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Rich and poor in the New
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No.

RICH AND POOR

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A STUDY OF
THE PRIMITIVE-CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE
OF EARTHLY POSSESSIONS

BY

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ERRATA

Page 233, first col., line 6 from foot, for "505" read "50, 51."

Page 234, second col., line 19 from foot, for "276" read "27 f."

Page 238, first col., line 16, delete "quoted, 157, 173," and insert after Schmiedel above.

Page 238, second col., line 10, delete "quoted, 78, 88, 120," and insert after Titius above.

PREFACE

THERE is no lack of treatises on the attitude of Jesus toward the Social Question, and in these there is usually a chapter on his teaching regarding riches and poverty. There is, however, no work in English known to the writer that deals with the teaching of the entire New Testament on the social question that concerns the relation of Rich and Poor and on Earthly Possessions in general in their connection with the moral-religious life. The little German monograph by Rogge, *Der irdische Besitz im neuen Testament*, attempts to cover this ground, and does it in a spirit of candour and impartiality. There is, however, a fault in this book that appears in most of the discussions of Jesus' teaching on the social question — a misconception of Jesus' point of view and a consequent

violence to exegesis done in order to make writings of the first century fit the conditions of the twentieth century.

It has been the endeavour of the writer of this book to interpret the New Testament teachers historically and grammatically, and to find what there may be in the spirit of their teachings that is applicable to modern social conditions. He deems it no great loss if in this process the letter of their words is not in all cases found to be available.

It is believed that the chapter on "Conditions and Teachings before Christ," setting forth the humanity of the Old Testament, will be found to furnish an instructive introduction to the central theme of the book.

O. C.

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RICH AND POOR IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

CHAPTER I

CONDITIONS AND TEACHINGS AMONG THE JEWS BEFORE CHRIST

The books of the New Testament are included in Jewish literature as a part in a whole. This Jewish literature comprises, so far as we are to consider it, the books of the Old Testament and the writings of later Judaism. If Christianity is another Judaism —a Judaism transfigured by new and fruitful ideas and by a great life—it is not independent in its origin of that which preceded it. It did not spring into existence as a new creation. It was nurtured in the womb of a wonderful nation until it was time for it to be born. The child bears the features of its mother. No wonder, too, if on its face are birth-

marks denoting the struggles, griefs, and ecstasies of her eventful history! Whether we express the relation of the two by the figure of generation or by the law of evolution, certain it is that they must be studied together as kindred aspects of religion. He who would know this child must know its parent. The austere and majestic features of the one and the softer grace and charm of the other are only different expressions of a spirit essential in both. Antique grandeur transformed into a gentle dignity befitting a new age and a new dispensation!

Just as the theological problems of ancient Israel and the later Judaism reappear in the New Testament under different lights and in settings strange to the former time, and just as the underlying religious ideas of the older book constitute the foundation of the primitive-Christian literature, so the social problems of the one Testament recur in the other, with altered features indeed, but with the same essential character. In both Testaments the same spirit expresses itself in the attempted solutions of these problems. In regard to the social question of worldly possessions and of the reciprocal relations of rich and poor, the attitude of lawgivers and prophets and of the great Teacher and his apostles

is unique. Whether this quality should be regarded as a race-characteristic, or as denoting the striking and uniform character of a single and unbroken course of divine inspiration, is a question that need not be discussed in an historical inquiry. The fact of paramount interest and importance is that the dominant note throughout, the note of commandment, admonition, reproof, and teaching in legislator, prophet, psalmist, Jesus, and apostle, is Humanity.

It was remarked in our first paragraph that the two literatures, called Jewish and Christian, should be studied together as presenting kindred aspects of religion. We may now return to this thought in order to mention the fact that in both the religious interest is predominant. Life and conduct are regarded from the point of view of the divine approval or disapproval, of obedience to, or violation of, the law of God. Ethics pure and simple does not constitute the leading motive of the teachers and writers of either Testament. Their interest is unmistakably in ethics under the sanction of religion. An illustration of this fact that belongs to our subject is found in the absence throughout the Old Testament of a discussion or consideration of the social question of riches and poverty from a social point of view. On the contrary, it is quite uniformly

presented under a religious aspect. It is Yahweh who is the protector of the poor and their avenger, and whosoever wrongs them will incur His judgments. "The needy shall not always be forgotten," exclaims a psalmist: "the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever."[1] He that "considereth the poor" has the promise of the divine blessing, and "the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble."[2] A prophet declares the judgment of Yahweh on those who "take away the right from the poor of the people," who prey upon widows, and rob the fatherless.[3] The extreme divine penalty is pronounced upon the man who has oppressed the poor, spoiled by violence, and has not restored the pledge taken for debt, who has "given forth upon usury, and taken increase. He that hath done all these abominations shall surely die."[4]

In accordance with this general ethical-religious point of view, the great prophet of the exile co-ordinates a kindly regard for the poor and oppressed with the highest duties enjoined and sanctioned by religion. The true fast chosen by Yahweh is to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to deal bread

[1] Psa. ix. 18. [2] Psa. xli. 1. [3] Isa. x. 2.
[4] Ezek. xviii. 12, 13.

to the hungry, to bring the poor that are cast out to one's house, and when one sees the naked to cover him.[1] That highest religious experience, to know Yahweh, accrues to him who "judges the cause of the poor and needy," and "does judgment and justice," according to another of the great prophets. He also declares that sorrow and tribulation as divine visitations shall come upon him who buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by injustice.[2] In like manner the word of Yahweh to another prophet explicitly commands as a religious duty to "show mercy and compassion every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor."[3] The writer of Proverbs regards the matter from the same religious point of view: "Rob not the poor, because he is poor, neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: for Yahweh will plead their cause, and despoil the life of those that despoil them."[4]

The temptations of riches are also considered in a religious aspect by the Deuteronomist in the warning: "Beware . . . lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply,

[1] Isa. lviii. 6, 7. [2] Jer. xxii. 16. [3] Zech. vii. 10. [4] Prov. xxii. 22.

and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget Yahweh thy God, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt . . . who fed thee with manna, that he might humble thee . . . and thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth."[1] It is worthy of note that the acquisition of wealth is here deprecated, not on account of the social evils that it may produce, but because it is likely to destroy the sense of dependence upon God that from the Old Testament point of view is an essential of religion. In the same spirit and with the same peril in view is conceived the prayer of Agur: "Give me neither poverty nor riches . . . lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is Yahweh? or lest I be poor, and steal, and use profanely the name of my God."[2]

The several ordinances of the Hebrew legislation with reference to the relations of rich and poor become intelligible only when they are considered as products of the historical periods in which they originated, and to the exigencies of which they were adapted. The same may be said of the exhortations and requirements of the prophets delivered as "the

[1] Deut. viii. 11-14. [2] Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

word of Yahweh." The prophets were men of their time, their activity was called forth by existing conditions, and their ministry was directed to effecting the reforms that they saw to be immediately urgent. This principle of interpretation is not, however, to be so construed as to carry a denial of the reappearance at various times of prescripts and teachings that originated in an earlier period, and that were found to be adapted, sometimes in a modified form, to a particular stage of social evolution.

The term "social evolution" is used advisedly to characterise the course of the social life of the Jews disclosed in their history. Their conditions and surroundings in the different periods of their national existence could have no other result than a passage from a simple to a complex order of society.

Prior to their settlement in Canaan the people of Israel led a nomadic life in pastoral occupations, wandering about in the Sinai peninsula with their flocks and herds.[1] There exist few historical data relating to this period. Some events and experiences have, however, left an indelible mark upon the tradition of these primitive times. Beneath the embellishments of legend and the accretions of

[1] Buhl, *Die socialen Verhältnisse der Israeliten*, 1899.

tradition are discernible historical facts that one can not dispute, for the reason that the subsequent life and development of the people are inexplicable without them. In the conflict of Israel during the historic period with the Canaanitish religions—a conflict in which they were often defeated and corrupted, but in which they were at length relatively successful—we see the influence of a great religious personality dimly outlined in the shadows of tradition, with Sinai-Horeb in the background. The Mosaic period made an ineffaceable impression upon the religious and ethical life of the people, and one hears the voice of the great lawgiver in the prophets and in the Deuteronomic legislation of the time of Josiah. It is evident that during this nomadic period Israel could have had neither a national existence nor an idea of becoming a State. The coherence of the several tribes was due to the instinct of self-defence and to a common faith in Yahweh their God, who, they believed, was mighty in battle, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies.

For a people in such conditions a social problem in the modern sense of the word could not have existed. That there were high and low, rich and poor, owners of flocks and herds and inferiors who depended upon them, there can be no doubt.

But the relations of these to one another were, in the nature of the case, widely different from those that obtain in a settled commercial or even agricultural community, where reciprocal dependence is slighter, and the tenure of property less insecure. In the nomadic state the simpleness of the necessaries and the absence of means of luxury, together with the sense of independence engendered by the mode of life, have a tendency to produce social equality. The subjective conditions of social inequality were, however, present in this people, since human nature was in the field; and it were an error to conceive the age as one of idyllic simplicity and unalloyed virtue. These nomads were not without the craftiness that appears in the Bedouins of the desert.[1] The Hebrew tradition has preserved instances of an artfulness and cunning in which it would seem that these qualities were not controlled by scruples of conscience with respect to the rights of fellowmen or even of kindred. Jacob's selfish scheming in his relations with Laban and with his brother Esau furnishes a parallel to some of the methods whereby in modern times social inequalities arise, and men acquire wealth and distinction.[2]

[1] See Nowack, *Hebräische Archäologie*, 1894, i. pp. 100 f.

[2] Gen. xxv. 31 f.; xxx. 25-43.

The settlement in Canaan effected a radical change in the life of the people, and gave a new direction to their social development. The nomadic shepherds and herdsmen were transformed into agriculturists, living upon their lands, or residents of villages and cities. They came in contact, too, with a civilisation much more advanced than their own. From all we can learn of the Canaanites of this time, they must have been in a condition of development in industries and arts equal to that of Israel in the time of the later kings.[1] The writer of Deuteronomy speaks of the land of Canaan as containing at the time of the Hebrew immigration great and goodly cities not built by Israel, houses full of all good things, which the invaders did not fill, cisterns hewn out, which they did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees, which they did not plant.[2] Since in the nature of the case they could not at once enter into possession of the country, and their mission must be one of conquest, it is evident that contact with its people, even in a hostile relation, could not but profoundly influence the character of the Hebrews. One has only to read the story of the conflict recorded in Joshua and Judges, and the history of their

[1] Buhl refers to the Tell-el-Amarna Letters for evidence of the culture of the Canaanites at the time in question.

[2] Deut. vi. 10 f.

religious degeneracy, to see that if the Israelites were in the end outwardly conquerors, they were inwardly in no small measure the conquered.

The Book of Judges, as recast by the Deuteronomic compiler,[1] sets in a clear light the relations of the two peoples in the passage chap. iii. 5-7: "And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites . . .; and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and forgat Yahweh their God, and served the Baalim and the Asheroth." A temporary deliverance, when "Yahweh raised up a saviour," is represented as followed by evil-doing in the sight of Yahweh that results in a conquest by Moab, in consequence of which "the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years."[2]

There is no trace within the period covered by Joshua and Judges of serious reflection upon the question of social inequality. Amidst the difference of worldly fortune that must have existed, the poor appear to have lived beside the rich without a sense of hardship and oppression, and no voice is heard

[1] Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 8th edit. p. 167 f.

[2] Judges iii. 12-15.

in behalf of the former and in denunciation of the latter. Leadership was not a prerogative of wealth, but was attained by men of "valour." Jephtha was a man of low birth and an outcast, who fought his way to the distinction of a judge; and Gideon, when conscious of a call to leadership, pleads the meanness of his station, his family being "the poorest in Manasseh" and he "the least in his father's house."[1]

A career that ended in eminence was sometimes begun under disgraceful conditions, and supported by "vain and light fellows," who were induced by money or the prospect of plunder to follow a "valiant" leader. In the unorganised social conditions prowess easily made itself master. There was no priestly or military aristocracy. As fast as the land was conquered it was doubtless divided among the several tribes according to the number of men in each capable of bearing arms. This principle of equality under which the Hebrews began to establish themselves in Canaan is significant. Agriculture was the chief occupation of all, and a considerable time must have elapsed before the relations of rich and poor became a "burning question."

The early period of the kings presents substantially similar social conditions. Of Saul's

[1] Judges vi. 14; xi. 1.

parentage nothing is said except that his father was "a mighty man of valour," although there are indications of his possessing considerable wealth for the time. As king, Saul continued to live as an ordinary farmer, and when the messengers of Jabesh, seeking "in all the borders of Israel" whether there be none to save their beleagured city, come to Gibeah, they find Saul the king "following the oxen out of the field."[1] He made no display of royal splendour during his reign, but continued to live upon his estate with one wife and one concubine.[2]

Prior to and during the earliest period of the kings, commerce, by means of which social inequality is quickly developed through the gaining of great wealth by successful trade, was unknown to the Hebrews. They were cut off from the sea, and so long as the Canaanites were unsubdued, trade by means of caravans was impracticable to them, although it was carried on by the latter. A more extended conquest and a greater strength and solidity of the government than then existed were necessary before simplicity of life and relative equality of condition could be broken in upon by occupations that gave rise to the problem of riches and poverty.

[1] 1 Sam. xi. 1-5.
[2] 1 Sam. xiv. 50 ; 2 Sam. xxi. 8.

Under the rule of Solomon the monarchy began to bear its legitimate fruits of social inequality. While the splendour of his court was supported in a measure out of the profits of a commerce that he skilfully conducted, it is doubtless true that the people had no small part of the burden to bear. The wealth that he acquired by trade was chiefly employed in the gratification of his inordinate love of luxury and display. We read of rich works of art, two hundred targets of beaten gold of six hundred shekels each, three hundred shields of beaten gold, and a great throne of ivory overlaid with the finest gold. All his drinking-vessels were of gold. Such things, says the narrator, "were nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon." When besides all this we take into the account the fact that he "loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonions, and Hittites," maintaining a domestic establishment of "seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines,"[1] we can form a conception of the expenses of his royal state and the social inequalities that it entailed.

