has been more or less discussion upon the question of ordinance, it is upon the subject of polity that the most serious lines of cleavage among the followers of Christ are to be found.

Three forms of government, the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian and the Congregational, are in existence among Protestant bodies. It seems very probable that these different forms originated largely from the prevailing types in vogue among the different nations when the Church began its work. Imperial Rome furnished the germ of the episcopacy; the Judean Synagogue, the starting-point of the presbytery; and the free Greek communities of Asia Minor and elsewhere, the basis of congregationalism. Nothing is clearer than the fact that no special polity is set forth in a mandatory way in the New Testament. It is certain that

specific officers known as elders and deacons formed a part of the early church organization. Paul ordained elders in all of the churches, and the establishment of the diaconate is set forth in detail in the Acts of the Apostles. The duties pertaining to these offices are also clearly outlined in the Pastoral Epistles of the Apostle of Tarsus. There is no reference in the New Testament to any organized Church with a central head, though there are a number of references to the Churches of Christ collectively. The Church at Jerusalem seems to have had some special weight in the early counsels of Christendom, a fact doubtless due to the presence of so many of the Apostles ; but there is nothing said of any central ecclesiasticism, either there or at Rome.

The polity of the Apostolic Church in the New Testament days, so far as it can be determined, was therefore unquestionably Congregational. That there was any specific injunction laid upon the Church of future ages to continue this polity, may be questioned. That the creed and the ordinances, as fixed and fundamental factors in the constitution of Christianity, cannot be changed, except by the great Head of the Church Himself, seems clear ; but the same is not equally true of any distinctive polity. That form of government which will best

subserve the spiritual interests of the whole Church would seem to be the form required by Scriptural authority. This being conceded, it still remains questionable whether any form more satisfactory than that actually in existence in the Apostolic days has been devised since. Any government which does violence to the third great ideal of Christ is sure, in the end, to cost more than it is worth.

The idea of Apostolic succession, held by a large and eminently respectable portion of Christendom, relies to no small degree upon tradition for its basis, and as a dogma will probably never command anything like universal acceptance. The Episcopacy as a form of government may perhaps meet with better success, though it will in all likelihood have to undergo essential modifications if it does so. The Presbyterian polity has also many points in its favor, but it seems hardly probable that it will ever appeal to the hosts of universal Christendom.

There is a demand for freedom in the modern age which cannot be suppressed. The Congregational polity gratifies this demand, but is weak along the line of effective organization and direction. A polity which would guarantee the freedom of the last of the trinity and the effectiveness of the first, would appear to be the ideal. This seems to be reached largely through the coöperation of inde-

pendent churches bound together not by authority, but by reason and love. The extreme independence of a radical congregationalism is almost if not altogether as defective as the excessive centralism of a despotic hierarchy. Not all the problems of church polity are yet worked out, but it is safe to say that the religion of Christ demands that measure of freedom which was guaranteed each individual church in the Apostolic days, and beyond this, all the efficiency in the way of organization that it is possible to secure.

Whatever organization may be effected must assuredly be founded upon the New Testament basis. Whatever coöperation may be secured must come from the free Churches of Christ as individual units, and dare not be imposed upon them. Perfect autonomy and freedom must be guaranteed to the individual Christian and the individual church. This was the victory won in the Reformation, and its fruits must not be thrown away. Starting from the New Testament idea of free but coöperating units, there will result that final organization of the Church which will guarantee perfect liberty to each and absolute efficiency to all. We are perhaps not ready for this yet, taking the Christian world as a whole; but we are rapidly getting ready. In the meantime, individual churches of all

communions should cultivate the coöperative spirit, and endeavor to help each other in the common warfare against evil. Whenever the Church of Christ becomes one, in answer to the Master's prayer, it will be through the coöperation of individual churches from the bottom, and never by legislative enactment from the top. This coöperation all Christians should encourage, and the good feeling thus engendered will prove no small element in solving other problems of divergence. With a better understanding of each other, with the spirit of prejudice disappearing before the spirit of prayer, and with an honest effort on the part of each one to do his duty in the contest against the common foe, the goal of Christendom in the matter of organization will be reached ere we are aware. The motto of all Christians in regard to polity, as in other matters, must ever be, "In essentials unity, in non-essentials freedom, in all things charity." To borrow the expressive sentence of Daniel Webster in his "Reply to Hayne," the watchword of the Church, no less than the watchword of the state, in matters of government, must be :

"Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

IV

THE SPIRITUAL AND MYSTICAL ELEMENT IN RELIGION

CREED, ordinance and polity constitute the skeleton or framework of the Church, but they do not constitute all that is meant by the religious life. Nor does the practice of vital Christianity, in addition to them, include all that there is in religion. To be a Christian, to be a member of Christ's Church, means something more, and that something more is embraced in the emotional and spiritual content of formal Christianity usually included under the idea of worship. Worship is largely an emotional term, and embodies all of that mystical and æsthetic element which has proven so appealing to many minds in all times and all ages. Worship includes the idea of prayer, with its wonderful voice for the aching heart of humanity; it includes likewise the æsthetic appeal of great architecture and painting and music; it has to do with what we style ritual, and all those forms and ceremonies which, however complex or simple they may be, touch the heart and move the

soul. Even so stern a Puritan as Milton could not help being affected by the "studious cloister's pale," and

" the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light,"

while the voice of music spoke even more appealingly than that of architecture to his soul :

" There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes."

Without attempting any exhaustive analysis of this tremendously rich side of the religious concept, we shall endeavor to embody the most important features under a threefold division: first, the mystical or spiritual side of the Christian religion, embraced in an especial manner under the various interpretations and doctrines of the Holy Spirit; second, the function of prayer; and third, the element of ritual and the æsthetic in general as applied to Christianity.

The first involves a great part of religion

to many Christians ; and although there are numberless theories of the Holy Spirit, some place is given to Him in all systems of Christianity. No Christian church is without a belief of some sort in the Holy Spirit. The more mystical the individual Christian may be, the greater part will this belief play in his life ; while the more rationalistic and unemotional he is, the less significance will he attach to it. To dogmatize in a matter which is of such obviously individual interpretation would be absurd. Theories of the Holy Spirit, like theories dealing with other matters of dogma and theology, are not to be enforced by one Christian upon another. The mystic and the rationalist may both be Christians upon the common foundation of the confession of Peter, though the one "sees visions and dreams dreams," while the other sees no visions at all. The religion of Christ is broad enough to include them all, so long as the mystic keeps reason enough to transact the ordinary business of life, and so long as the rationalist keeps mysticism enough to believe in a spiritual reality beyond the things of material sense. To say that only the mystic is a Christian is absurd ; to say that he is not a Christian is equally so.