The author of First Samuel, writing nearly three hundred years later than Solomon's time, presents a

[1] 1 Kings x., xi.

picture of royal oppression and of the hardships of the people that it produced, when he puts into the mouth of Samuel a warning against kings. While the passage doubtless had in view royal exactions in general, there is reason for applying it to the reign of Solomon, for we read that he had twelve officers over all Israel, who provided victuals for his table, doubtless through a levy upon the people—ten fat oxen and twenty oxen out of the pastures and a hundred sheep for one day, besides numerous other supplies.[1]

The passage in First Samuel referred to represents the prophet as saying that the king will take the sons of the people to run before his chariots, to plow, and to harvest, and their daughters to be cooks; that he will take their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants, and the tenth of their flocks, and they shall be his servants, and shall cry out in that day.[2] It accords with the reference of this passage to Solomon's reign that he has been given in the history of the times a character for oppression and cruelty. His son is represented as saying to the people who murmured against his rule: "My father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my

[1] 1 Kings iv. 7 ff.; 22-24. [2] 1 Sam. viii. 11-18.

father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."[1]

The social conditions went from bad to worse under the successors of Solomon both in the northern and southern kingdoms. That the writer of First Samuel did not paint the picture of royal oppression in too dark colours is evident from the violent procedure of Ahab in possessing himself of Naboth's vineyard on a false charge put forth by Jezebel that he had cursed God and the king.[2] With the increase of wealth went increase of greed, more marked social distinctions, and conscienceless oppression of the poor. The prosperous abandoned themselves to luxury and a life of pleasure. We read of summer-houses and winter-houses and houses inlaid with ivory, in which the rich lie upon beds of ivory, and eat the lambs out of the flocks and the calves out of the stall, and sing idle songs to the sound of the viol, and drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments, while the women demand wine of their husbands.

Amidst the graphic descriptions of this rioting we hear the pathetic refrain of the prophet crying out against the oppression of the poor and the crushing of the needy. They that build houses of hewn stone

[1] 1 Kings xii. 11. [2] 1 Kings xxi.

have trampled upon the poor and taken exactions of wheat from him. They afflict the just, take bribes, and turn aside the needy in the gate from their right. It is "an evil time." Those who "make the ephah small and the shekel great, and deal falsely with balances of deceit," "buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat." Pledges were seized of the debtors who could not pay, and the creditors "lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge, and in the house of God they drink the wine of such as have been fined."[1]

The extent of the iniquity and oppression, from which the poor were the chief sufferers, may be inferred from the frequent references of the prophets to the corruption of "the mighty" in the land. When "men of high degree are a lie" it goes hard with the men of low degree. The prophets, who were the champions of the latter, charge that corruption had invaded the high places of justice, so that a poor man had no chance of getting his rights. The seats of the judges were either occupied by the rich and powerful, or these influenced judgment in the interest of their exactions. Accordingly we read of Jerusalem that "the heads thereof judge for reward, and the

[1] Amos ii. 8; iii. 15; iv. 1; v. 11; viii. 4.

priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money"; "The prince asketh, and the judge is ready for a reward, and the great man uttereth the mischief of his soul; thus they weave it together." The rulers "hate the good, and love the evil"; they "eat the flesh of the people, and flay their skin from off them." A lamentable state of things is indicated in the mention of "the scant measure that is abominable," the "wicked balances," and "the bag of deceitful weights," in connection with the remark that "the rich men are full of violence."[1]

One of the greatest of the prophets of Judah declares that "the princes are the companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards; they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them." The social evils were intensified by the greed that accumulated vast estates in the hands of a few. The prophet regarded this as so great an evil to those of whose cause he was the champion, that he exclaims: "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land."[2] Since only the owner of land had the rights of a citizen, it

[1] Micah iii. 1 f.; 11. [2] Isa. i. 17; iii. 15; v. 8.

is evident that the consequences of such accumulations involved a worse fortune than poverty for the unhappy peasants who, despoiled of their small holdings, are "made to dwell alone in the midst of the land," and who have no choice but to leave the country or become the slaves of the great proprietors,[1] the hard-hearted men who "grind the face of the poor."

The uses to which some of the wealth obtained by cunning and dishonesty was put—uses that suggest reflection on the pernicious influence of riches upon the possessor himself to whom righteousness and mercy are wanting—are indicated in the vivid picture drawn by Isaiah of the meretricious splendour of the women of Jerusalem. They are "haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet." They have ankle-chains and sashes and perfume-boxes and rings and nose-jewels and fine linen and turbans and veils. A royal officer has a costly sepulchre hewn, and rides in a sumptuous chariot.[2]

The overthrow of the northern kingdom, which from the religious point of view of the people was a fearful judgment of God upon its cruelty and

[1] Marti, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 1900, p. 55.
[2] Isa. iii. 16 f.; xxii. 18.

oppression, did not put a stop to the social vices of Judah, although there were not wanting teachers who used this calamity to point a moral.[1] There is a note of lamentation in Jeremiah over the failure of judgment between a man and his neighbour, over the oppression of the fatherless and the widow, and the shedding of innocent blood.[2] Zephaniah denounces the princes as roaring lions, and the judges as evening wolves.[3] The good king Josiah is praised because he "judged the cause of the poor and needy," but a woe is pronounced upon Jehoiakim because he built his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by injustice, and used his neighbour's service without wages.[4]

Thus the prophets prior to the captivity appear as the champions of the poor and oppressed. They speak, as the representatives of religion, the message that they believed was given them by Yahweh, and denounce injustice, cruelty, and dishonesty. By solemn warnings and awful threats of divine judgment they seek to awaken the conscience of the rich and mighty, and to move them to mercy and charity. Had their ideal of social virtue been adopted by their people, how different might have been the fortune of

[1] Jer. vii. 15. [2] Jer. vii. 6. [3] Zeph. iii. 3.
[4] Jer. xxii. 13, 16.

this wonderful nation! But ideals are effective for permanent reform only when men are enlisted in their practical realisation. "These prophets hovered as idealists too much above reality, and did not know how effectively to realise their ideals by means of practical measures, as is shown especially in regard to the violations of justice lamented by all of them. Each of them lays bare the evils, but no one of them knows the deepest roots of them, and seeks to secure for the administration of justice an organisation independent of the arbitrary action of individuals."[1]

Good fortune befell the proletariat when after the fall of Jerusalem (B.C. 597) the second deportation (586) took away the peasant population, and left the land in the possession of the poorest classes. The comparatively few who returned from the captivity in 536 constituted a Persian province under oppressive taxation. Nehemiah calls them "slaves of the Persian king." Drought and crop-failures increased the distress. But the common misfortunes and sufferings did not soften the hearts of those who were in a position to take any advantage of their neighbours.

We hear, accordingly, in Malachi the old

[1] Nowack, *Die socialen Probleme in Israel*, 1892, p. 11.

refrain of the earlier prophets against the lawlessness and greed of the oppressors. Yahweh is "wearied" with the words of the people who say, "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of Yahweh," and ask "Where is the God of judgment?" But He "will be a swift witness against the false-swearers, and those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and turn aside the stranger from his right."[1] Nehemiah gives a vivid portrayal of the condition of the poorer classes, whom he took measures to relieve. They had "mortgaged their fields and vineyards and houses." They had "borrowed money for the king's tribute." Their children were "in bondage" as servants, and they were powerless to help themselves, for other men had their fields and vineyards. Nehemiah holds "a great assembly against" the "nobles and rulers," and charges them with exacting usury, "every one of his brother." They cannot deny the charge, and they promise to restore to the poor what they had exacted of them.[2] The introduction of Ezra's legislation and the subsequent stricter observance of the law contributed to the amelioration of the condition of the poor and to the later happier condition of the people. Sources are unfortunately wanting for details of the

[1] Mal. ii. 17; iii. 5 [2] Neh. v. 4-14.

social life of the Jews in Palestine during the latter part of the Persian period.

The same is true of the Greek period. Josephus appears to have had little interest in social questions. We know only of a general prosperity, of a contact with Greek civilisation, of an increasing population, and of a regulation of personal relations by the observance of the law.[1] During the period of the Maccabees, under whom the Jews secured independence, there seems to have been a marked improvement in social conditions, due in part to the possession of some coast cities and consequent facilities for commerce. The writer of 1 Maccabees describes in a somewhat high-wrought poetic strain the prosperous and happy condition of the land under the rule of the great Simon :—

> They could till their land in peace.
> The land yielded its products,
> And the trees of the field their fruits.
> . . . . .
> He [Simon] made peace in the land,
> And Israel was greatly rejoiced ;
> Every one sat under his vine and fig-tree,
> And no one made them to fear.
> . . . . .
> He lifted up all the needy of his people,
> He was full of zeal for the law.[2]

[1] Buhl, *ubi supra*, p. 26. [2] 1 Macc. xiv. 6-15.

From all that we can learn of the social conditions of the people during the last century before the Christian era, they were far more favourable to the lower classes than during the later period of the kings. Under Herod the Great the country enjoyed a high degree of economic prosperity, the land was industriously cultivated, and many products were exported. The producing power of the people is evident from the enormous contributions levied for Rome, for the support of the court of Herod, and for the temple.[1] We are not to believe, however, that the social distinctions of former times did not exist, and that there were no poor in the land. Among the Essenes alone was an attempt made to establish a social order on the basis of the equality that was in accordance with the ancient ideal of the Hebrew race.

The course of our inquiry leads us to a consideration at this point of the endeavours made to realise this ideal, or at least to relieve the distress of the poor and curb the greed of the rich. It may be well to note first, however, that, what is *a priori* to be looked for in a literature written at widely different times and by men having different points of view, the conditions of the social problem are not uniformly

[1] See Buhl, pp. 27, 126 f.

regarded and treated throughout the Old Testament. The attitude toward wealth, for example, is now friendly, and now uncompromisingly hostile. The words of Hannah, "Yahweh maketh poor, and Yahweh maketh rich," express the opinion of many of the writers, since they imply the Hebrew doctrine that God is the author of all things, making the light and the darkness, peace and evil.[1] We find, then, the teaching that "the blessing of God maketh rich," and that Solomon received riches and honour from God because he did not ask for them, but for wisdom.

From the religious point of view that all the awards for conduct are directly bestowed by the Deity, and that the reward of piety is worldly prosperity, we should expect to find the doctrine that "wealth and riches are in the house" of the man who fears Yahweh, and that long life is in the right hand of Wisdom, and in her left riches and honour. It is openly expressed that as a mark of the divine favour Job was, at the end of his tribulations, "blessed" of God with greater wealth than he had before, in accordance with the teaching in Proverbs that "the reward of humility and the fear of Yahweh is riches and honour and life." [2]

[1] 1 Sam. ii. 7 ; Isa. xlv. 7.

[2] 1 Kings iii. 13 ; Psa. cxii. 3 ; Prov. iii. 16 ; viii. 18 ; xiv. 24 ; xxii. 4 ; Job xlii. 12 f.

On the other hand, although there is no indication in these passages that the writers did not think wealth a good in itself, since they regarded it as bestowed of God as a reward of piety, there are not wanting others of a quite different purport. Wisdom is to be preferred to riches, and he that maketh haste to acquire them commits a sin that will not go unpunished. Hence the admonition, "Weary not thyself to be rich," for "riches certainly make themselves wings, like an eagle that flieth toward heaven." Agur's prayer is against riches as a gift of God, in view of the peril to the soul attendant on the possession of them—pride, denial of God, and blasphemy.[1] The grasping greediness of the rich, their violence and heartlessness, in the time of the prophets, led these teachers to identify them in their denunciations with the wicked and godless. Accordingly, in the exilic prophecy of the suffering servant of God it is said of him: "And they made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death"[2]—he died as only the godless and rich die.

This association of wickedness with riches was a lamentable fact of life that presented itself to the pious observer and champion of the oppressed, and

[1] Prov. iii. 13; xiv. 20; xxiii. 4; xxx. 8. [2] Isa. liii. 9.

led him to regard the pursuit of wealth as synonymous with godlessness. If God was the Father of the fatherless and the Friend of the poor, the man must be ungodly who lived in luxury while they starved. How much more he who oppressed them with usury, or by false dealing snatched the bread from their mouths!

Another equally logical conclusion from generally accepted premises might have led to a perplexing antinomy in the thought of psalmists and writers of "wisdom" apothegms. How can the doctrine that riches are a gift of God, the reward of piety, and a token of divine approval, be reconciled with the fact that they are gained by extortion and godlessness, and are a sign of a selfish and worldly disposition in the possessor of them? If the Hebrew thinkers were conscious of this antinomy, it is not easy to conceive of a solution of it on their grounds. Another difficulty they did, however, endeavour to resolve—the reconciliation with the divine goodness of the suffering and misery of the righteous poor and the prosperity and enjoyment of the godless rich. This life did not, however, furnish sufficient data for a solution. They have recourse accordingly to death and Sheol. The writer of Psalm xlix. sets in glaring contrast the end of those that trust in their wealth

and of himself, a representative of the pious poor. The former, like "the beasts that perish," go down into the underworld, whence they will never come up to "see the light." "They are appointed as a flock for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd." But as to him, "God will redeem his soul from the power of Sheol," for He "will receive" him.[1]

The author of Psalm lxxiii. says that he had well-nigh gone astray (into unbelief) when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, who increase in riches, until he "went into the sanctuary of God" (penetrated into God's holy mysteries), "and considered their latter end." Then he found that God "casts them down to destruction." But as for him, God will guide him with His counsel, and afterward receive (take, translate) him in glory. This solution, which, the reader will note, does not proceed upon social, but upon religious premises, must be regarded as quite inadequate and one-sided. Its point of view is purely personal. The writers, who seem keenly to have felt the contrast between their own worldly fortune and that of the rich, content themselves with consigning these godless persons to the underworld and

[1] The writer doubtless had in mind the fortune of Enoch and Elijah (Gen. v. 22; 2 Kings ii. 11), and expected to be "ransomed" from death. As to the rich, "the redemption of their soul is costly, and must be let alone for ever."

with rejoicing in their own exemption from a descent to this gloomy abode. The radical defect in this attempt to solve the difficult problem and "vindicate the ways of God" is the unconcern that leaves out of the account the thousands of the poor and oppressed, the victims of the heartless rich. The writers could certainly not have thought that all these would escape Sheol after the manner of Elijah! They were, however, poets, not philosophers.