The spiritual significance of Christianity is a

theme which should receive the earnest attention of every Christian. That the "miracles of conversion" which the modern age presents, the reclamation of men like Gough and McAuley and Hadley, the lifting up of whole nations such as the Feejee and Sandwich Islanders, and other examples of similar character—that these things are not evidences of a power beyond the purely material, surely, we think, admits of no discussion. However rationalistic in temper a man may be, in the presence of the facts to which allusion has just been made, to say nothing of the inexplicable mysteries opened up by the whole subject of genius and inspiration, he must, if he be thoughtful at all, agree with the sentiment of Hamlet:

"There are more things in Heaven and Earth,
Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

The function of prayer as an essential feature of Christianity will hardly be disputed. Here again there is wide room for divergence, and yet certainly all men, and especially all Christians, will pray at some time or other. Prayer keys the soul to the Unseen and the Infinite, and lifts one out of his little individual sphere into the larger communion with the universe and with God. No

Christian can be a Christian without prayer, and certainly no Christian would want to be one without it. That sympathy with the spiritual and the ideal which was at the heart of all the philosophy of the Nazarene can be fostered and developed only through prayer. Nothing is more indisputable or significant in the life of Jesus than His habit of constant petition to His Father. Sometimes He remained alone all night in solitary supplication. In communion with Nature, upon the mountain, by the seashore, or among the hills, He sought strength for the daily task which was His. Prayer has been the source of inspiration and power for the good and great of all times and all ages. Good men practically without exception are and have been men of prayer. It is unnecessary that the question of the objective or the subjective value of our petitions should be discussed here. Whether the universe comes to us or we come to the universe is, after all, of little significance, providing there is harmony between us. Robertson's masterly appeal for the subjective value of prayer has a place along with George Müller's orphanage and the other objective witnesses. The great significance of prayer as a part of the Christian religion is its power to bring one into vital touch with the spiritual and the ideal side

of life, and to save us from the dominance of the sordid and the material. However moral a man's life may be objectively, it will always lack richness and fervor unless he is also a man of prayer.

The value of the purely artistic or æsthetic features of worship is also one which has provoked wide-spread discussion. Many Christians see in great architecture, painting and music, an effective means for deepening the spiritual life. Others on various grounds object to them entirely. That the moral content of Christianity is more important than its æsthetic features must, we think, be conceded ; and yet the æsthetic element is a large and significant factor, not only in the religious, but also in the total life of man. Great music has undoubtedly a stimulative value, which, properly used, means much in the religious life. So long as the art element remains the hand-maiden of religion and morals, her services are valuable and indeed almost indispensable. Whenever she usurps the throne for herself, however, she proves destructive to both. No architecture can be too superb for the material dwelling place of the Church, so long as the Church dwarfs the edifice and not the edifice the Church. No music can be too inspiring so long as it points to the Cross, and makes men and women forget its own beauty by revealing the

beauty of Christ. No ritual can be too impressive so long as it holds up Christ and the Christian life before men, and does not degenerate into the mockery of religious pretense and sham. Here again, much latitude must be permitted to the individual Christian and the individual Church. To some temperaments, the purely æsthetic element will always appeal; to others, it will not. That there is a place for it in the religion of Christ, no thinking man can deny; what place is given it will depend upon the extent to which the artistic side of life makes its appeal to individual Christians.

It is obvious that we have but touched upon this rich and important side of formal Christianity. Many other factors enter into worship, which we have not attempted to discuss. The Word of God, as the basis not only of this feature but indeed of both vital and formal Christianity as a whole, is an important example; the personality and office of the preacher is another. The outline given will suffice, however, to indicate the nature of the subject, as well as its breadth and value. Whatever a man's temperament may be, he finds in a true religious service that inspiration which Wordsworth depicts in one of his choicest passages :

“that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.”

V

CONVERSION

IT would seem that after a study of the content of religion, or vital Christianity, and an attempt at least towards an interpretation of the nature and function of the Church, nothing would need to be said regarding the acceptance of Christ by the individual. Obviously the man who turns to the Christ ideal of life, who believes in Jesus as Lord and King, and who desires to enter upon His service, should have no difficulty in discovering how to carry out his desire. In the early history of the Church, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, it is certain that men found little difficulty in becoming members of the Church of Christ. Three thousand were added on the day of Pentecost alone, and large numbers upon other occasions.

The process by which these early converts became identified with the Church seems to have been exceedingly simple. That process may be expressed in three words frequently found in the early record. Those three words were belief, repentance and baptism. The first word related to an intellectual acceptance of Christ as Lord, and the life which

He advocated as the true life for man to live; the second stood for a resolute turning from the old life to walk in the new; and the third represented the initiatory rite which marked the complete obedience of the convert to his new Master and Lord. There is no case of conversion recorded in the history of the Church as given in the New Testament which does not include these three things. Upon the day of Pentecost, as Peter for the first time proclaimed the charter of the new Church, when those who heard his burning words and believed them to be true turned to him and said, "What shall we do?" the answer came with unerring precision, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;" and the text states, "They that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

It would be difficult to place too much emphasis upon this account of the first additions to the Church of Christ, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts. Everything conspired to make the case a typical one, for the benefit of all who should come after. It was the day of the formal founding of the Church as an organization, that day being signalized by the

miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit. Peter, as the chief spokesman, was in a position to state authoritatively all necessary facts connected with admission to the new organization. It was assuredly the occasion of all occasions when the method of conversion should have been made perfectly clear and plain. So far as the record at least is concerned, it could not indeed have been made plainer. The three thousand yielded their assent to the new doctrine, an assent predicated in the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were told to "repent and be baptized," and when they obeyed this injunction, it is recorded that they were added to the nucleus of the early Church.

This analysis of the first case of conversion to Christianity is borne out by every other case of which mention is made in the book of Acts. The Ethiopian eunuch hears the gospel story from Philip, believes it, confesses his faith, and is forthwith baptized to "go on his way rejoicing." The Philippian jailer believes the new Gospel, falls on his knees before Paul and Silas, and is baptized "the same hour of the night." Lydia, a seller of purple of Thyatira, hearing the message of Paul, opens her heart to it, and is baptized forthwith. Saul of Tarsus himself, notwithstanding his super-

natural vision, is no exception to the general rule, for after his confession of faith in Christ on the Damascus highway, he too repents in blindness and solitude, and is baptized just as the other converts. Cornelius, the devout Roman centurion, is admitted to the Church in precisely the same way ; and when Philip preached to the inhabitants of Samaria, as recorded in the eighth chapter of Acts, it is stated that after they believed his preaching they were baptized, "both men and women."

It is no part of our plan in what is stated here to attack in any way the belief of those who see a mystical element in conversion, nor have we any impeachment for men and women who espouse the essential facts of vital Christianity through any roundabout process whatever. What we are trying to make clear is the fact that admission to the Church, following an honest acceptance of the Christ ideal of life, was a very simple and direct thing in the Apostolic days. Why it should not be just as simple now, does not seem apparent. Why, when a man believes in Christ and His gospel of life, and honestly desires to serve Him and humanity through Him, he should not be baptized and allowed to enter the Church, does not, we say, seem apparent. Obviously such a man would have become a member of the early Christian community

in the shortest possible time, and in the simplest possible way. The eunuch was a man like this, and his conversion is typical in every respect.

To sum up, then, the entire subject in the fewest possible words: the early Christians demanded of every convert an acceptance of Jesus as the Christ—that is, as the Anointed One of God, this belief carrying with it an acceptance, of course, of the Christ ideal of life. They demanded along with this profession what was its necessary concomitant, an honest “turning away” from the old life of sin and evil deeds; and last of all, as an evidence of overt obedience to the laws of the new kingdom, they required the convert to be baptized. When these things had been done, the new Christian came into the visible Church, and strove with his brethren, from day to day, to “walk in newness of life.”

A man converted in the way just described may not fulfill all of the special requirements of every Christian communion to-day, but there are few communions claiming to be the guardians of vital Christianity which will not acknowledge such a convert as being, in the fullest formal sense of the term, a Christian.

VI

THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

THE religion of Christ has had a strange and checkered history. At one time uniting both formal and vital elements in their native purity, it swept the world in a little over two centuries of triumphant progress. Then came the story of the decadence of the vital and the crystallization of the formal element in the darker days of the Middle Ages. Worst of all, in the minds of many, the formal became a substitute for the vital, and people came to believe that the touch of holy water on the body could cleanse the soul still reeking with sin. It is only proper, however, to say that all the while, much vital Christianity remained in the world. The annals of all time may be challenged to produce a more beautiful life than that of Francis of Assisi, or a more devout career than that of Thomas à Kempis ; while in the life of Savonarola, one catches a glimpse of a reincarnated Isaiah or Elijah. Those who imagine that the Middle Ages were devoid of splendid examples of genuine Christianity are by no means familiar with

the facts. The unfortunate thing about mediæval Christendom was the dominance, at times, of the visible Church, at least at its centre, by false ideals and a mistaken concept of life.

Then came the days of the Reformation, with its stirring appeal for the revival of the moral life as constituting the heart of Christianity. This was the burden of Luther's appeal ; it was also back of the stentorian blasts of Knox, and the gentle words of Zwingli and Melancthon. Too often the reformers were motived by some of the baser passions in their work, too often they persecuted their persecutors, and in other ways showed that they were by no means perfect followers of their Master ; and yet, even at the worst, their efforts advanced in no slight measure the concept of a world-wide Christendom, embodying more fully than ever before the supreme ideals of Christ. In this world movement, it should be remembered too that Francis Xavier and Loyola had a part, as well as Calvin and Luther.

It was necessary that the Church should realize the fundamental significance of the ideals of its Master, and that vital Christianity should regain its old place in the hearts of men. The ideal which needed most attention was the ideal of freedom, and the world is to-day only beginning to realize the immense significance of this principle. The

proper place to be given vital Christianity is pretty universally understood and acknowledged at the present time, throughout the Christian world. The Christ life is everywhere conceded to be the end of religion, and it is to the credit of all sections of Christendom that no one party or denomination has a monopoly upon good men or good women.

Formal Christianity still divides the visible Church into more or less antagonistic sections ; but these sections are coming closer together, and in the Master's own good time, will all be fused into one. It was essential that the Church should have its crude unity broken up in order that men should realize to the fullest the supreme blessings of the ideal of freedom. Now that freedom has been gained, and all Christians everywhere think freely upon religion and are allowed to do so, with comparatively trifling exceptions ; the world is ready for the larger unity which will not be gained at the cost of freedom, but which will include it as an essential element. The Church Universal will be that embodiment of formal religion which, ever including vital Christianity as its content and goal, will guarantee perfect freedom to every individual Christian, and at the same time unified action to all. It will be such a unity as will guarantee the fullest liberty to the conscience of every believer, and yet eliminate all

jealousy, bickering and strife between Christians of divergent opinions. Christendom as a whole is veering rapidly towards this point, but as yet is not quite up to the goal.

One essential still to be realized is a single name for all the hosts of Christ. Divergent names create party spirit, and party spirit engenders strife. Different organizations, rival church boards, rival publishing houses and the like, work to the same end. Some day there will be a single name, with, perhaps, for a while, the smaller names in parenthesis, as is the case on many mission fields, a single representative board, perchance to look after all of the little boards, and such a unification of machinery as will guarantee harmonious action and effort. This unity will come not from the top but from the bottom. It will not be imposed upon Christians by ecclesiastical authorities, but Christians anxious and eager to realize the prayer of their Master will compel their ecclesiasticisms to accept it. This unity will be real, vital and spontaneous. It is essential to the conquest of the world by the armies of Christ, and it will come. My opposition or your opposition may retard but will not prevent it. As Christians have won freedom, so they will win unity. And that unity will be the unity not of a great ecclesiasticism, but of a living Church; not of unwillingness or force or

tyranny, but of freedom, of joy and of love. The Church of Christ, Universal, must come; and it will come. We have it in our power to hasten its coming or to throw stumbling-blocks in its progress. Fichte, in his "Doctrine of Religion," a hundred years ago, wrote these eloquent words:

“. . . Hadst thou done the like deed in holy indignation that the Son of Eternity should be tormented by such vanities as these, and should be left there so forsaken by his fellow men:—with the desire that he might have at least one glad hour in which he might raise his eyes joyfully and thankfully to heaven, with the purpose that in thy hand he might see the saving hand of God and might know of a surety that the arm of God is not yet shortened, but that he has everywhere instruments and servants to do His will . . . then had thy deed been the outward expression of a moral religious spirit.”

Fichte's vision of the Son of Eternity ought to be our vision of the Son of Man. He has left in our hands the matter of accomplishing or failing to accomplish His will. It is for us to bring sorrow to His great heart of love, or joy to His soul, the true soul of the world. Perhaps we, consciously or unconsciously, are retarding the fulfillment of His great desire, the union of His followers. Surely to

do so is to crucify Him anew, and to put Him to an open shame before the world. May all who profess the religion of Christ meditate again and again upon His words :

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us ; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”

Appendix

GENERAL NOTE.

The material contained in this appendix includes data which has been used in classroom lectures, outlines, source material, and other information of interest to the student rather than to the general reader.

The Scripture references have been selected with especial care, and represent the author's authority for his conclusions in regard to the ethics of Jesus as well as for other positions taken in the body of the volume. It is scarcely necessary to add that the author does not presume to endorse, in their entirety, many of the reference-books appended as suggestive reading in connection with the outlines which follow.

Critical questions are not touched upon because it is the conviction of the writer that the personality of Jesus, and the essential facts of his religion, are not seriously affected one way or the other by the results of modern criticism. The religion of Christ is a living thing to-day—a thing the existence of which can no more be disputed than it is possible to dispute the actuality of the sun, the moon or the stars. It is redefinition and scrutiny of this undisputed fact which constitutes the basis of our study.

PART I.

STUDY OUTLINES COVERING CHAPTERS I., II.
AND III.I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS
IN THE WORLD.

1. The law of development in the universe as regards both Individual and Race.
 - (1) The individual. Examples from infancy, childhood, adolescence.
 - (2) The race. (a) The family; (b) the tribe or clan; (c) transition to the state; (d) external power as embodied in a monarchy; (e) internal freedom as embodied in the free state; (f) after the free state—what?
2. The law of development as applied to religion.
 - (1) The patriarchal period.
 - (2) State religions.
 - (3) Ethnic religions based upon external forms. (a) Babylon; (b) Egypt; (c) Judea; (d) Greece.
 - (4) Cosmopolitanism in religion based upon freedom of conscience for the individual.
3. Christ, the center of world history, marking the adolescence of the race.