Whatever differences in point of view may appear respecting riches, it is interesting to observe that the one common and prominent note in prophet, poet, and legislator is benevolence toward the needy and oppressed, the fatherless and widows. The stranger also receives a share of kindly consideration. If these idealists, whose writings constitute a noble literature, devised no practical measures for the permanent embodiment of their ideas in social institutions, they must at least have contributed a powerful impulse in this direction. Among the traits of the "just" man prominence is given to mercy and beneficence. "He hath not wronged any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment." This man has the divine favour and protection. His mode of life has a

religious significance. "He shall surely live." "He shall not die" (in the impending judgment of God).[1] The wisdom literature contains many fine admonitions of a humanitarian character: "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it"; "He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath pity on the poor, happy is he"; "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed."[2] It is worthy of note that in Job's justification of himself through a retrospect of his life in two of the finest passages in the Old Testament he gives prominence to his kindness to the poor:—

> Because I delivered the poor that cried,
> The fatherless also, that had none to help him.
> The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me:
> And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy . . .
> My justice was as a robe and a diadem.
> I was eyes to the blind,
> And feet was I to the lame.
> I was a father to the needy:
> And the cause of him that I knew not I searched out.
> And I brake the jaws of the unrighteous,
> And plucked the prey out of his teeth.
>
> If I have withheld the poor from their desire,
> Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;
> Or have eaten my morsel alone,
> And the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; . . .

[1] Ezek. xviii. 7 ff. Cf. Bertholet, *Das Buch Hezekiel*, 1897; and see Isa. lviii. 6 ff. [2] Prov. iii. 27; xiv. 21; xxii. 9.

If I have seen any perish for want of clothing,
Or that the needy had no covering;
If his loins have not blessed me,
And if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;
If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless,
Because I saw my help in the gate:
Then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder blade,
And mine arm be broken from the bone.[1]

We must go to the Law in order to find the attempts made practically to give form and efficacy to the humanitarian ideals that grace the literature of the golden age of the nation. Here we meet with admonitions that are grounded upon principles fundamental in charity and unsurpassed in any religious teaching. In the so-called Holiness Law[2] we read: "Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[3] In the document known as the Book of the Covenant[4] is a humane requirement as to pledges: "If thou at all take thy neighbour's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it unto him by that the sun goeth down: for

[1] Job xxix. 12 ff.; xxxi. 16 ff.

[2] Lev. xvii.-xxvi., incorporated in the Priests' Code, and of exilic or post-exilic date. Driver, *Introduction to Old Testament Literature*, 8th edit. pp. 47 ff.

[3] Lev. xix. 18.

[4] Exod. xx. 22-xxiii. 33. See Driver, pp. 38 ff. and Holzinger, *Exodus*, 1900, pp. 78-103.

that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep?" Then follows the religious ground of the humanity enjoined: "And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious."[1] The principle that we should put ourselves in thought and feeling in the place of those whose condition appeals to our benevolence, is finely expressed in Deuteronomy with regard to the humane treatment of slaves: "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day."[2]

The humane sentiments that find expression in such admonitions were embodied in definite legislation, which doubtless gradually grew out of the exigencies of the people after they had become settled agriculturists and dwellers in cities in Canaan. In the Book of the Covenant we find an attempt to alleviate the hard fortune of the men who were obliged to sell themselves or their children into slavery on account of poverty, or who, when caught in a theft, were unable to pay the damages. Slavery is recognised as an institution that is permitted, and that is to be regulated in the interest of alleviating

[1] Exod. xxii. 26 f. [2] Deut. xv. 15.

its burdens.[1] It is not condemned as such, and no measures are taken to abolish it. The relief ordered in the law of the Book of the Covenant provides for the release of a Hebrew slave without ransom at the end of the sixth year of his service. "If he be married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master give him a wife [one of his female slaves], and she bear him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be his master's, and he shall go out by himself."[2] If he choose, however, he may remain, and be a slave "for ever." In the later legislation of Deuteronomy this law is repeated with a modification in the interest of the slave. He should not be allowed to "go empty" at the end of the six years, but should be "liberally furnished out of the flock, threshing-floor, and wine-press" of the master. "As the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him."[3]

The enactments for the relief of the poor borrower are particularly interesting. In the Book of the Covenant a man who has lent money to a poor person is forbidden to be to him as a "creditor," that is, probably, shall not distress him, so that he

[1] Gen. xii. 16; xvii. 23; xxiv. 35 (slaves given by God); xxx. 43; Exod. xxi. 4.

[2] Exod. xxi. 2-4. For the provisions relating to a daughter sold as a concubine see vv. 7-11.

[3] Deut. xv. 12 ff.

must sell his house, or sell himself into slavery.[1] The selling of children by a parent on account of the severity of the creditor is mentioned in 2 Kings iv. 1. In the Deuteronomic legislation the taking of interest from a fellow-countryman is forbidden, but is allowed from a "foreigner." This enactment is repeated in the Holiness Law without special mention of the foreigner. The creditor appears, however, to have been protected, and had the right to take the debtor's property if the debt was not paid at a certain time, and might even sell him or his children into slavery.[2] Alleviating provisions are, however, found, such as that in taking a pledge for a loan the creditor shall not go into the debtor's house to take the pledge, but shall wait without until the man bring forth what he will give. A hand-mill or an upper millstone shall not be taken, and an upper garment received as a pledge must be returned at night.[3]

That the benevolent interest of the legislators in the poor availed little against the greed and rapacity of the rich and powerful, although the provisions of the law were emphasised by repetition in different

[1] Exod. xxiii. 25. The prohibition of usury here is thought to be a later addition. See Buhl, p. 98, and Holzinger, *Exodus*, on the passage.

[2] Neh. v. 5, 8; Isa. l. 1.

[3] Deut. xxiv. 6, 10, 15; Exod. xxii. 26.

codes, is evident from express statements in the writings of the later prophets. In Ezekiel's portrayal of the unrighteous man appear traits that he had doubtless observed. Prominent among these are wronging the poor and needy, spoiling by violence, and not restoring the pledge. Nehemiah, in the passages already referred to, presents a vivid picture of conditions existing after the exile. It would appear that the theology of the people, according to which the captivity was a judgment of Yahweh for their sins, had exerted little influence upon their conduct. In the lamentation in Babylon they had neither learned mercy nor applied their hearts to wisdom. The historian tells of "a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren." Some said, "We are mortgaging our fields and our vineyards and our houses." Others said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tribute upon our fields and our vineyards, . . . and lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, . . . neither is it in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our vineyards." Nehemiah takes up their cause, and charges the "nobles" with taking usury.

One of the most radical provisions of the law in the interest of debtors is that of the "release"

every seven years enacted in the Deuteronomic legislation. "And this is the manner of the release," says the writer: "Every creditor shall release that which he hath lent unto his neighbour; he shall not exact it of his neighbour and his brother, because Yahweh's release hath been proclaimed." Foreigners are not included in this enactment.[1] The release was that of the entire debt, and did not apply to the interest only, as some have maintained. For the rich are warned (vv. 9, 10) not to have a base thought in their heart and refuse to lend to the poor man because the seventh year is at hand, "and he cry unto Yahweh against thee, and it be a sin unto thee." This exhortation would not be "without meaning," as Buhl thinks, if it related only to the loss of the interest, but it would not be likely to appear in this sense in a legislation in which the taking of interest on loans is prohibited.[2] The words following this enactment, "Howbeit there shall be no poor with thee[3] (for Yahweh will surely

[1] Deut. xv. 1-3.

[2] A detailed discussion of the meaning of this law may be read in Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 1895, pp. 174-183.

[3] Edward Tallmadge Root in *The Profit of the Many* endeavours to show that אֶפֶס כִּי, rendered "Howbeit" in the Revised Version, expresses *purpose*. But this is a forced construction. The meaning is clear when the clause "if only thou diligently

bless thee, etc.), if only thou diligently hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy God, to do and observe all this commandment," denote a condition that no one could have regarded as other than ideal.

If the legislation itself was intended to serve as more than an ideal, if it was expected that it would actually go into effect, it was certainly not framed with a wise foresight of future conditions. No community engaged in extensive trade and business enterprises requiring credit could exist under such a law. Indeed the complaints of the prophets show that this law was in general disregarded as well as the other laws for the relief of the poor.

After the exile the people did indeed, under the influence of Ezra, agree to abide by this requirement, but no sooner did the Jews begin to carry on credit operations on a large scale than artful expedients were resorted to in order to evade it. A man, for example, would refuse to lend money until the borrower importuned him, and agreed to accept it as a present; or it was agreed that all debts were excepted from this law that were secured by a pledge; or Hillel's expedient was resorted to, according to which the lender read before the court a declaration

heed," etc., is read as the condition of the former. The result in view is contingent and perhaps altogether ideal.

in which he reserved the right to collect his debt.[1] Thus wealth had its way, and proved its ancient right to be regarded as another name for power.[2]

Other humane provisions of the Deuteronomic legislation are worthy of note, such as the permission to eat grapes from a neighbour's vineyard at pleasure, but not to "put any in any vessel," and to pluck the ears of his standing corn, but not to reap any of it. It is required that a hired servant who is poor and needy be not oppressed, whether he be a Hebrew or a stranger, and that he be paid his wages at the end of his day's work. A widow's raiment shall not be taken as a pledge, but the people shall remember that they were bondmen in Egypt. Since God "redeemed" them from this bondage, they ought to show a mercy to those in distress like the mercy of Yahweh. Here we see again the religious ground of moral obligation.

In the connection of the foregoing is the enact-

[1] Buhl, p. 110.

[2] "Usury" is interest, and it was so regarded by the theologians of the Church, who until the middle of the eighteenth century opposed money-lending as contrary to the Old Testament legislation, which they thought to be perpetually binding. It is interesting to note the expedients to which they at length resorted when driven to reconcile the prohibition of interest on loans with the necessities of trade and commercial enterprise. See Andrew D. White's *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, 1898, vol. ii. pp. 264-287.

ment regarding gleaning, that requires a sheaf forgotten in the harvest to be left: "Thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that Yahweh thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands." In like manner there shall be no second gathering of the olives and grapes. They shall be left for the poor.[1]

The later Priests' Code repeats these provisions with the added requirement that when the field is reaped the owner shall not "wholly reap the corners" of it, but that these shall be left for the poor and the stranger.[2]

In the same code, or in the Holiness Law included in it, occurs the unique and remarkable enactment regarding the so-called Sabbatic Year. The fields are to be sown and the vineyards pruned and the fruits gathered six years, but "the seventh year shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath unto Yahweh." That which grows of itself during this year shall not be reaped or gathered, but shall be for food for the owner, his slaves, his hired servants, the stranger, the cattle, and "the beasts that are in the land." This law has been regarded as "a relic of communistic agriculture," a condition

[1] Deut. xxiii. 24, 25; xxiv. 19-22. [2] Lev. xix. 10; xxiii. 22.

of collective ownership of the lands pertaining to a certain group of individuals, who at certain periods renounce their tenure in favour of the community.[1] Thus the less fortunate members of the society might be benefited, according to the words in Exodus xxiii. 10, where the earliest sketch of the provision appears: "that the poor of thy people may eat." The law in Leviticus "limits the rights of individual ownership in the interest of the community at large," whatever its origin may have been.[2]

The modifications that the legislation of the Old Testament underwent in the various stages of its development are illustrated by a comparison of the form of the enactment in question as it appears in the Priests' Code in Leviticus with the earlier and briefer sketch of it in the Book of the Covenant in Exodus. The later recension takes no notice of the kindly reference to the poor that stands in the earlier, but its dominant interest is in the Sabbath, which, at the time when it was written, had attained a significance before unknown; so that, as Nowack remarks, "the law is essentially nothing but the consequence of the Sabbath-idea that had thus assumed importance."[3] It is expressly said that the

[1] John Fenton, *Early Hebrew Life*, p. 66 f. Driver, *ubi supra*, p. 177.

[2] Lev. xxv. 1.

[3] *Die socialen Probleme in Israel*, p. 18.

year of rest for the land is "a sabbath unto Yahweh"; and to remove the natural apprehension of the people that there would be a dearth of food in this year and the following, an assurance of supernatural intervention is given to the effect that Yahweh will command His blessing upon the sixth year, and the land shall bear fruit for three years.[1] We have, of course, no evidence that this promise was fulfilled.

This assumed necessity of a miracle is a tacit acknowledgment that the law was, in fact, regarded as impracticable. To say nothing of the perils of starvation that the divine intervention might obviate, the idleness of an entire people during the period of "rest" must without a miracle of grace have pernicious moral consequences. There is some ground, accordingly, for the contention that this legislation had only an ideal significance connected with the doctrine of the Sabbath.[2] We have no evidence of the existence of the law in the period before the exile, but an implication that it was not observed is found in two passages.[3] After the return from the exile the people, according to Nehemiah, solemnly

[1] Lev. xxv. 21.

[2] Baur in the *Tübingen Zeitschrift*, 1832, pp. 142, 167, supported by Ewald, Oehler, and Keil. See art. "Sabbatjahr" in Schenkel's *Bibel-Lexicon*, v. p. 126 f.

[3] Lev. xxvi. 34; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. Cf. Nowack, *ubi supra*.

"promised" to "forego the seventh year and the exaction of every debt"; and its observance is recorded in the time of the Maccabees with disastrous consequences in the failure of supplies to a besieged city, and the consequent surrender of the same.[1]

Another provision of the Priests' Code, which appears to be explicable only as an ideal that originated in a sentiment of humanity and a desire to abolish in a degree the distressing conditions of poverty, debt, and slavery, is the institution of the Year of Jubilee. After "seven sabbaths of years" the jubilee shall be proclaimed, and in the fiftieth year there shall be no sowing and no gathering of products. At this time every man "shall return to his possession." In fact, permanent ownership is annulled. A man who has sold his land may buy it back at any time during the period of forty-nine years, and if he is unable to do this, it shall revert to him in the year of jubilee. The price at any time is governed by the nearness or remoteness of the great year of release. What has really been sold is "the number of the crops." The land must not be sold "in perpetuity," for it belongs to Yahweh, and the people are strangers and sojourners with Him.[2]

[1] 1 Macc. vi. 49. Cf. Josephus, *Antiq.* xiii. 8; xiv. 6.
[2] Lev. xxv. 8 ff.