II. HEBREW HISTORY AS ILLUSTRATING RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT.

1. The patriarchal period.
 - (1) Priests of the family—Abram, Isaac, Jacob, Melchizedek.
2. The transition to external law.
 - (1) Moses and Sinai.
 - (2) The Judges.
 - (3) Evolution into monarchy.
3. The period of external law.
 - (1) The kingdom.

- (2) Temple worship of David and Solomon.
- (3) Idolatry of later kings.
- 4. Transition to internal law.
 - (1) The prophets—Elijah, Elisha, Malachi.
 - (2) The Messianic predictions—Psalms 23, 2, etc.; Isaiah 53, and elsewhere.
- 5. The Messianic period.
 - (1) The Sermon on the Mount—"Not to destroy, but to fulfil."
 - (2) The Epistle to the Hebrews.
 - (3) John 1: 17—key-text.
- 6. Types and antitypes in Jewish history.
- 7. The significance of the Old Testament.

III. ADOLESCENCE OF THE WORLD CONSCIOUSNESS IN CHRIST.

- 1. The world consciousness—figurative use of the term.
- 2. Point of departure—the discovery of the individual.
 - (1) The individual in Greek and Roman thought.
 - (2) The individual in Christ's teaching.
- 3. Soul values internal rather than external.
- 4. The testimony of church history.
 - (1) Roman Catholicism. (a) Growth of external ceremonies borrowed from Jewish and heathen rites; (b) ceremonialism as related to atheism—Leo X., Taine's comment; (c) ceremonialism as related to immorality—Alexander VI. and Cæsar Borgia.
 - (2) The Protestant Reformation. (a) Luther in Rome; (b) Tetzl and indulgences.
 - (3) The counter Reformation. (a) Savonarola; (b) Loyola.
- 5. Modern progress due to the unfolding of essential principles of Christianity.

IV. CHRISTIANITY A RELIGION OF IDEALS AND NOT A CODE OF LAWS.

- 1. Childhood and positive statute.
- 2. Religions of statute.
 - (1) Judaism.

- (2) Mohammedanism.
- 3. Religions of ideals.
 - (1) Buddhism.
 - (2) Confucianism.
 - (3) Stoicism.
- 4. Jesus as a formulator of ideals.
 - (1) Compare with Buddha; Confucius; Socrates.
- 5 Example *versus* precept.
- 6. Christianity a system of ethical ideals, embodied in a great personality.
- 7. Hero-worship: Its value.

REFERENCE BOOKS FOR PART I.

"Ethical Principles," Seth; "History of Ancient Religions," Rawlinson; "The Evolution of Religion," Caird; "Fetichism," Schultze; "Orpheus," Reinach; "Can We Still Be Christians?" Eucken; "Creative Evolution," Bergson; "The Realm of Ends," Ward; "Outlines of Christian Theology," Clarke; "The Ascent of Man," Drummond; "Old Pictures in Florence: The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's," Robert Browning; "The Gospel and the Church," Loisy; "Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit," Sabatier; "History of English Literature" (chapter on the Pagan Renaissance), Taine.

PART II.

OUTLINES COVERING CHAPTER I.

I. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN IDEALS.

- 1. Sources of information.
 - (1) Bible.
 - (2) Sacred literature.
 - (3) Christian biography.
- 2. The ideals of Jesus.
 - (1) Righteousness—the personal goal.
 - (2) Service—the social goal.
 - (3) Freedom—the comprehensive goal.

3. Righteousness.
 - (1) Humility.
 - (2) Duty.
 - (3) Kindness.
 - (4) Industry.
 - (5) Truthfulness.
 - (6) Chastity.
 - (7) Good citizenship.
 - (8) Honesty.
 - (9) Temperance.
4. Only an approximate analysis.
5. Two errors.
 - (1) Substitution of religious forms for ideals.
 - (2) Substitution of mistaken ideals for true ones.
6. The negative value of the ideals. (Romanes.)
7. The unique embodiment of these ideals in Jesus himself.
8. The new elements—passive virtues.

REFERENCES.

Matthew 5-7; "Ecce Homo" (Chap. XIII.), Seeley; "Ethics of Jesus" (Chaps. V.-VII.), King; "The Church's One Foundation" (Chap. V.), Nicol.

II. HUMILITY.

1. The basic virtue.
2. Contrast with Greek and Roman culture.
3. Views of modern biologists.
4. The teaching of Nietzsche.
5. The confirmation of science.
6. Contradictions in religious history.
7. Practical application.

TEXTS.

Matt. 5: 3, 5; 18: 1-6; 20: 20-28; 21: 4, 5; Mark 9: 33-37; 10: 13-16, 35-45; Luke 9: 46-48; 10: 21; 18: 9-17.

REFERENCES.

"Nietzsche," Mencken; "The Evolution of Man," Haeckel; "Discourses" Epictetus; "Meditations," Marcus

Aurelius; Articles on Sir Isaac Newton in the encyclopedias.

III. DUTY: THE KEYNOTE OF LIFE.

1. Duty defined.
2. The categorical imperative.
3. The idea of a "calling."
4. A purposeful universe.
Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson.
5. The reality of the ideal.
6. The meaning of success.
7. Duty and love as motives.
8. The life of Jesus the perfect realization of an absolute standard.
9. Duty in history.
 - (1) Luther.
 - (2) Knox.
 - (3) John the Baptist.

REFERENCES.

The life of Christ: Childhood (Luke 2: 49); early ministry (Matt. 3: 15); first miracle (John 2: 4); Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5: 6; 6: 24, 33); raising of Lazarus (John 11: 8-16); steadfastness in his course (Mark 10: 32, 34; Luke 9: 51); on the cross (John 19: 30).

Paul: Acts 20: 24; 1 Tim. 6: 12; 2 Tim. 2: 15; 4: 17; salutation to Epistles, "called to be an apostle," etc.

LITERATURE.

"The Discourses of Epictetus;" "Marcus Aurelius;" "Critique of Practical Reason," Kant; "Ethics of the Scottish School;" "Life of Cato the Younger," Plutarch; "Ode to Duty," Wordsworth; "Julius Cæsar" (character of Brutus), Shakespeare; "Duty Surviving Self-love," Coleridge; "Epistle to a Young Friend," Burns; "The Realm of Ends," James Ward.

IV. KINDNESS.

- 1 The cruelty of nature.
Huxley, Darwin, Schopenhauer.
2. The cruelty of man.
Law. Religion. Inquisition.
3. The cruelty of religion.
(1) Future punishment.
(2) Mythology and Christianity.
(3) The real Inferno.
4. The ideal and experience of Christ.
5. Cruelty in the name of Christ.
6. Reforms of the present day.
(1) Prisons.
(2) Capital punishment.
7. Sins condemned.
(1) Personal. (*a*) Ill temper; (*b*) cruelty; (*c*) revenge.
(2) Social. (*a*) Envy; (*b*) hatred; (*c*) slander.
(3) National. (*a*) Slavery; (*b*) murder; (*c*) war.

TEXTS.

Matt. 5: 7, 9, 22; 6: 12; 7: 1, 12; 11: 28; 12: 18-20;
18: 10-35; 20: 34; Mark 1: 4; 9: 38, 39; 11: 25; Luke 4: 18,
19; 7: 47; 15: 1-32; 17: 4; 23: 34-43; John 3: 16; 13: 34;
Eph. 4: 32; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 John 3 and 4.

REFERENCES.

"Law of Love and Love as Law," Hopkins; "Addresses," Drummond; "Sermons," Edwards; "Divine Comedy," Dante; "Man Was Made to Mourn," Burns; "Sermons," Beecher.

V. KINDNESS (continued).

(The Doctrine of Non-resistance.)

Three theories:

1. Theoretically and practically valid—St. Francis, Fox, Tolstoi.
2. Theoretically valid and practically invalid—majority of Christians.

3. Theoretically and practically invalid—Professor Foster.
4. Solution—Sermon on the Mount a collection of ideals, and not a code of laws.

TEXTS.

Matt. 5: 38-48; 26: 50-52; 27: 40-44; Mark 15: 32; Luke 18: 34.

REFERENCES.

"Life of St. Francis," Sabatier; "The Little Flowers of St. Francis;" "My Confession," Tolstoi; "My Religion," Tolstoi; "The Gospel in Brief," Tolstoi; "Journal of George Fox;" "Milman's History of Latin" ("Christianity"—Book IX.); "The Finality of the Christian Religion," Foster.

VI. INDUSTRY.

1. Industry the first law of God.
2. Teaching of modern philosophy—Schopenhauer; Bergson.
3. The old definition of a gentleman.
4. Christ's sympathy with the workers.
5. Labor organizations and the church.
6. The apostolic point of view.
7. Laziness in pulpit and pew.
8. The Middle Age monk.

TEXTS.

Matt. 7: 7, 21, 24-27; 25: 14-30; Mark 4: 25; Luke 6: 46; 8: 18; 19: 11-27; John 5: 17; 7: 17; 9: 4; 1 Thess. 4: 11; 2 Thess. 3: 7-12; Eph. 4: 28; 1 Cor. 4: 12.

REFERENCES.

"The Quest of Happiness," Hillis; "Jesus Christ and the Christian Character," Peabody; "The Sons of Martha," Kipling; "Faust," Goethe; "Rabbi Ben Ezra," R. Browning.

VII. TRUTHFULNESS.

1. The question of abstract truth.
 - (1) Psychological—correspondence of an idea with its object (Kant).

- (2) Metaphysical—the ultimate goal of reason.
- (3) Mystical—the unknown source of genius.
- 2 The practical problem.
 - (1) Exaggeration.
 - (2) Equivocation.
 - (3) Hypocrisy.
- 3 Is a lie ever justifiable?
- 4. Scientific devotion to truth.
- 5. The business and social value of truthfulness.
- 6. The Jesuit policy.
- 7. Truthfulness and discretion.

TEXTS.

Matt. 19: 18; 23: 13-29; 1 John 1: 6-10; 3 John 1, 3, 4, 8; John 1: 17; 8: 44-46; 17: 19; 18: 37, 38; Rev. 21: 8, 27; 22: 15.

REFERENCES.

"Truth," Bacon's Essays; "The Marks of a Man," Speer; "Is a Lie Ever Justifiable?" Trumbull; "Imago Christi" (Chap. XV.)—"Christ as a Controversialist;" "Life and Letters of Huxley" (Vol. III.).

VIII. PERSONAL PURITY. THE HOME IDEAL—PRESERVATION AND LOSS.

- 1. Purity of heart central in Christ's moral code.
- 2. The vital factor in personal purity, a high home ideal.
- 3. Falsity of the celibate ideal—Creed of Council of Trent.
- 4. The Christian home—fundamental essentials.
 - (1) Absolute confidence.
 - (2) Mutual sympathy.
 - (3) Mutual forbearance.
 - (4) Mutual respect.
 - (5) Justice.
- 5. Christ's attitude toward marriage.
 - (1) At Cana.
 - (2) The Sermon on the Mount.
 - (3) The question of the Pharisees—Mark 10.

- (4) The question of the Sadducees—Matthew 22.
- 6. The attitude of the apostles.
 - (1) Peter—Mark 1: 30; 1 Cor. 9: 5.
 - (2) John—Rev. 22: 17.
 - (3) Paul—1 Cor. 9: 5, 7.
 - (4) Heb. 13: 4.
- 7. The modern eugenic movement.
- 8. Clean thought, speech and action.

TEXTS.

Matt. 5: 8, 27-32; Mark 10: 2-12, 14; 1 Cor. 6: 9-20; Gal. 5: 19; Eph. 5: 3-5; John 2: 1-11.

REFERENCES.

“The Marks of a Man” (Chap. II.), Speer; Modern Texts on Eugenics; The Sylvanus Stall Series.

IX. MARRIAGE.

- 1. The origin of marriage.
- 2. Primitive marital customs.
- 3. Marriage ideals of Greeks.
- 4. Marriage ideals of Romans.
- 5. Marriage ideals of Jews.
- 6. The Christian ideal.
 - (1) Christ.
 - (2) Paul.
- 7. Non-Christian ideals of the present.
 - (1) The French ideal.
 - (2) Materialistic Socialism.
- 8. The sins of development.
 - (1) Monogamy for polygamy.
 - (2) The indissoluble ideal.
 - (3) The spiritualization of the relation.
 - (4) The higher dignity given to womanhood.
 - (5) Added emphasis upon the home.
- 9. Celibacy and Christianity.

TEXTS.

John 2: 1-11; Mark 10: 6-9. Paul: 1 Cor. 9: 9; 7; Heb. 10: 4; Rev. 20: 12.

REFERENCES.

"Gesta Christi" (Chap. III.); "History of European Morals," Lecky; "History of Human Marriage" (1891), Westermarck; "History of Matrimonial Institutions" (1904), Howard; "Golden Bough" (1890, 1900), Frazer.

X. DIVORCE.

1. Origin of divorce.
2. The Eastern nations.
- 3 The Greeks. Athens—divorce to either party upon application. Harder for women.
- 4 The Romans—free to both parties. Women counted years by husbands.
- 5 Jews—man's privilege alone.
6. The teaching of Christ.
 - (1) Divorce.
 - (2) Remarriage.
- 7 The teaching of Paul. Corinthian church.
8. The mediæval point of view. Charlemagne and the Papal bull. Henry VIII.
- 9 Modern divorce.
 - (1) France.
 - (2) England.
 - (3) America.
 Separate State laws.
10. The church attitude to-day.
11. Progress.
 - (1) Lessening of divorces.
 - (2) Man and woman on equal terms.
 - (3) Higher ideals of marriage.
 - (4) Christianity guards marriage rather than divorce.

TEXTS.

Matt. 5: 31, 32; 19: 3-11; Mark 10: 2-12; Luke 16: 18; Rom. 7: 1-4; 1 Cor. 7: 10, 11.

REFERENCE.

"The History of Divorce and Remarriage," Wilkins.