Humane treatment of the poor is especially enjoined in this law, and the earlier commandments regarding slavery in the Book of the Covenant and Deuteronomy are greatly modified. "If thy brother be waxen poor, and his hand fail with thee, then thou shalt uphold him; as a stranger and a sojourner shall he live with thee. Take no usury of him or increase, but fear thy God." If a poor man sell himself as a slave, he shall not be "made to serve as a bond-servant," he shall be "as a hired servant" until the year of jubilee, when he shall be free, he and his children. "For they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt." They are neither to be sold as bondmen nor "ruled over with rigour."

No account is here taken of the law that sanctions the holding of Hebrews as slaves, and the other provision is ignored that required the release of a slave at the end of the sixth year of service, and his retention "for ever" if he did not then go. The only slaves that the people are permitted to have are such as they may buy of "the nations that are round about" them and the children of the strangers that sojourn among them, whom "they have begotten in the land." The purely religious ground of this legislation is evident. There is no "sociology" here.

The land belongs to Yahweh, and accordingly all His people are to have equal rights in it. The people are His servants, and hence must not be held as slaves of men. Did He not bring His people out of Egyptian bondage, and should they be sold again into slavery?

That this law ever went into effect is extremely doubtful. One can see at a glance that it could not be carried out in a time when property was considerably diversified and among a people engaged in trade and commerce. Even in an agricultural period, when the possessions of the people were chiefly in land, it must have shown itself impracticable. The requirement that every man should return to his possessions in the year of jubilee implies that every one had possessions that he might claim—a most improbable supposition with reference to all the poor, the infirm, and the slaves. What were the conditions forty-nine years before that could at any jubilee-period be reproduced? Is any jubilee-period supposable at the beginning of which all the people could have been in conditions to which a return would be desirable because beneficial?

The Jewish tradition, in fact, concedes that this law was never observed—a fact that is regarded as surprising, because after the time of Ezra the law

in general was kept with great assiduity. Nowack accordingly remarks that "the best will was not in a situation to carry out such a law, which did not grow out of historical relations, but was artificially formed from fixed and accepted premises." There is no evidence of its existence before the exile. The failure to observe it is never charged against the people by the prophets in their arraignment of them for their theocratic and ethical shortcomings, although Jeremiah threatens the most frightful judgments upon the people of his time, because, after having liberated their slaves during the siege of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, they subjected them again to bondage on a temporary cessation of hostilities. Here he refers to the law of release, at the end of the sixth year, changing it so as to read, "at the end of seven years." But neither here nor in the reference to "a year of liberty" in Ezekiel is there a definite indication of an acquaintance with the jubilee-legislation.[1]

The law has, however, an historical-ethical interest as one of the many examples throughout the Old Testament of the indomitable, although, alas! ineffectual, endeavour of the best minds of the Hebrew

[1] Jer. xxxiv. 14 ff.; Ezek. xlvi. 17. See Bertholet, *Das Buch Hezekiel*, p. 239.

race to realise, through admonition, warning, or legislation their fine ideals of humanity, and to rescue the poor, the unfortunate, and the slaves from the clutches of heartless Greed. It matters little whether such a sketch of legislation was seriously intended to go into effect, or is to be regarded as an ideal conception, the embodiment of the humane social aspirations of some great-hearted priest who, bewailing the wretchedness of the poor of his people, wrote out his dream of a golden age, in which the mercy of Yahweh, the friend of the fatherless and the widow, should find expression in the triumph of humanity, long scorned and set at naught by the mighty in the land.

Although the humanitarian social strivings of Israel, expressed in the ideals of prophets and poets, failed of practical realisation in the history of the people, they proceeded from principles of universal interest and worth. The idea of grounding the individual life and the national polity in the divine righteousness and tender mercy commends itself to the social philosophy of all ages and peoples. Israel disregarded the admonitions that were founded upon this religious principle, and suffered unspeakably. No system of social life can dispense with justice and love; and in no way can these more effectually

be made the springs of conduct in men than by the cultivation of personal piety toward God regarded as the supreme embodiment of them.

If the failure of the ideals of humanity and charity in Israel to control the evil passions of men, to check the hot and heartless race for wealth, and to inspire consideration for the weak and poor, be thought to ground a pessimistic conclusion as to the efficacy of the religious sanction and the response of human nature to it, then reason may be found for a cheerful optimism in the reflection that it is not given to the preaching of prophets, the inspired song of poets, and the inditing of wisdom-apothegms to effect the regeneration of mankind, but that this consummation must wait for the advent of a great Personality appointed to be an example and an inspiration—a Son of Man, filled with piety toward God and love for men.

CHAPTER II

MATTHEW AND LUKE

THE consideration of the teaching of the New Testament concerning the social problem arising from wealth and poverty or the relation of the rich and the poor in society, to which the foregoing chapter furnishes, it is hoped, an interesting and instructive introduction, leads us in the beginning to the Gospels, composing the first grand division of the Christian canon. We begin with them, not because they are the earliest writings of the New Testament, for many of the Epistles antedate them, but rather because they record the words, portray the personality, and show the attitude toward our subject, of the great Teacher from whom proceeded the impulse and the inspiration of all the writers that we shall have to consider.

Since the unique point of view and purpose of the author of the fourth Gospel diverted his attention

from the matters that are related to our inquiry, his work calls for very little consideration in the present discussion. So far as the Gospels are concerned, then, our attention will be chiefly given to the so-called synoptics or the first three. Of these, moreover, for the reason that Mark has very little material for us that is not contained in the other two, we shall be occupied in the main with the first and third, that "according to Matthew" and that "according to Luke."

At the present stage in the progress of biblical investigation no scholar who well knows his ground undertakes to derive a doctrine from the Gospels without establishing it upon conclusions carefully considered or resting upon the general consensus of the learned regarding the character and composition of these records. The importance of this procedure is manifest when we consider the relation of the trustworthiness of the sources to the validity of the teaching that is derived from them. If the teaching of Jesus is in question, an inquiry is evidently indispensable into the relation of the writers of the Gospels to him, their sources and their attitude toward them. The limits within which it has been determined to write this monograph do not admit of our entering into a technical discussion of the

composition and relation to one another of the first three Gospels or the so-called synoptic problem. We must, then, content ourselves with stating as simply and clearly as possible, so as not to weary the reader, some general facts and conclusions, for the grounds of which reference may be made to scientific works upon the subject.

It is now generally maintained by those best qualified to judge of the matter that the first three canonical Gospels were largely composed from written sources. Mark is believed to be the oldest of these, and to have been one of the sources of the other two. Yet it does not have the appearance of an independent work, such as the traditional "interpreter of Peter" might have written from his recollections of the preaching of that apostle. Rather does it contain indications of dependence upon more or less fragmentary writings, intended to set forth the acts and words of Jesus as they had been handed down in the tradition of his followers.[1] The writer's peculiar style, his fondness for embellishment and for picturesque details, reveals his

[1] The repetition of accounts with variations indicates a somewhat negligent use of sources. Cf. Bacon, *Introd. to the New Test.* 1900, p. 207. The long discourse in chap. xiii. must have been derived from a written source. Cf. Jülicher, *Einleit. in das N. T.* 1901, pp. 254 f.

hand, and distinguishes his contributions from the common material of the tradition.

As to the Gospel according to Matthew, the general consensus of expert opinion pronounces it a composite work, written in dependence upon sources, two of which may be said to be pretty well known. One of these was the Gospel according to Mark, the order of events in which the writer substantially adopted together with the most of its material. The other was a collection of the sayings (λόγια) of Jesus, perhaps the one mentioned by Papias about the middle of the second century as a writing in Aramaic by the apostle Matthew. We know that translations of this existed, and the author of our first Gospel, who wrote the work in Greek, doubtless had one of the recensions of it in that language, and used it as suited his somewhat fanciful idea of the grouping of events and discourses. It is necessary also to assume other sources that cannot be definitely determined, together with the current oral tradition, in order to account for all the phenomena of this record.[1]

[1] See Weizsäcker, *Die evangelische Geschichte*, 1864, pp. 104 ff.; Pfleiderer, *Das Urchristenthum*, 1887; Cone, *Gospel-Criticism and Historical Christianity*, 1891, pp. 118-166, 197-209; Holtzmann, *Einleit. in das N. T.* 2te Aufl. pp. 347 ff.; Bacon and Jülicher, as above; Wernle, *Die synopt. Frage*, 1899; "The Synoptic Question," by the writer, in *The New World* for September 1900.

We are not left to conjecture regarding the composition of our third Gospel, which bears the traditional designation, "according to Luke." The writer himself takes us frankly into his confidence when he informs us in his introduction of his acquaintance with the writings of "many" who had "taken in hand to draw up a narrative" such as he was about to undertake with the manifest conviction that he could write a better Gospel than any one of these—at least one more "in order" (*καθεξῆς*), since by means of the material at his disposal he had "traced the course of all things accurately (*ἀκριβῶς*) from the first." Accordingly, he assures the friend to whom he dedicates his work that he purposes to enable the reader to attain "certainty" (*ἀσφάλειαν*) respecting the matters in which the catechumens of the time were instructed.

At the present stage of the investigation of the origin of the Gospels one hazards nothing in assuming that two of the sources of this narrative were the same that lay at the basis of the first Gospel—Mark in substantially its present form and a collection of the sayings of Jesus in one of its Greek recensions. While Matthew is also included by scholars whose opinion is entitled to the highest consideration, the differences between the two render a dependence of

the third upon the first very doubtful, apart from the reasons that may be urged for regarding the latter Gospel as the latest of the three. Other sources that are in the nature of the case indeterminable must be assumed in order to account for the considerable material that Luke has over Mark, in which are included the parables of the Prodigal Son, the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Good Samaritan. We may, however, well leave them undetermined, and content ourselves with the writer's vague mention of them as the productions of the "many" who had undertaken to write evangelic narratives.

Of greater importance, moreover, than the fact that our Gospels were composed from sources are the variations in the narratives as they lie before us. In respect to these it is difficult to determine whether they are due to differences in the sources themselves or to varying points of view and aims of the writers of the Gospels. The writer of Luke appears to have known nothing of the flight into Egypt, and leaves no place for it in his narrative. Mark makes Jesus ask the man who addressed him as "good Master," "Why callest thou me good?" In Matthew the question is changed to "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good?"[1] The different

[1] Mark x. 17, 18; Matt. xix. 17.

versions of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and Luke indicate different sources or changes made by one or both evangelists.[1] The two versions of the Sermon on the Mount must not only have come from two unlike sources, but must also have received their respective forms according to altogether different conceptions and purposes of the two writers.[2] Matthew's account of a meeting of Jesus with the eleven disciples in Galilee after the resurrection is not recognised in Luke, where it is recorded that on the day of the resurrection Jesus commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem until "endued with power from on high," then led them out to Bethany, and was "carried up into heaven."[3] The reconciliation of these differences cannot be compassed by exegesis, and every explanation of their origin must in the nature of the case be conjectural. The only course, then, that is open to the student of the teachings of the Gospels is to accept them as they stand and admit into his results such modifications as legitimate inferences from these deviations appear to require. He must prudently take his course between Scylla and Charybdis—between the perils involved in the dogmatic assertions that he can know infallibly what

[1] Matt. vi. 9 ff.; Luke xi. 2 ff.
[2] Matt. v.-vii.; Luke vi. 20-49.
[3] Matt. xxviii. 16 ff.; Luke xxiv. 15-53.

is taught, and that the records are in such hopeless imperfection and contradiction that their essential teaching cannot be ascertained.

Another feature of the Gospels of special importance to the student who endeavours to derive a teaching from them concerns their relation to the circle of readers that their authors had in view and to the problems of primitive Christianity. In particular should account be taken of the way in which the narratives and reports of sayings are influenced by the Jewish-Christian and gentile-Christian controversies, due to the original and compelling personality of the greatest of the apostles. No doubt the theory of a "tendency" in the Gospels in a Pauline or an anti-Pauline direction has been overdone; but after abstraction has been made of all excesses, there remain to the sober critical judgment some facts deserving consideration.

As to the Gospel according to Matthew in this relation, it is well known that as early as the latter part of the second century Irenæus found in it indications of a Jewish-Christian character and purpose. He regarded it as written in order to furnish to the Christians of the circumcision proof that Jesus was the expected Messiah of their people. Accordingly, it is more than any other of the Gospels

distinguished by citations from the Old Testament in supposed and intended proof of its implied thesis that the principal events in the life of Jesus are fulfilments of Hebrew prophecy. Jesus comes out of Egypt when a young child in accordance with a prophetic word, and when he speaks in parables it is "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet."[1] There is need neither to cite the numerous examples illustrating this interest of the writer nor to dwell upon the defects of his interpretation of the Old Testament. His method of dealing with the Jewish sacred writings was that of his time, and precisely for this reason it was effective for his purpose.

A partisan Jewish-Christian interest is distinctly represented in this Gospel. This feature apparently belongs to the writer's oldest source—the collection of sayings, and denotes a recognition of the permanent validity of the Jewish law and a limitation of Jesus' mission to the Jews. The whole law is to be literally fulfilled, and the righteousness of the kingdom of God consists in doing and teaching its commandments. The scribes and Pharisees, who are the representatives of Moses, furnish in their teachings an inviolable authority for the conduct of life.

[1] Matt. ii. 15 ; xiv. 35.

Righteousness is of "works" rather than by "faith." The twelve tribes will be recognised in the kingdom of God, and the twelve apostles will be their judges. The gentiles are spoken of in a disparaging and contemptuous tone. The twelve are forbidden to extend their mission beyond the cities of Israel and in particular to visit the Samaritans. The kingdom of God will have come before they can have preached in all the Jewish land. Directions are given regarding sacrifices and the temple and altars, as if these were of permanent validity and importance to the followers of Jesus.[1]

On the other hand, the Gospel contains expressions of decided hostility to the Jews. The kingdom of God shall be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Their overthrow is predicted. They are held responsible for the death of Jesus. Their boasting that Abraham is their father is declared to be futile. Greater faith than theirs is found among the gentiles. They shall be shut out of the kingdom in outer darkness, while in the name of Jesus the gentiles shall hope. In the Messianic consummation the publicans and harlots will have precedence over

[1] Matt. v. 17-19, 23, 24, 47; vii. 6, 19 ff.; x. 5, 6; xii. 33; xv. 24; xviii. 17; xix. 17, 28; xxiii. 3, 18-20.

them. The universal destination of the Gospel of Jesus is, moreover, implied in the injunction to the apostles to proclaim it to "all nations."[1] It is remote from our present purpose to inquire whether or no the former series of Jewish-Christian sayings represents the oldest tradition, and the latter series of gentile-Christian content should be credited to the evangelist, or whether these antithetic tendencies find their true explanation in the assumption of two authors, while a third reviser added the words that recognise the Church already in process of formation.[2] It is sufficient, as indicating the general character of the Gospel as a document from which a teaching is to be derived, to call attention to these contrasted representations without undertaking the fruitless task of reconciling them. The high repute of this great work among the ancients and moderns is a tribute to the catholic spirit in which, without consciously belittling or exalting either Peter or Paul, it represents the dominant ideas and tendencies, the conflicts and accords, of the primitive Church.