XI. THE HOME IDEAL (concluded).

1. Marital unfaithfulness.
 - (1) Ancient viewpoint—Greeks, Romans, Hebrews.
 - (2) The Biblical teaching.
 - (3) The modern world—France, Austria.
2. Destructive literature.
 - (1) The problem novel.
 - (2) Magazine slush.
 - (3) The might have been in literature.
3. The influence of art, the drama, dress, customs, etc.
 - (1) Art—the nude in art.
 - (2) Drama—cheap plays.
 - (3) Dress—Tolstoi's criticism.
 - (4) Customs—dancing.
4. The home life—parent and child.
 - (1) Duties of the parent. (a) Preservation; (b) education; (c) inspiration.
 - (2) Duties of the child. (a) Docility; (b) respect; (c) loyalty.
5. Duty and love in the home.

TEXTS.

Matt. 5: 27, 28; 15: 19; 29: 18; John 8: 1-11; Rev. 20: 8; 22: 15. Divorce: Matt. 5: 31; 19: 3-12; 10: 2-12; Luke 16: 18; Deut. 24: 1; Gen. 1: 27; 2: 24; Eph. 5: 31; 1 Cor. 7: 10, 11.

REFERENCES.

"The History of Divorce and Remarriage," Wilkins; "Love and Marriage; Love and Ethics," Ellen Key; "The Lady and the Painter;" concluding paragraphs of "The

Ring and the Book," Robert Browning; "What Is Art?" (Chaps. IX. and XVII.), Tolstoi.

XII. GOOD CITIZENSHIP.

1. The ideal of citizenship.
2. Christ's attitude toward law and order.
3. Attitude of the early church.
4. Christ's attitude toward governmental problems.
 - (1) Anarchism.
 - (2) Socialism.
5. The attitude of the Christian toward
 - (1) Mob law.
 - (2) Municipal corruption.
 - (3) Debauchery of the ballot.
- 6 Christianity and politics.
 - (1) Voting.
 - (2) Bearing arms.
 - (3) Office-holding.

TEXTS.

Matt. 17: 24-27; 22: 15-22; Rom. 13: 1-7; 1 Pet. 2: 13-17.

REFERENCES.

Plato (especially "The Republic"); "The City of God," St. Augustine; the writings of Fox and Tolstoi; lectures and sermons of Beecher.

XIII. HONESTY.

1. The idea of property.

Legal definition—personality.
- 2 Property rights among the Jews—Ten Commandments.
3. Christ's attitude toward property.
 - (1) Rich young ruler.
 - (2) Sermon on the Mount.
 - (3) The rich fool.
 - (4) Rich man and Lazarus.
- 4 Attitude of early church.
 - (1) Barnabas.
 - (2) Ananias and Sapphira.

5. Christianity and business.
 - (1) Business ethics and the preacher.
 - (2) The problem of debt.
 - (3) Ministerial mendicancy.
6. The modern worship of money.

Reaction to-day.

Long, Carnegie, Rockefeller.
7. Two guiding principles to guarantee honesty.
 - (1) Love thy neighbor as thyself.
 - (2) What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

TEXTS.

Matt. 6: 25-34; 10: 9, 10; 13: 22; 15: 19; 19: 18, 23; 21: 13; Luke 16: 1-5, 19-31; Mark 7: 22, 23; Acts 2: 43-47; Luke 12: 13-21; Acts 4: 32-37; Rom. 12: 17; 13: 8-10.

XIV. TEMPERANCE.

1. Meaning of word.
2. Virtue among Greeks.
3. Narrowed definition to-day.
4. Temperance and abstinence.
5. The liquor question.
6. Drug habits.
7. The law of liberty.
8. The law of liberty and the law of service.

TEXTS.

Matt. 10: 8; 29: 48-50; Mark 7: 1-23; Luke 15: 13, 14; 16: 19; Rom. 12: 1, 2, 14; 1 Corinthians 8 and 9; Gal. 5: 16-24; Phil. 4: 8.

REFERENCES.

"The Marks of a Man," Speer; "Those Who Have Come Back," Macfarlane; "Twice-born Men," Begbie; "Drink," Zola; "Lectures," Gough.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II.

The problem of the social ideal of Jesus looms so large on the horizon of present-day Christianity that it would

require a volume to even approximate an adequate treatment. Instead of essaying this task, we prefer to suggest some of the best literature of the day, leaving the student to work out his own material from the volumes recommended.

Perhaps the sanest treatment from the modern point of view is that of Prof. Walter Rauschenbusch, of Rochester University, whose two volumes, "Christianity and the Social Crisis" and "Christianizing the Social Order," leave little to be desired, at least as we view the question.

The radical standpoint is presented in such volumes as Bouck White's "The Call of the Carpenter" and "Letters of the Social Revolution."

The more conservative side is presented in W. M. Clow's "Christ in the Social Order," and in the Roman Catholic writings, such as those of Professor Ryan and of Father Vaughan.

Good books to read on the subject in general are the following: "Jesus Christ and the Social Question," Peabody; "Religion in Social Action," Graham Taylor; "The Social Creed of the Churches," Ward; "Spiritual Culture and Social Service," Macfarland; "Social Psychology," MacDougall; "The Ethics of Jesus and Social Progress," Gardner; also the works of Jane Addams, Shailer Mathews and of Professors Batten and Vedder.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III.

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM.

1. Definition of freedom.
2. National freedom.
3. Personal freedom.
4. Christianity and slavery.
5. The caste spirit.
6. Catholicism and freedom.
7. Protestantism and freedom.
8. Martyrs to freedom.
9. Freedom and the early church.

10. Kinds of freedom.

- (1) Moral.
- (2) Intellectual.
- (3) Physical.
- (4) Metaphysical.
- (5) Economic.

TEXTS.

Mark 7; John 8: 32-36; the Epistle to Philemon; the Epistle to the Galatians; Luke 4: 16-30.

REFERENCES.

John Stuart Mill on Liberty; "Essay on Liberty," Hobbes; "Essays," Mazzini; "Ethics," Aristotle; "The Growth of Freedom," Nevinson; "Philosophy of History," Hegel; "Gesta Christi," Brace.

II. MORAL FREEDOM.

1. Definition of the term.
2. No metaphysical principle directly asserted.
3. Christianity, being a moral religion, must have a moral basis.
4. Christ always assumed the principle of human responsibility.
5. The early Christians preached the doctrine of universal accountability.
 - (1) Apparent contradiction in Paul.
 - (2) The "whosoever" of the Gospel.

TEXTS.

Matt. 11: 28; 28: 19; John 3: 16; Rom. 10: 11; Rev. 22: 17.

REFERENCES.

"An Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will," Jonathan Edwards; "The Will to Believe," William James; "The Realm of Ends," Ward; "The Conception of God," and "The World and the Individual," Royce.

III. FREEDOM OF THOUGHT.

General Text.—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8: 32.

- 1 The last phase.
- 2 The part played by dogmatic Christianity.
- 3 "Freethinking," so called, and Christianity.
- 4 Modernism and higher criticism.
- 5 The scientific spirit and modern Christianity.
- 6 "Belief," as Christ used the term, not an intellectual clamp, but simply a moral acquiescence.
- 7 The passing of creeds.

TEXTS.

All texts dealing with the binding power of the law in the old dispensation and freedom from it in the new; Mark 7: 3, etc.; Rom. 7: 4; Gal. 2: 4; John 1: 17; 7: 34.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF FREEDOM.

- 1 Thought and action: their relation.
- 2 Free thought and thoughtless action.
- 3 Relation of the right philosophy to the right life.
- 4 The failure of philosophic creeds.
 - (1) An ultimate philosophy unintelligible at present.
 - (2) A present-day philosophy will be outgrown in the future.
- 5 The attitude of science toward Christianity.
 - (1) The evolutionary school. (a) Huxley; (b) Spencer; (c) Clifford; (d) Tyndall.
 - (2) Latter-day students. (a) Kelvin; (b) Ramsay; (c) Romanes.
- 6 Esthetic and volitional elements a part of life as well as the intellectual.
- 7 Agnosticism and intellectual freedom.
8. Freedom of thought and the Infinite.

REFERENCES.

"Defense of Philosophic Doubt" and "The Foundations of Belief," Balfour; "The Dawn of a New Religious Era," Carus.

NOTES ON CHAPTERS IV., V. AND VI.

I. NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM.

1. The non-miraculous type of Christianity.
2. Can such a type be reconciled to the New Testament?
3. Relative value of the now and the hereafter.
4. Bearing of the former upon the latter.
5. Religion *versus* ethics in life.
6. Christ differentiated from other great teachers here.
 - (1) Socrates.
 - (2) Zeno.
 - (3) Confucius.
 - (4) Zoroaster.

TEXTS.

1 Corinthians 14; John 3: 15, 16; 4: 1; Matt. 13: 36-43; 10: 28; 1 Pet. 1: 4, 5; John 6.

REFERENCES.

"The Christian Hope," Brown; "The Miraculous Element in the Gospels," Bruce; "Psychical Research and the Resurrection," Hyslop.

II. THE MYSTICAL BASIS OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. Definition of terms.
 - (1) Mystical. (*a*) Immediate; (*b*) Personal; (*c*) Ecstatic and emotional.
 - (2) Supernatural. (*a*) Miraculous; (*b*) Mechanical; (*c*) Formal.
 - (3) Spiritual. (*a*) Scientific; (*b*) Immanent; (*c*) Philosophic.
2. Distinction from the ethical basis.
Contrast Voltaire.
3. Necessity of the mystical or supernatural for religion.
 - (1) Eucken.
 - (2) James.
 - (3) The idea of God.
- 4 Relation to literature and art.
Burroughs, Plato, Hegel.

- 5 The subject in historical religion.
The old mysteries.
Christianity and positivism.

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III. JESUS AND THE SUPERNATURAL.

- 1. Place which it occupies in his life.
 - (1) Birth.
 - (2) Miracles.
 - (3) Prayer.
 - (4) Resurrection.
- 2. Place in his teachings.
 - (1) Fatherhood of God.
 - (2) Kingdom of heaven.
 - (3) The non-materiality of his sermons.
- 3 His philosophy of life.
 - (1) The practical element.
 - (2) The conscious basis.
 - (3) Unity with God.
- 4 The Holy Spirit.
- 5 Special instances.
 - (1) The temptation.
 - (2) The transfiguration.

TEXTS.

Matt. 4: 19, 20; 6: 25-32; 11: 25-27; 12: 39-42; 22: 23-33; Luke 16: 19-31; 9: 28-36; John 5: 17-29; 4: 23-26; 8: 23-29; 14: 9-13; 15: 9, 10; 17: 3.

IV. THE REALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

1. The philosophy of the New Testament.
2. Idealism defined.
Matter *versus* spirit.
3. Jesus a pronounced idealist.
4. The *world* and the *kingdom*.
5. The function of will in philosophy and religion.
6. Immanence and transcendence in Christianity.
7. Evolution and Christianity.
The ape and the tiger.
Animal and spiritual.

TEXTS.

2 Cor. 4: 17, 18; 5: 1-6; Matt. 6: 19, 20; John 8: 58;
4: 24; Phil. 3: 20, 21; Heb. 13: 14; Rev. 22: 1-5; Rom.
14: 6-11.

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V. THE RESURRECTION.

1. The resurrection the crux of Christianity.
Paul's testimony.
2. The fact of miracle staked upon it.
3. Testimony to the resurrection.
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul.
The appearances:
Sunday—
 - (1) Mary Magdalene.
 - (2) Other women.
 - (3) Peter.
 - (4) Emmaus.
 - (5) Disciples, Thomas absent.
 - (6) Disciples, with Thomas.
 - (7) Seven disciples—Tiberias.
 - (8) Mountain in Galilee.
 - (9) James.

- (10) The ascension.
 (Possibly) (11) Great Commission.
4. Character of appearances.
- (1) Appears and disappears suddenly (Luke 24: 31, 51);
 in their midst (Luke 24: 36; John 20: 14; 21: 4);
 closed doors (John 20: 19, 26).
- (2) No immediate recognition (Luke 24: 16-31; John
 20: 14; 21: 4-7); identity doubted (Matt. 28: 17);
 thought a spirit (Luke 24: 37); timid—no one dared
 address (John 21: 12); fell down and gave divine
 honors (John 20: 17-28; Matt. 28: 9-17).
Contra. Jesus eats (Luke 24: 39-43); Jesus walks
 (Luke 24: 30); sits at table (John 21: 13); shows
 hands and side (John 20: 27); some desire to
 touch (John 20: 17; Matt. 28: 9); others urge to
 stay (Luke 24: 29).
5. The resurrected body.
- (1) Lazarus and Jesus—difference.
 (2) Where during forty days?
 (3) Disciples' faith in future life.
 (4) Resurrected body necessarily materialized for evi-
 dence.
 (5) Paul's testimony—1 Corinthians 15.
6. Modern science and the resurrection.
7. The three positions.
- (1) Physical resurrection.
 (2) Spiritual resurrection — Keim, Lake — spiritual
 visions materialized.
 (3) Semi-spiritual—Orr.

TEXTS.

1 Corinthians 15; Acts 17: 16-34; 2 Tim. 4: 6-8; Heb.
 13: 20, 21; Rom. 6: 4-6; Gospel accounts.

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 Weiss.

VI. CHRISTIANITY AND THE FUTURE.

1. The unending problem. Plato, Kant.
- 2 The situation to-day.
 - (1) The viewpoint of pure science. Munsterberg, Edison.
 - (2) Viewpoint of philosophy. Eucken, Ward, Bergson, Balfour.
 - (3) Pseudo-science. Psychical research—Hodgson; Myers; Spiritualism; Theosophy.
3. Practical bearings of the question. The teaching of Karma.
4. Christianity the guardian of personal immortality.
5. Conditional immortality.
 - (1) "Immortality of soul" not in Bible.
 - (2) Athenagoras.
 - (3) Jewish doctrine. Resurrection of wicked (Matt. 25: 31; Rom. 2: 5-10; John 5: 28, 29; Acts 24: 15; Rev. 20: 12, 15).
 - (4) Immortality—1 Cor. 15: 53, 54; Rom. 2: 7; 2 Tim. 1: 10.