As to the third Gospel, it was not without reasons

[1] Matt. iii. 9; viii. 10-12; xii. 21; xxi. 28-32, 43; xxii. 7; xxvii. 24, 25; xxviii. 19. See Weizsäcker, *Die evangel. Gesch.* pp. 195-200; Jülicher, *Einleit.* pp. 243-247; Holtzmann, *Einleit.* pp. 389 ff.; Keim, *Gesch. Jesu von Nazara*, i. pp. 47-63; Renan, *Les Évangiles*, pp. 94 ff.

[2] Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17.

apparent in its contents and general character that Irenæus, Tertullian, and Eusebius among the ancients regarded it as distinctively the Gospel of the gentile-Christian or Pauline believers in the early Church. In the story of the infancy, Simeon, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declares that in the young child he sees the salvation of God, "prepared before the face of all peoples, a light for revelation to the gentiles." The mission of the Seventy denotes the evangelisation of the nations by the authority of Jesus, who gives them instructions similar to those given to the twelve apostles. Jesus is made to declare to the Jews that they have no claim upon the kingdom of God because he belonged to their nation and "taught in their streets." It is a Samaritan who by his benevolence shames the Jewish dignitaries, and a Samaritan leper is distinguished for his gratitude. The publican who casts himself in faith upon the divine mercy is "justified" rather than the Pharisee who boasts of his "works." A ministry to the gentiles is declared by Jesus himself at Nazareth to be the true fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, which is interpreted as Messianic. The account of the indignation of the people at this application of the stories of Elijah and Elisha emphasises the writer's purpose. If the Pauline gospel

of salvation by faith is not distinctively supported, the gospel of works is certainly not commended, but is rather belittled in the teaching that he who keeps the commandments does nothing worthy of praise, and is, in fact, "an unprofitable servant." The legendary account of the call of Peter has undoubtedly an allegorical tendency toward an establishment of the mission to the gentiles on the authority of Jesus. In the parable of the Supper those compelled to come in from the highways and hedges represent the gentiles. To these evidences must be added the omission in Luke of several distinctly Jewish features in Matthew as well as a few instances of the influence of the Pauline Epistles.[1]

The foregoing consideration of the two Gospels that we are chiefly concerned with, which shows their relation with respect to varying points of view and diversified material, due either to their sources or to the different purposes of their authors, will not, it is hoped, be found too prolix to serve as an introduction to a study of them with reference to their attitude toward the social question under consideration. In the material common to Matthew

[1] Luke ii. 31 f.; iv. 16-30; v. 1-11; x. 1-16, 25-37; xiii. 26; xiv. 15-24; xvii. 10-16; xxiii. 10-14. See J. Weiss in Meyer's *Commentar*, i. 2, 1892, on the passages, and Schmiedel, art. "Gospels" in Cheyne and Black's *Ency. Biblica*, ii.

and Luke the relation of the two, as has been frequently pointed out, is that of an intensification by the latter in the interest of the poor and against the rich. Not to dwell upon such unimportant matters as "sell that thou hast" (*πώλησόν σου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα*) in Matthew, and "sell all thou hast" (*πάντα ὅσα ἔχεις πώλησον*) in Luke, attention should be called to such more radical modifications of the traditions of Jesus' words as are presented in the report in Luke of the Sermon on the Mount, where "poor" stands for Matthew's "poor in spirit," and where to the few beatitudes given are added "woes" pronounced upon the rich without qualification as to their character or the use made of their riches, upon those that are "full," and those that "laugh," while they that "hunger" and "weep" receive an unconditional beatitude.[1]

In the connection in which Matthew reports the injunction about laying up treasure in heaven, Luke adds by way of transition the commandment apparently addressed to all the followers of Jesus: "Sell that ye have, and give alms." Thus they will make for themselves purses that never wear out and treasures in heaven that fail not, since their almsgiving will be eternally rewarded in the kingdom of

[1] Luke vi. 19-25; xviii. 22.

God. Matthew's "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away," is intensified in Luke so as to read: "Give to every one that asketh thee, and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." The special requirement to sell his goods and give to the poor imposed upon an individual seeker after eternal life in Matthew, is made general in Luke in a different connection: "So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."[1]

Not a little of the material in Luke that is not contained in Matthew is of special interest relative to the social point of view that prevails in that Gospel. The unique social tendency of these sections, the marked colouring of interest in the poor and opposition to the rich that distinguishes them from all other parts of the New Testament except the Epistle that bears the name of James, can most probably be explained by the assumption of a source that the author of this Gospel alone of the synoptic writers had before him. The questions need not here be discussed whether the decided tendency in question should be ascribed to the writer or to his source, and whether the source was of Ebionitic origin, or simply

[1] Luke vi. 30; xii. 33; xiv. 33.

represented sentiments prevalent among all classes of primitive Christians.[1] It is sufficient to say that in the Gospel an ascetic inclination is apparent—a view of life to which poverty appears as an ideal of perfection and the giving of alms as a virtue. This peculiar character of the book is more likely correctly to represent the teaching of Jesus if it be attributed to a source than if it be charged to the writer. In the latter case it would be purely arbitrary and subjective, while in the former it would have the objective quality of depending upon a tradition of Jesus' teaching more or less trustworthy.[2]

In the stories of the infancy in Luke, which are so different in form and contents from those in Matthew as to indicate a separate source, the lowly conditions of the birth of Jesus are significant. The hymn ascribed to Mary, which was evidently composed from reminiscences of the Psalm of Solomon, of 1 Samuel ii., and various other Old Testament passages, contains the refrain that sounds throughout

[1] See Colin Campbell, *Critical Essays on Luke*, 1891; Weizsäcker, J. Weiss, Jülicher, Renan, as above, and Holtzmann, *Handcommentar*, on Luke.

[2] Rogge contends for the former supposition, *Der irdische Besitz im neuen Testament*, 1897, p. 13. So also J. Weiss in Meyer's *Commentar*, i. 2, p. 282, and Feine, *Eine vorkan. Ueberlieferung des Lukas*, 1891. But a tradition is not authenticated beyond question by being referred to a "source."

the entire Gospel, the note of sympathy with the poor and lowly—the exaltation of those of low degree, the filling of the hungry "with good things," and the sending of the rich "empty away." Jesus himself was always poor, and depended for his living upon the gifts of his friends. Antipathy to the rich is plainly the note of the parable concerning the man who, contemplating the abundant products of his lands, says to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." The divine judgment declares him to be a "fool," because he must die, and leave his possessions, to whom he knows not. The direction is given to a "ruler of the Pharisees" that when he makes a feast he should not invite his friends or kinsmen or rich neighbours, lest they recompense him by inviting him in return, but the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, because they cannot recompense him. He will be rewarded, however, "in the resurrection of the just." Thus kindness to the poor is recognised as a virtue that will secure eternal life in the Messianic kingdom.[1]

A harsh characterisation of wealth as partaking of unrighteousness ("the mammon of unrighteousness") is given in the parable of the Unjust Steward,

[1] Luke i. 52 f.; viii. 2 f.; xii. 16-21; xiv. 12-14.

who is commended for making friends by reducing the obligations of his proprietor's debtors, in order that, when he is removed from his stewardship, they may receive him into their houses. A similar use of riches, thus discredited by association with unrighteousness (*ἀδικία*), is recommended to the Pharisees. They should use it for the benefit of the poor, and thus make to themselves friends who will intercede for them, that they may be received into the "everlasting habitations" of the Messianic kingdom.[1] Thus again the giving of alms is declared to be a means of attaining eternal life. It also atones for the evil that essentially attaches to riches. The "foolish" Pharisees are enjoined to "give as alms the things that are within [the vessels], and, behold, all things are clean" to them, the outside of the vessels that they take so much pains to cleanse, foods, etc., since, according to the writer of Titus (i. 15), "to the pure all things are pure."[2]

These passages together with several others of a similar import will be considered more in detail when we come to the particular discussion of the social teaching in the third Gospel. They are sufficient to show without special elucidation the

[1] Luke xvi. 1-10. See Titius, *Die neutest. Lehre von der Seligkeit*, 1895, i. p. 78, and J Weiss, as above, p. 534.

[2] Luke xi. 41.

marked and characteristic attitude of this record toward the rich and the poor, toward the pursuit of wealth, and the bestowal of it in alms. While its spirit is essentially the same in this relation as that of the first Gospel, it draws the line of social distinction with a firmer hand than the latter, and expresses an intenser sympathy with poverty and a sharper antipathy to wealth. Its author has not inappropriately been called "the socialist among the evangelists." [1]

Recent investigations render it very probable that the source used by the author of the third Gospel comprised material peculiar to his record together with the λόγια—in other words, that he did not employ the λόγια in the form in which it lay before the writer of Matthew, but a revision of it whereby it was enlarged by the addition of various narratives and sayings. The different recension of the Sermon on the Mount—the blessing upon the "poor" and the woes upon the rich and fortunate—furnishes an illustration of the modified form of the λόγια that he employed.[2]

The following words from Rogge may well close this part of our discussion: "The peculiarity of the

[1] H. Holtzmann, in *Protest. Kirchenzeit.* 1894, No. 45.
[2] See J. Weiss in Meyer's *Commentar* on Luke, 1892, p. 280.

Luke-source strikingly corresponds to the *milieu* in which it originated. As a matter of course, the poor Jewish-Christian churches in Jerusalem and Palestine, which in their need were later obliged to ask for support from the gentile Christians, above all preserved the words of the Lord that furnished them strength and comfort. That in such communities these words, by means of a special emphasising alone, but more probably through an involuntary sharpening, should have received a slight intensification in favour of the poor, is the more explicable and natural as it was believed that thereby one remained in the spirit of the great Teacher who had compassion on the weary and heavy-laden."[1]

[1] *Der irdische Besitz*, p. 17

CHAPTER III

THE POINT OF VIEW IN THE GOSPELS

APART from the question as to what matter the records represent to have been of paramount importance in the first proclamation of the gospel or the good news, no one can deny that great prominence is given to an interest in the welfare of the poor and unfortunate. In the account in Luke of Jesus' first public appearance in the synagogue at Nazareth, apparently taken from the peculiar source of the writer of this Gospel and intended to serve as a "programme" of the gospel-message as he apprehended it, Jesus is represented as having read from the roll of the prophet Isaiah as follows:—

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he anointed me to preach
> good tidings to the poor:
> He hath sent me to proclaim release
> to the captives,
> And recovering of sight to the blind,

To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

That there may be no misunderstanding regarding the application of these words, Jesus is made to say: "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears."[1]

The same Gospel has another passage of similar import, also placed early in the life of Jesus, and having, moreover, a parallel in Matthew of such verbal agreement as to indicate a common source. In answer to the question of John the Baptist, conveyed by two of his disciples: "Art thou he that cometh [Messiah], or look we for another?" Jesus is made to say: "Tell John what things ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them."[2] In an outcry of ecstasy "in the Holy Spirit" he thanks the Father that the contents of his gospel have been hidden from the wise and understanding, and have been revealed to "babes," to the *νήπιοι*, the untaught, unskilled, the lowly folk from the midst of whom his disciples were chosen.[3] Who but these lowly poor, on whom the religious ceremonial

[1] Luke iv. 16-22. [2] Luke vii. 22; Matt. xi. 5 f.
[3] Luke x. 21; Matt. xi. 25.

of the time laid "heavy burdens and grievous to be borne," are included in the great invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"?[1] The promise of an easy yoke is to those that were panting under a galling load.

These passages can hardly be otherwise interpreted than as an emphatic declaration that the gospel was conceived as pre-eminently good tidings to the poor, the unfortunate, and the oppressed. While it may be hazardous to maintain that others were excluded, it is certain that the fortunate, the prosperous, and the rich were not expressly included. Jesus was known as the one that was to come by the fact that his ministry was primarily to the blind, the lame, the lepers, and the poor. "The wise" (*σοφοί*) and "the understanding" (*συνετοί*) in the estimation of the world had not the insight of discipleship. The gospel was revealed to the untaught and unskilled (*νήπιοι*), to those on whom the high and proud looked down, and whom they scorned as lowly folk, "the people of the land." Those that laboured under heavy burdens were invited, apparently because it was assumed that they would welcome an invitation to come under an easy yoke, and not unlikely because

[1] Matt. xi. 28; xxiii. 4.

the sympathetic heart of the great Teacher yearned for them.

One hazards nothing, then, in asserting that according to the representation of Luke, and in a less degree of Matthew, the Messianic message is conceived as pre-eminently the gospel of the poor. That the "poor" in question are the literally poor, and the "lame and blind and the lepers" are those physically afflicted is obvious. Yet the too prevalent tendency to find "figurative" expressions where they do not exist leads a great expositor to say deprecatingly: "One should not be too hasty to dissolve the life-like, fresh colouring of such words in the uniform gray of our edificatory speech."[1]

It is especially noteworthy, however, with respect to the end in view that while the message is distinctively declared to be "good tidings" to the poor and unfortunate, it does not very clearly appear how these classes of people are to be relieved. The lame and deaf and blind are, indeed, immediately healed, that is, the small number of them within the Healer's reach. As to the poor, they have the good news "preached" to them. But no direct and permanent measures for the "cure of poverty" are indicated. The injunction to those who have

[1] Holtzmann, *Protest. Kirchenzeitung*, 1894, No. 45.

property, "Sell that you have, and give alms,"[1] is more radical in appearance than in reality. Obedience to it would reduce all men to a common level of poverty. The giving of alms is the most wasteful and ineffectual economic measure for the relief of the poor. It exhausts the source of charity without fertilising the waste of poverty. Interest in the needy is, indeed, a prominent feature of the "programme" of the gospel as it appears in the records; but one searches these records in vain for definite directions as to the construction of a social order that should have no "social problem."