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PART III.

FORMAL CHRISTIANITY.

I. THE CHURCH.

1. What is the church?
2. The New Testament idea.
- 3 The historical development idea.
4. The church in the Gospels.

- 5 The church in the Acts.
- 6 Paul's idea of the church.
- 7 The necessity for the church.
- 8 Analysis of church (Acts 2: 42).
 - (1) Doctrine—creed.
 - (2) Fellowship—polity—social features.
 - (3) Breaking of bread—ordinance.
 - (4) Prayers—mystical element.

TEXTS.

Matt. 16: 17-20; Acts 2: 42-47; 8: 3; 14: 23; 1 Cor. 16: 19; 2 Cor. 1: 1; Gal. 1: 2; Phil. 3: 6; Col. 1: 18; 1 Tim. 3: 15; Rev. 1: 4; 1 Cor. 12: 27; Eph. 1: 23.

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II. THE EVOLUTION OF CREED.

- 1 The confession of Peter.
2. The apostles' creed.
3. Early sects in church.
 - (1) Greek party.
 - (2) Jewish party.
 - (3) Heresy in Paul's day.
 - (4) Heresy in John's day.
 - (5) Gnosticism.
 - (6) Ebionites.
4. Creeds arise to suppress heresy.
5. Nicene Creed. Trinity.
- 6 Athanasian Creed. Holding church's belief a necessity of salvation.
7. The failure of man-made creeds.
8. Apostles' creed.
 - (1) God.
 - (2) Jesus Christ.
 - (3) Virgin birth.

- (4) Sufferings and death.
 - (5) Descent into Hades.
 - (6) Resurrection.
 - (7) Ascension.
 - (8) Intercession.
 - (9) Judgment.
 - (10) Holy Ghost.
 - (11) Holy Catholic Church.
 - (12) Communion of saints.
 - (13) Forgiveness of sins.
 - (14) Resurrection of body.
 - (15) Life everlasting.
9. Nicene Creed.
- (1) Of all things visible and invisible.
 - (2) Born of Father before all ages. Consubstantial to the Father, etc.
 - (3) Incarnate by the Holy Ghost.
 - (4) (Descent omitted.)
 - (5) Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son.
 - (6) One holy catholic and apostolic church.
 - (7) (Omitted.)
 - (8) One baptism for the remission of sins.
 - (9) I look for the resurrection of the dead.
 - (10) Life of the world to come.
10. Tridentine.
- (1) Sacraments.
 - (2) Mass.
 - (3) Transubstantiation.
 - (4) One kind legitimate.
 - (5) Scriptures interpreted according to church traditions.
 - (6) Roman Church.
 - (7) St. Peter.
 - (8) Council proceedings.
 - (9) Justification.
 - (10) Original sin.

11. Post-tridentine.

- (1) Immaculate conception.
- (2) Infallible pope.
- (3) This true Catholic faith out of which no one can be saved I vow and swear, etc.

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III. CREEDS OF THE CHURCHES TO-DAY.

1. Attitude of Roman Catholicism.

- (1) Modernism.
- (2) Pius X.

2. Current Protestantism.

- (1) Episcopalianism. Liberal interpretation.
- (2) Congregationalism.
- (3) Presbyterianism.
- (4) Methodism. North and South.
- (5) Baptist Churches. Southern.
- (6) The Federal Council.

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"Churches of the Federal Council," Macfarland.

IV. ORDINANCE.

- 1 Definition.
- 2 Distinction from creed.
- 3 Ordinance and sacrament.
- 4 The two ordinances of Christ.
- 5 The necessity for the ordinances.
- 6 The twofold side of the ordinances.
- 7 Mistaken views of the ordinances.
 - (1) Protestant extreme. Quakerism.
 - (2) Catholic extreme. Sacramentarianism.

TEXTS.

Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 16; Luke 22: 17-20; Acts 2: 38-41; 8: 36-39; John 3: 5; Rom. 6: 3, 4; Col. 2: 12; Gal. 3: 27; 1 Pet. 3: 21; Tit. 3: 5.

V. THE FIRST ORDINANCE.

1. Baptism defined.
2. Question involved.
 - (1) Design.
 - (2) Subjects.
 - (3) Action.
3. Baptism in history.
4. Mistaken views of baptism.
5. Characteristics.
 - (1) Greek equivalents.
 - (2) The question of translation.
 - (3) The "Century" definition.

TEXTS.

Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 38; 8: 36-39; Rom. 6: 3, 4; Col. 2: 12; 1 Pet. 3: 21; Tit. 3: 5.

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VI. BAPTISM: ITS MORAL AND SPIRITUAL ASPECT.

1. The two extremes. Pedobaptist and legalist.
2. The pedobaptist idea of significance derived from pre-Christian sources.
3. Legalist idea a similar survival.
4. Moral and spiritual elements involved.
 - (1) Faith.
 - (2) Obedience.
 - (3) Symbolism.
 - (4) Complete self-surrender.
5. Is there a mystical element?
6. The new birth in John. Baptismal regeneration.
7. Necessity for proper understanding of baptism.
8. Old Testament deductions. Hyssop-sprinkling, circumcision, etc.

TEXTS.

Rom. 6: 3, 4; Col. 2:11-13; Tit. 3: 5; 1 Pet. 3: 21.

REFERENCE.

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VII. BAPTISM. PROPER SUBJECTS.

1. Question depends upon presuppositions.
2. Scriptural authority lacking.
3. The argument from expediency.
4. History of infant baptism.
5. Infant baptism to-day.
6. Household baptisms.
- 7 Infant dedication.

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VIII. THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1. The element of confession.
2. The memorial element.
3. As an ordinance.
4. The mystical element.
5. The social element.
6. Different theories of the eucharist.
 - (1) The Roman Catholic. Transubstantiation.
 - (2) The Lutheran. Consubstantiation.
 - (3) The Zwinglian. A memorial only.
 - (4) The Restoration position.
7. Manner of administration.
8. Frequency of administration.

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IX. THE ELEMENT OF POLITY.

1. The Episcopal.
2. The Presbyterian.
3. The Congregational.
4. The Catholic.
5. Modifications of these four forms.
6. Polity and the Restoration movement.
 - (1) The convention problem.
 - (2) The Louisville plan.
 - (3) The second Louisville plan.
 - (4) The Mellinger plan.
 - (5) The regional idea.

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X. SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS.

1. Worship.
2. Prayer.
3. The element of music.
4. Ritual.
5. Art in religion.
6. The non-progressive idea.
7. The place of the mystical in religion.
8. The Holy Spirit.

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XI. CONVERSION.

1. Meaning of word.
2. Intellectual elements.
3. Emotional elements.
4. Volitional elements.
5. Faith.
6. Repentance.
7. Baptism.
8. The Holy Spirit.
9. New Testament conversions.

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XII. CHRISTIAN UNION.

1. The cause of schism.
2. The history of schism.
3. Efforts toward unity.
4. The Lambeth Quadrilateral.
5. The Federal Council.
6. The World Conference.
7. Present status.
8. The Restoration plea.

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