Plainly it was not in the intention of Jesus to furnish a plan for a social order. This was as remote from his purpose as was the teaching of a system of theology. The ascribing of modern social doctrines to him proceeds upon a misconception of his purpose. The earnest and enthusiastic "Christian socialist," Naumann, furnishes an illustration of this sort of misunderstanding in attributing to Jesus opposition to capital as now held and employed in industry.[2] The great industrial social order and the beneficent uses that capital might serve in the economy of the business world lay beyond his

[1] Luke xii. 33.

[2] *Was heisst christlich Sozial.* 2te Aufl. 1896. See also Todt, *Der radicale deutsche Sozialismus*, 2te Aufl. 1878.

horizon. There is no hint in his teachings of an interest in "sociological" problems and their solution. The wonder-world of scientific discovery, of invention and machinery, the ages of iron and steel, of steam and electricity, did not lie within the scope of his idealistic vision. Principles, impulses, and inspirations he could, indeed, supply, but not polities and constitutions. The Fatherhood of God, the basis of all true religion, and the Golden Rule, the principle of the true social order, are the intuitions of a spiritual and ethical prophet. But the systems of theology and the social polities that shall embody these ideals are the product of the ages. They are born in the throes of human reason and experience. The prophet has no part in them.

It is evident, then, that the standpoint of Jesus was radically different from that of the social reformer. The method of the one cannot be that of the other. The latter seeks to accomplish his object by readjustments of social relations. He aims to change the conditions of the industrial world, the attitude of the employer toward the labourer, the relative shares of capital and labour in the product, and by various practical devices to diminish poverty and finally remove it altogether. This was not the manner of Jesus. He did not contemplate the slow

development of society and the improvement of the condition of the poor by means of a long and painful wrestling with social problems. To him the kingdom of God was at hand, and when it should come there would be no social problem.

In the message of Jesus is revealed his point of view. This message was in substance: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand."[1] The direction is given to his disciples, when he sends them out to preach, to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven or of God is about to come.[2] He regarded the power of God over the dominion of Satan, manifested in his own casting out of demons, as an evidence that His kingdom was at hand: "If by the finger of God I cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you."[3] A stronger than the strong man has come upon the prince of evil, and overcome him, and taken from him his whole armour in which he trusted.[4] The reign of evil in the world, with its accompaniment of poverty, distress, and sin, is about to come to an end, and the blessed reign of God to begin.

[1] Matt. iv. 17; cf. Mark i. 15.

[2] Matt. x. 7; Luke x. 9, 11.

[3] Luke xi. 20. Here ἔφθασεν is probably equivalent to ἤγγικεν, a translation into Greek of the same Aramaic word. See J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, 2te Aufl. p. 71.

[4] Luke xi. 21 f.

For this kingdom, this reign of God unhindered by the dominion of the power of evil, is a good, the supreme good, indeed. To those who "seek" it by directing their desires, their thought, and their will toward it, all other things regarded as good will be added.[1] Its coming is a consummation to be prayed for. It is like a treasure, a goodly pearl, to procure which one may well sacrifice all one's possessions. The righteous shall shine forth in it as the sun in heaven, while all that do iniquity shall be cast out of it. It is the place of blessedness, where the patriarchs dwell.[2]

This good, this highest good, the kingdom, is a gift of God that men may appropriate and enjoy, that they may possess, on certain conditions. It is a domain into which some may enter, and from which others are excluded, according as the former are fitted and the latter are unfitted for it. Conversion from a former evil life, the forgiveness of sins, a righteousness exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees, the spirit and temper of the child, are some of the conditions required for participation in its blessedness. Since it is the dominion of God, the godly alone can be received into it. The com-

[1] Matt. vi. 33; Luke xii. 31.
[2] Matt. vi. 10; viii. 11; xiii. 41-46.

prehensive equivalent term for all that the possession of the kingdom denotes is "life" (ζωή). To have life, to inherit life, to enter into life, are expressions synonymous with possessing or entering into the kingdom.[1]

Since the kingdom is a gift bestowed according to the "good pleasure of the Father," it is not an achievement of men. Its coming and establishment are independent of their wishes or their work. Men have only to prepare themselves to enter into it, whenever in God's chosen time it shall come as His domain and dominion. Repentance does not condition or hasten its advent. Men are exhorted to repent, not in order to bring it, but in order to be prepared to receive it. It is declared to be at hand, whether they repent or not. "The time is fulfilled," "the acceptable year of the Lord" is proclaimed. It is the part of men to repent and believe in the good tidings, and they will be received into the blessedness of the kingdom "prepared" for them "from the foundation of the world." If the publicans and harlots are on the way to enter into it before the scribes and Pharisees, it is because of their penitent mood. If it is the possession of the

[1] Matt. xix. 16; Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18. Cf. Holtzmann, *Neutest. Theol.* i. p. 204; Titius, *Die neutest. Lehre von der Seligkeit*, i. pp. 30, 34.

poor, it is because their spiritual susceptibilities have not been stifled in the sensuous enjoyments that disqualified the rich for apprehending the things that belong to the eternal life.

In his proclamation of the approach of the kingdom of God, Jesus expressed essentially the hope and ardent longing of his age. We cannot here do more than touch upon this important aspect of the subject, and cannot adduce the abundant testimony from the later Jewish literature. The proposition is hardly open to question in view of the learned researches that tend to establish it.[1] Suffice it to say that whatever new features the conception of the kingdom may have received in the teaching of Jesus, it did not originate with him. The coming of a supernatural kingdom through a divine intervention, a glorious reign of God, extending over the earth and having Palestine as its centre, introduced by a coming of the Messiah, a renewal of the world,

[1] See in particular Schürer, *Gesch. des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Christi*, 3te Aufl. ii. pp. 522–556; Toy, *Judaism and Christianity*, chap. vi.; and Schnedermann, *Reich Gottes*, 1893. "It was a religio-historical necessity that a pre-eminently religious spirit like Jesus took the Messianic domain as his point of departure. For that which he felt, willed, longed for, the kingdom of God was the appropriate, popular expression. He did not choose it, and did not create it. He accepted it as naturally and as necessarily as he spoke the language of his time."—Baldensperger, *Das Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, 1892, pp. 131 f.

a resurrection of the dead, and a judgment with æonian awards,—these are, in the main, common features of the two representations. The Messianic kingdom will be composed of a holy people. "The righteous and pious will be received into paradise," such is the Jewish conception, "and will dwell on the heights of that world, and behold the majesty of God and His holy angels."[1] New in the conception of Jesus is the profounder spiritual apprehension of the kingdom. The Fatherhood of God, the new idea of the resurrection as a state in which there should be no marriage, since those accounted worthy to attain it would be as the angels of God in heaven, and the sons of God, because sons of the resurrection, love to God and man as the fulfilment of the law, and the essentially religious character of the kingdom,—these are features of the kingdom due to the deeper spiritual insight of the great Teacher. It has accordingly been truly observed that while "in his delineation of the kingdom of God, Jesus attached himself essentially to the Jewish conception, his inner relation to this idea was a wholly altered one."[2]

In by far the greater number of passages in which the coming of the kingdom of God is

[1] Schürer, ii. p. 553. See Matt. xix. 28; xxii. 30; xxv. 31-46; Mark ix. 1; xiv. 62.

[2] Titius, *Lehre von der Seligkeit*, i. p. 40.

mentioned, this coming is spoken of as in the future, although near at hand. The intense conception of the kingdom as impending, as "at hand," sometimes leads to expressions that appear to denote its actual presence. Thus it is said by anticipation to be "in the midst" (ἐντός) of the Jews.[1] The power of Jesus over the evil one, the falling of Satan like lightning from heaven, denotes the dawn of the dominion of God in the world. But the actual coming is still in the future, and is to be prayed for as not yet realised. For it has no natural development. As "given" by God, it is not an institution of man that grows by slow accretions through human endeavour by gradually overcoming and casting out evil and fostering the good. It can be taken from one nation and given to another. It is wholly at God's disposal. Man has only to receive it, to enter in and enjoy it. It is comparable to a grain of mustard seed and leaven only as its present prospect is set over against the increased number of disciples who will be members of it when it comes in glory. It is conceived as eschatological, that is, its coming denotes the end of the old order, the present age, and the dawn of the new order, the age to come, the age of the Messiah. Regarded otherwise than this, it is an

[1] Luke xvii. 21.

historical bastard and monstrosity, and its connotation would have been unintelligible to the people whom Jesus addressed. It could have been and can be known only in its Jewish setting.

This view of the matter is supported by the passages that declare the sudden coming of the kingdom in the near future, before some of the hearers of Jesus shall have "tasted of death." It was to be seen manifested in "power." There are no signs by the observation of which one can determine the precise time of its coming, a time unknown to Jesus himself. In this sense it "cometh not with observation." It will come upon the world with such a surprise as the deluge caused in the time of Noah, or the destruction of Sodom in the days of Lot. Far from being the Messiah of a slowly evolving kingdom, the Son of Man will be "in his day" "as the lightning, [which] when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven."[1] In connection with this

[1] Mark ix. 1; Luke xvii. 21-31. We cannot here enter into the discussion of the complicated question of the meaning of the term Son of Man in the Gospels. The recent investigations by Aramaic scholars, Wellhausen, A. Meyer, Lietzmann, N. Schmidt, and others, have not cleared up the difficulties of the problem. It is in any case incontestable that the Gospels represent the Son of Man, who was to come in glory, as the one who must first "suffer many things." To reject such words as sayings of Jesus is a violent exegetical procedure that tends to discredit the records entirely.

manifestation will occur the great Messianic judgment, for, as John preached, the threshing-floor is to be cleansed, and the wheat separated from the chaff. Thus it will appear that saying "Lord, Lord," does not ensure admittance into the kingdom. But to many who have prophesied and cast out devils in the name of Jesus will he say, "in that day," "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." The "angels" will be sent to "gather out of the kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity," and to bring "the elect" of the Messiah "from the four winds."[1]

Thus by means of a divine intervention, as comes a catastrophe from heaven, the old order will pass away, the pre-Messianic age, "this age" (ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος), will suddenly come to an end, and "the age to come" (ὁ αἰὼν μέλλων) will be ushered in. The kingdom of God will descend upon the earth, and His will, as it is done in heaven, will be done here below. The Messiah will descend from heaven and sit in judgment upon "all nations," separating between the righteous, "the blessed of the Father," and the wicked, the "cursed," doomed to the æonian fire, "prepared for the devil and his angels." Corresponding to this new spiritual order, there will be estab-

[1] Matt. iii. 12; xiii. 41; Mark xiii. 27.

lished a new physical order in the παλιγγενεσία or re-creation, the restoration of the earth to the condition in which it was believed to be before the fall of Adam, "which the Jews looked for in connection with the advent of the Messiah, and which the primitive Christians expected in connection with the visible return of Jesus from heaven."[1]

It is evident that such a point of view must radically affect the social perspective of one who occupies it, and from it looks forth upon the world. A belief in the impending end of the existing world-order excludes the occupation with plans and policies for the remote future. He who looks for the immediate collapse of the social order will not engage in the solution of social problems. The sword of the swift judgment about to come will cut these Gordian knots. Hence the limitations of the scope of the beatitudes. Since the kingdom of God is about to come, they are "blessed" who are approximately in the mood to receive it, most likely to "repent and believe in the good tidings." Such

[1] See Thayer's *Lexicon*, *sub voce* παλιγγενεσία and Matt. xix. 28; xxv. 31-46. The so-called "apocalyptic" interpretation of the kingdom of God is elaborately defended in several recent works, among which may be mentioned those of J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, 1900; Baldensperger, *Das Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, 1892; and Schmoller, *Die Lehre vom Reiche Gottes*, 1891. See also Bossuet, *Die Predigt Jesu*, etc.

are the meek, the poor, the persecuted for righteousness, the pure in heart, the peace-makers. Here the exclusions are significant. To one looking back through the historic struggles of nineteen centuries this list appears, to say the least, anything but exhaustive. If the judgment of history has not reversed that of these beatitudes, it has at any rate been more comprehensive. It includes among the "blessed" the men who by interpreting nature have made science serve the welfare of man, who have founded states, made war in the interest of liberty, interpreted the law in behalf of justice, interpreted human life by philosophic or poetic insight, and even by means of riches established beneficent industries. From the point of view of an idealist, a prophet, to whom nineteen centuries ago the world was old and hastening to its doom, the beatitudes of the Gospels are the sublime expression of a faith in the salvation of what could then be saved. But the world was not old, and its youthful vigour has justified a different horoscope of the future of humanity.

A view of the future controlled by the conviction that the end of the age is at hand, and accordingly taking no account of the conditions and exigencies of a protracted social development, is indicated in a series of injunctions respecting non-resistance. The teach-

ing that evil, or he that is evil, is not to be resisted; that one must not defend oneself against assault, but rather turn the other cheek when the right cheek is smitten; that a borrower should not be refused; that another garment should be given to him who takes a man's coat; and that one should not ask one's goods of a man who takes them away,[1]—these are injunctions that are, to say the least, not adapted to an orderly society, founded upon respect for the person, the rights, and the property of its members. They present an exegetical difficulty only to one who regards them as ethical teachings of universal application. One so regarding them may resort to an explanation that refers them to Oriental modes of speech or to hyperbole. But one does not thus do justice to the mood out of which the words were spoken. For after allowance has been made for Oriental exaggeration, the principle of non-resistance to evil or to the evil man remains. The teaching did not relate to the foundation of a permanent social order, but to preparation for the impending kingdom of God. It was not addressed to men whose abiding place was in this age, but to men who stood in the evening twilight of the pre-Messianic age, and looked toward the dawn of the glorious æon that was to come.

[1] Matt. v. 39-42; Luke vi. 29, 30.

The teaching that enjoins indifference to the things of this world, food, and clothing, requires a similar interpretation. The idea is that solicitude about what one shall eat or wear is incompatible with preparation for the kingdom of God. He who is striving for this should have unlimited confidence in God. The heavenly Father, who cares for the birds, and clothes the lilies with more than royal splendour, knows that those to whom it is His good pleasure to give the kingdom "have need of all these things," and that they are of more value than the birds. Let "the gentiles" seek for these temporal things. He is "of little faith" who asks with solicitude what he shall eat or wherewithal he shall be clothed. Let him seek the kingdom, and the needed food and raiment "will be added" to him.[1] Such words are not adapted to the practical life of men, and must not be regarded as spoken with a view to regulating it. They are the sublime expressions of the profoundest religious mood. The ancient, indomitable trust of Israel in Yahweh is uttered again in these words of its greatest spiritual Son—the faith that if the people

[1] Matt. vi. 25-34. "Since the least event in nature does not happen apart from the effective action of God, and does not take its course without Him, the disciple has no need to take anxious thought or to be afraid."—Lütgert, *Das Reich Gottes*, 1895, p. 166.

walk in the statutes of God, all material blessings will be poured in abundance upon them, "rains in their season," the increase of the land, the fruits of the trees, so that they "shall eat their bread to the full," and dwell in safety in the land.[1]

The entire ethical teaching of Jesus cannot, however, be correctly represented as having been controlled by this eschatological conception. He did not always speak as the prophet of judgment with reference to the end of the age and the impending kingdom of God. The shadow of the approaching catastrophe appears to be sometimes lifted, the intense and sombre mood of prophetic ecstasy passes, and words come from his lips that proceed from the clearest ethical insight, and that are of permanent and universal validity. Such are the sayings that the lustful thought is adulterous; that the evil that proceeds out of the heart of a man is corrupting; that the two great principles of love to God and one's neighbour include all that the law enjoins, and that to "live" is to observe these requirements. Such is the teaching that the kindness of the Father to the unthankful and the evil is the right disposition of men, and such is the spirit at least of the injunction that protects woman against

[1] Lev. xxvi. 3 f.; Psa. civ. 14 f.; Jer. xxxi. 28.

man's "hardness of heart," to which the old law made concessions.[1] Thus there are two sides of his teaching that must be taken into account in making up a complete judgment of its contents, two points of view from which he looked at the world, two moods out of which he spoke—the mood of the prophet of the kingdom of God and the mood of the ethical teacher.

The two series of sayings, delivered from these two standpoints, must be separately regarded and estimated. The one series is controlled by immediate reference to the coming kingdom, the other has no reference to it. We cannot, then, with a recent writer, "adopt the paradoxical conclusion that the kingdom of God had to Jesus both significations, that of a future and that of a present state."[2] The kingdom that was to come "with power" was present to him only in the intense realisation of it as "at hand." Its coming denoted nothing less than a rupture of the existing world-order. "God Himself, not human hands, establishes the kingdom. A transformation of the world takes place that not only changes the nature of man, but also extends to inanimate nature, and draws even the heavens into

[1] Matt. v. 28; Mark vii. 21; x. 11; xii. 29 f.; Luke vi. 35 f.; x. 26 f.

[2] Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, 1900, p. 100.

its domain."[1] Such an event can be proclaimed only with the intense earnestness of the prophet.

This is the mood in which Jesus is represented in the Gospels as speaking when the kingdom of God is in question. Often does every other consideration, every other motive, give place to this dominant idea, to the one thought and motive in the presence of which all others are insignificant. The foremost proclamation, that of repentance, is set in the lurid light of the impending catastrophe: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel!"[2] Repentance is enjoined, because a change of mind (*μετάνοια*) is the indispensable condition of sharing in the blessedness of the kingdom. In the presence of the mighty urgency of this motive all others remain unexpressed. The omission to mention other grounds for the

[1] Titius, *Die neutest. Lehre von der Seligkeit*, i. p. 48. "The kingdom in which all wrong and rigour of the present will be compensated for, and in which a total reversal of the existing situation will be effected, belongs to the future. In this sense it is and remains eschatological. Of its reality those disciples will be able to convince themselves who shall see the Son of Man come, and with him his kingdom."—Holtzmann, *Neutest. Theol.* i. p. 224. "In the language and thought of Jesus, world and the kingdom of God are absolutely irreconcilable opposites: the world must pass away in order to give place to the kingdom of God."—J. Weiss, *Die Nachfolge Christi und die Predigt der Gegenwart*, 1895, p. 168.

[2] Matt. iv. 17; Mark i. 15.

preaching of repentance is significant, and denotes, when this saying is contrasted with the present ethical-religious proclamation of the gospel, the distance that separates the modern preacher of Christianity from the Prophet of Nazareth. A similar intensity, in view of the coming great event that was to shake the world, is evident in the announcement relating to the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, and those of Jerusalem on whom the tower in Siloam fell: "I tell you, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,"[1] that is, in the impending Messianic judgment. A motive of fear in view of a fearful catastrophe!

The two opposite points of view already indicated are illustrated in the teachings ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels regarding the relations of men in the family. On the one hand, we have the purely ethical precepts touching the sanctity of marriage in which the lustful feeling toward a woman (even a wife, according to Tolstoi's interpretation) is declared to be sinful, and divorce for the purpose of remarriage is absolutely forbidden,[2] together with the recognition

[1] Luke xiii. 1-5.

[2] Mark x. 11; Luke xvi. 18. These two evangelists agree against Matthew in reporting an unqualified prohibition of divorce. The presumption is in favour of the originality of their account of

of the duty of children toward their parents.[1] On the other hand, the intense mood of the prophet of the kingdom of God is conspicuous in the indifference to family ties manifested in the answer when told that his mother and brothers were standing without and wishing to see him.[2] The record does not inform us whether or no Jesus made any other response than the one reported to the request of his family to see him. It certainly does not tell us that he did, and we are not authorised in drawing any inferences not supported by the account as it stands. The feelings of family affection and of filial piety are rudely repudiated in the refusal to permit one who wished to follow him to take leave of his family and another to bury his father. He that loves father or mother more than him is not worthy of him. A renunciation that is intensified to the impossible, if not to the monstrous, is demanded in the declaration that no one can be his disciple who does not "hate" his own father and

the matter, while Matthew's qualification, *παρεκτὸς λόγου πορνείας* and *μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ*, is doubtless a concession to a sense of the too great strictness of the requirement (Matt. v. 32; xix. 9).

[1] Mark vii. 10-13.

[2] Mark iii. 33 ff. The refusal to respond to the wish of his mother that is plainly implied would be most unfilial in one whom the urgency of the mission of the kingdom of God had not wrought to the highest intensity. Indeed, the family of Jesus thought him "beside himself" (Mark iii. 21).

mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters.[1] These words were spoken out of the exalted mood that prompted the harsh rebuke addressed to Peter, when he tried to dissuade Jesus from making the supreme sacrifice: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me." They remind us of the promise of eternal life or the blessedness of the kingdom to those who had left house or wife or brethren or parents for its sake, and of the doom of exclusion pronounced upon the man who had married a wife, and hence declined the invitation to the great supper.[2] The separation from the interests and ties of "this age" must be absolute in the case of those who would be prepared for the "age to come." Either God or Mammon! One cannot serve two masters.

[1] Luke xiv. 26.

[2] Luke xiv. 20; xviii. 29.

CHAPTER IV

THE TEACHING IN MATTHEW

THE foregoing considerations indicate the point of view from which the sayings of Jesus about earthly possessions, riches and poverty, rich and poor, that are recorded in the Gospels, are to be interpreted. Just as the words about the kingdom of God are misconceived when they are regarded apart from their historical setting, so those relating to what we now call the social question are misunderstood when torn from the connection of thought that determined them. This averment will not be disputed by any one who considers the fact that in this connection of thought there was no social question. The interests and aims that occupied the thought of Jesus lay in the realm of religion, and not at all in that of "sociology." Naumann, who is not always judicious, lays down a correct principle when he

says that we should not seek in Jesus a theory of political economy.[1]

We need not pause upon the discussion of the question whether the words of Jesus that are to be considered were spoken with reference to the end of the age, that is, eschatologically, or with a view to salvation.[2] For the two points of view are not in principle widely different, since salvation, historically understood, is a state of preparedness for the kingdom of God, which was to come at the end of the age. Salvation being conceived as eschatological, it is evident that the soteriological and the eschatological conceptions are two names for essentially one and the same way of looking at the world. By whatever name it may be called, the important matter to be kept in mind is that it was a religious, and not a "sociological" way of looking at the world.

Disregard of these considerations leads to the sin against exegesis that is committed when there are read into the words in question meanings that were not in the mind of him who spoke them. Thus it is apparently the purpose of a recent German

[1] *Jesus als Volksmann*, 1894, p. 4.

[2] The former view is defended by J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu*, and the latter by Titius, *Die neutest. Lehre von der Seligkeit.*

writer[1] to make Jesus speak like a modern social reformer, disposed to conciliate the rich. Accordingly, Jesus' requirement to sell all and give alms is interpreted to mean that the disciple of the Master must have the "inward disposition" of benevolence, the willingness to make self-sacrifice.[2] This is to err as much in one direction as Naumann errs in another, when he understands Jesus to speak like a "Christian-social" reformer of the nineteenth century.

It is characteristic of the method of Dr. Jacoby, who is here considered as a representative of a class of interpreters, that he endeavours to minimise the prominence given to the poor as the special objects of Jesus' mission by asserting that the rich were as well the objects of it, although not mentioned as such. On the contrary, the answer sent to John as an indication that might satisfy him with respect to the Messiahship, "The poor have the gospel preached to them," is decisive as to the primary intention of the mission of Jesus. It is doubtless legitimate to infer from what is otherwise known of Jesus that no rich man who could fulfil the conditions of discipleship, if such an achievement were possible,

[1] H. Jacoby, *Jesus Christus und die irdischen Güter*, 1875, and *Neutest. Ethik*, 1899.

[2] *Neutest. Ethik*, p. 140 f. See Pfleiderer in *Protest. Monatshefte*, 1900, Heft 4, p. 134.

would be excluded from the kingdom of God. But this matter is quite apart from the question, What class of people do the Gospels represent as primarily the objects of Jesus' mission? His sympathies as well as his superiority to the legalistic prejudices of the time are indicated by the fact that he sat at table with persons who in the estimation of the Pharisees were unfit to be their associates, and who were objects of scorn to the rich and powerful among the Jews. In answer to the question addressed by the Pharisees to his disciples why he did this,[1] he said that "the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." While the self-righteous Pharisees must be regarded as affected with moral sickness equally with those legally unclean persons who were the objects of their contempt, the answer can be interpreted only as denoting that his mission was especially to the latter.[2]

[1] Matt. ix. 11 f.; Mark ii. 16 f.

[2] "To Jesus the dangers of riches to the moral-religious life seemed greater than the dangers of poverty. Hence his sharp words against the deceitfulness of riches. In this lowering of property to its true value, the attitude of Jesus toward its possessors must necessarily become peculiar. Whoever so unsparingly as Jesus attacks the respect for riches cannot at any time escape the charge of being an enemy of the rich and of inciting the people against them. Accordingly, Jesus was censured as a friend of publicans and sinners, and how much part in the charge that he was a blasphemer the ill-humour at his words in opposition to the rich may have had cannot be determined."—Kambli, *Das*

The sympathy with "sinners" on the part of a free spirit, irreconcilably hostile to the ritual traditions of the time, was a natural expression of the personality of Jesus. For many of these so-called "sinners" were simply the poor who were unable to bear the burdens imposed by the costly ceremonial of the temple-service. Unwilling to be "praised as poor, but actually treated as beggars," they "simply threw off the yoke of the law," because submission to it was incompatible with their existence. But to live without the observance of the law was in the opinion of the leading classes among the Jews equivalent to being a "sinner." "Accursed" is the term applied in the fourth Gospel to the people that "know not the law.[1] "The man of slender means, the mechanic, the day-labourer, especially the peasant, who should venture to make the attempt, must very soon find that such requirements as those concerning the Sabbath and purification bade defiance to the best will."[2] What more natural than that Jesus, himself the son of a mechanic, should have been especially drawn toward these people, who were of all men

Eigenthum im Licht des Evangeliums, 1882, in "Wissenschaftl. Vorträge über religiöse Fragen, 5te Samml. p. 61.

[1] John vii. 49. See Holtzmann, *Neutest. Theol.* i. p. 136.

[2] Brandt, *Die evangelische Geschichte und der Ursprung des Christenthums*, 1893, p. 464.

most likely to receive with joy the "good tidings"? From the Pharisaic point of view, that of legal righteousness, these poor, these sinners, could have no part in the kingdom of God. They were "the lost." It was just such persons that Jesus thought it his mission to seek and to save. He knew a better righteousness than that of the scribes and Pharisees, and saw in these social outcasts a capacity for it. Let them come to him and find rest, these heavy-laden, from the intolerable burden of the hollow righteousness of unfruitful ritual and ceremony. In espousing their cause he was following the example of the prophets.

The favourable and kindly disposition of Jesus toward poverty and his antipathy to wealth are indicated in his keen sense of the perils and temptations of the latter and his disregard of the moral dangers and disadvantages of the former.[1] The cares and solicitudes, the burdens and anxieties of poverty may well be regarded as impediments to the spiritual life. Chains of iron may bind a man to the earth as well as chains of gold. There is, however, no record of any word spoken by Jesus of the temptations of poverty. Perhaps the pathetic helplessness of the poor man's condition restrained him

[1] Titius calls attention to this fact, and after him Jacoby.

from speaking any word of warning against its dangers. The rich might, if they would, escape the perils of their riches by giving them as alms to the poor. His ministry was primarily to the poor, for the reason doubtless that he saw in them a disposition more favourable to receive it and make it fruitful than that of the rich. Those to whom the present age furnished so little joy and such meagre consolation might well receive with alacrity the "good tidings" of the age to come, might "repent, and believe in the good news."

Accordingly, a beatitude is pronounced upon the poor, because to their advantage the kingdom of God would come. In Matthew we have the addition or so-called "gloss," "in spirit" (τῷ πνεύματι). The most natural sense of the words is poverty of spiritual capacity—the very opposite of fitness for the kingdom. Commentators have not been able to agree as to their interpretation. "Destitute of the wealth of learning and intellectual culture which the schools afford," and "conscious of their spiritual need," are meanings to which the words do not naturally yield themselves. They appear to be an "explanatory addition" that does not explain.[1] A

[1] A reason for thinking that the words τῷ πνεύματι did not stand in some of the ancient manuscripts is found in the fact that

good reason for regarding them as a gloss from the hand of the evangelist or of an editor or even of a copyist is that the passage without them has a natural place in the historical course of thought and in the Jewish literature. For as B. Weiss remarks on the passage, "It was the poor who according to the promise of the Old Testament had to expect the Messianic blessedness, because among the poor and wretched of the people the genuine theocratic piety had been best preserved."

It is doubtless correct to say that Matthew's gloss "spiritualises Jesus' saying too much," while it may be questioned whether, if the words are in fact a gloss, one is justified in giving to the beatitude the meaning, "Blessed are the poor who are humble to a degree corresponding to their poverty."[1] Whoever may be responsible for the τῷ πνεύματι, the words convey the opinion that Jesus did not intend to pronounce a blessing upon poverty and degradation as such, but upon the poverty that yields spiritual fruits, perhaps those of humility and self-sacrifice. This opinion may have the weight that belongs to an ancient interpretation of the original saying. The

Polycarp, who otherwise "shows undeniably reference to Matthew," quotes the beatitude without them. See Titius, p. 75.

[1] Titius, p. 76, so renders it.

fact that Luke reports the beatitude without the explanatory words presents a difficulty to the interpreter in which theories of the sources furnish no help. If the beatitude stood in the source common to both Gospels, the collection of the sayings of Jesus, we have no data for determining whether its primitive form was that of Luke or that of Matthew.[1] The criticism of the text has, however, derived by induction the principle that readings, the tendency of which is to remove difficulties, soften a harsh saying, or "spiritualise" a passage are to be suspected.[2] If, on the other hand, the two versions were derived from two independent sources, it is difficult to determine which should have the preference. On the ground, however, of Jesus' formal declaration both in Matthew and Luke that

[1] See the writer's article on "The Synoptic Question" in *The New World* for September 1900, p. 531 f.

[2] Dr. Peabody does not, however, accept this critical principle: "Of the two readings, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' and 'Blessed are ye poor,' it is on the face of things not likely that the peculiar depth and beauty of the truth which the first passage expresses should be a gloss upon the superficial, not to say questionable, teaching of the second passage" (*Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, 1900, p. 195). "The peculiar depth and beauty" of Matthew's version are not, however, apparent in view of the uncertainty as to the meaning of the words τῷ πνεύματι. Whether, moreover, Luke's version is a "superficial, not to say questionable, teaching," the reader must judge, and may perhaps be helped to a right judgment by the foregoing considerations as to Jesus' attitude toward the poor.

his mission was to the "poor" without any such qualification as "in spirit," it is at least probable that these words did not stand in the beatitude as originally spoken.

The beatitudes in Matthew have been characterised as more inward and spiritual than those in Luke. The blessing upon those that "hunger now" in Luke does not appear in Matthew, but instead of it we read here, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Whether such variations are due to different sources or to a tendency to "spiritualise" on the part of the writer of Matthew or of an editor of the Gospel is altogether a matter of conjecture. In any case, although in Matthew are wanting the harsh words against the rich, this Gospel has preserved no compensating beatitude for the rich. There is nowhere an indication that Jesus looked with favour upon riches or upon their possessors as having any affinity for the kingdom of God. The rich men of his time doubtless showed in general no qualities that could commend them to his favourable judgment. Zaccheus, however, who gave half his goods to the poor, appears, according to Luke, to have been honoured with his commendation. Not even between the lines of the records is there an indication that the beneficent uses for the poor that

wealth may be made to serve in an industrial and commercial age lay within the scope of his vision. Riches and rich men, as he knew them, belonged to the *αἰὼν οὗτος*, the pre-Messianic age, which was full of wickedness. He saw that wealth bound men to "this age," and destroyed the sense for the things of the age to come, the age of the kingdom of God; and this point of view determined his attitude toward it. His interests, intensely religious as they were, lay beyond the critical line that the hopes of his time drew between the two great world-periods. "He lived in the conviction that yet only a little while would this world take its further course, that soon the curtain would be rolled up that separated the present time from eternity." [1]

Accordingly, we have respecting riches the unqualified prohibition, preserved in Matthew alone: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal, for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also." [2] Here the

[1] Bossuet, *Die Predigt Jesu in ihrem Gegensatz zum Judenthum*, 1892, p. 68.

[2] Matt. vi. 19-21.

reason given for not laying up treasures upon earth, but for laying them up rather in heaven, indicates the point of view, and gives the key to the interpretation. The danger to the treasure from moth and rust and thieves is only an incidental matter. The important matter is that the heart follows the treasure. He whose heart is bound by riches to this doomed old world is unfitted for the new celestial order about to come. He has not the mood of the kingdom of God, the faith in the Father that takes no thought for the morrow, the earnest expectation of the new age of eternal life. He cares for none of these things, because he feels no need of them, filled as he is with his sensuous enjoyments. The dominant note is here plainly religious; or call it eschatological, if you will. It is both. To Jesus the two were one. For to him the kingdom of God was the supreme religious good. They who seek this first will have all temporal goods "added to" them without "taking thought" for them.[1]

As religious, then, let the *motif* of these words be regarded. It is hence not "sociological." Jesus spoke of wealth as he saw it—a canker consuming the souls of men, not of wealth as it might become in a different social order from that of his

[1] Matt. vi. 33.

time—"a means to moral ends, the foundation of an ethical life-work, the instrument of good, wholesome activity in the service of the God of mankind." It is no contribution to the understanding of these words about laying up treasures to say, as Jacoby does, that "a gathering of earthly goods for ethical purposes, accompanied by a mood of freedom, would not have been disapproved of by Jesus." We are not concerned with what Jesus would say as a professor of theology and ethics in the twentieth century, with the opinions about possessions, capital, and trade that he might entertain if he lived in our time, and had the views of the world that pertain to it. Dr. Jacoby, however, concedes that the accumulation of wealth in a "mood of freedom" from its enchantments lay outside the relations that Jesus was judging.[1] The reader who expects from him a "scientific exegesis" cannot, despite this concession, but be surprised to find in the immediate connection the assertion: "That Jesus actually forbade only a qualified laying up of treasures, a laying up that recognises in earthly possessions a supreme good, we learn from the prohibition of a double service." But what Jesus says about the two-fold service, that of God and Mammon, can have no other meaning in

[1] *Neutest. Ethik*, p. 134.

the context of the passage forbidding the accumulation of earthly possessions than that just this accumulation, without qualification, is incompatible with such a service of God as he deemed essential from his religious point of view. "Scientific exegesis" is not promoted by reading into the solemn words of Jesus such a qualification as, "Every laying up of treasures is forbidden by Jesus, in which the obligation to serve God alone is prejudiced, but only such a one." In fact, such an accumulation "lay outside the relations that he was judging."

The contention is doubtless sound that Jesus did not regard the possession of earthly goods as unqualifiedly sinful,[1] if it be required in order to establish the affirmative to indicate a passage in which such a declaration is directly made. If, however, one cannot innocently hold possessions that prejudice one's salvation, that is, the attainment of the blessed life of the kingdom of God, we have not far to seek in the Gospels to find an unmistakable attitude as to this matter. In the solemn hour at Cæsarea Philippi Jesus said to his disciples: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would

[1] Rogge, *Der irdische Besitz im neuen Test.* p. 55.

save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"[1] Here the fearful implication is unmistakable that the gaining of vast possessions imperils the soul or the life pertaining to the kingdom. This reference is vividly indicated by the words that immediately follow: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds."

The hindrance of riches to the attainment of the kingdom is more explicitly declared in Jesus' answer to the rich man who had kept the commandments and yet asked what he should do to inherit eternal life: "If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." The key to the interpretation of this passage is the motive

[1] Matt. xvi. 24-26. The rendering of the revised version, "life," is here misleading. "In the pointed aphorisms of Christ . . . εὑρίσκειν, σώζειν, ἀπολλύναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, designate as ψυχή in one of the antithetic members *the life that is lived on earth;* in the others, *the life in the eternal kingdom of God:* Matt. x. 39; xvi. 25 f.; Mark viii. 35-37; Luke ix. 24, 25; xvii. 33."—Thayer's *Lexicon, sub vocc* ψυχή. The revised version renders ψυχή "soul" in Luke xxi. 19; 2 Cor. xii. 15; and Heb. x. 39.

of the young man's question. He wished to know what he must do in order to "inherit eternal life." This is equivalent to asking how he might become a sharer in the blessedness of the Messianic kingdom that was the object of the ardent hopes of his people. There is no intimation in his question that he wished to become an immediate follower of Jesus. The answer is precisely fitted to the question: "If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure [reward] in heaven."[1] The version in Mark, "One thing thou lackest," is to the same effect, that is, one thing is wanting to thy perfection or qualification for the kingdom of God. The injunction, "Come, follow me," does not necessarily imply that the man should join himself to Jesus as a disciple, but may mean that he should "cleave steadfastly" to him, or "follow his example."[2]

That the case of this rich man, moreover, was exceptional in the sense that there was reason for making the requirement of him that would not apply to others of his class, is not intimated in the passage or in its connection. Rather the injunction to sell his goods and give to the poor appears to come under the general principle of renunciation expressed in

[1] Matt. xix. 16-25; Mark x. 17-26.

[2] Matt. x. 38; xvi. 24; John xii. 26. See Thayer's *Lexicon*, *sub voce* ἀκολουθέω.

the commandment: "If thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee; it is good for thee to enter into life [in the kingdom of God] maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire."[1] For not a special case, but a general principle, is plainly in question in the sequel, where Jesus declares of all men of the class to which this man belonged: "Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."[2] To the lust, materialism, and selfishness of

[1] Matt. xviii. 8; Mark ix. 45, 47.

[2] Wendt remarks on this incident that, "If we take into account Jesus' general religious view and his pregnant manner of expressing himself, we must judge that in these rough requirements of renunciation he only wished to give the sharpest possible expression to the principle that his disciples must rank heavenly goods absolutely above those of the earth, and in a conflict of their tasks in the kingdom of God with earthly goods they must unconditionally give up the latter in order not to lose the heavenly" (*Das Eigenthum nach Christlicher Beurtheilung*, 1898, p. 100 f.). By this interpretation, however, the scope of Jesus' words is unwarrantably extended. In other words, there is read into them a thought that is altogether foreign to their original purpose. He was not speaking of heavenly and earthly goods in respect to their relation to one another, or of the subordination of the latter to the former. In fact, there is no question of *property* in general in the passage, but only of *wealth* and its perils. Neither is there any hint of a conflict between earthly goods and duties *in the kingdom of God*. The one and only concern is the admittance into the kingdom. To this wealth constitutes an obstacle that man cannot overcome.

his time, Jesus proclaimed the eternal law of the spirit, "Through death to life!" He who would find the eternal life of the kingdom of God must lose the life that belongs to the world. Both no one could have, and the fateful choice must be made. One master only! Just as the offending eye must be plucked out, and the offending hand or foot cut off, if one would enter into the light and glory of the kingdom rather than be cast into the outer darkness, so the offending riches must be cast aside in the great renunciation. For their possessors can find admission to the blessedness of the glorious æon about to come only by a miracle of divine intervention. "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

From a reluctance to admit that Jesus required rich men to dispossess themselves of their wealth as a preparation for the kingdom of God, some of the scholars who have discussed this subject have endeavoured to show that he taught how riches may be "inwardly overcome."[1] The parable of the

[1] So Rogge, *Der irdische Besitz*, p. 56 f. Dr. Peabody finds in Jesus' teaching "indications of those employments of money that make for the purposes of the kingdom" (*Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, pp. 217 ff.). Money could certainly not contribute to the *advent* of the kingdom of God, so far as we learn from Jesus' words anything about the manner of its coming. It was already "at hand," and might, indeed, at most be prayed for. After it

talents[1] has been interpreted in this interest as relating to the right employment of earthly possessions, and teaching that he who makes a good use of the goods entrusted to him receives more because he has shown himself efficient in the service of God. "Thus worldly goods serve the purposes of the kingdom of God, and only he who makes them fruitful to this end can in truth increase them."[2] This application of the parable, however, proceeds upon a misinterpretation of it. The teaching of the parable is simply fidelity and responsibility to God in view, as appears from the context both in Matthew and Luke, of the great accounting at the end of the age. The money given to the servants and the use made of it are the illustrative material of the parable. If the use of wealth be regarded as the leading thought, then all else must be subordinated to that teaching, and the lesson becomes simply that one ought to strive for riches! He who doubles his wealth receives the divine approval! He who does not strive for riches is cast into the outer darkness! On the contrary, the true sense of the parable, as stated by

should have come, would they who should be "accounted worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead," the ἰσάγγελοι, living in the glory of the παλιγγενεσία, have any use for money?

[1] Matt. xxv. 14-30.

[2] B. Weiss, *Leben Jesu*, ii. 69.

the most competent expounder of this sort of teaching, is: "Reward is given only for performances. He alone who makes the best use of God's gifts may count on receiving the highest and last gift. Doing nothing excludes, despite all excuses, from the kingdom of heaven."[1]

Jesus' words regarding the use of the precious ointment on the occasion of the anointing in Bethany have been thought to denote his attitude toward the employment of wealth.[2] The question of the disciples, "To what purpose is this waste?" denoting a narrow mind without susceptibility for the touching devotion of the woman, is answered by Jesus with a mild reproof. Thereby he expressed the response of a beautiful soul to the charming adoration lavished upon him. That he could have mingled with this precious incense a thought about the uses of money is incredible. Yet Rogge is moved to remark that by his rebuke of the disciples Jesus "ennobled an employment of money and possessions that at the first sight appears rather as a luxury and useless than

[1] Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, 1899, p. 495. The commendation of the faithful servants was not bestowed because they had used wealth for "purposes that make for the kingdom," as if the doubling of their money could contribute to this end, but for their *fidelity*.

[2] Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9. The view mentioned in the text is taken by Rogge, and after him by Peabody.

useful, but that is really to be measured by another standard.[1] Dr. Peabody, not to be outdone by his German predecessor in this sort of interpretation, finds here "the charter of all undertakings that propose in the name of Christ to feed the mind, to stir the imagination, to quicken the emotions, to make life less meagre, less animal, less dull." Thus "all expenditure of money on art, on education, on music . . . rests on the explicit authority of Jesus Christ."[2] To draw such far-reaching conclusions from Jesus' acceptance of the affectionate devotion of a woman and his rebuke of the insensibility and ineptness that could intrude upon such a scene with reflections about economy, is to put a severe strain upon legitimate biblical interpretation.

Whatever may now be thought of almsgiving by those who have thoroughly studied the social question, Jesus evidently regarded it as meritorious. It was good for the soul of a rich man to get rid of his wealth in this way. The man of "great possessions," who had kept the commandments from his youth, is told that by selling his goods and giving the money to the poor he might become "perfect." To do this was to supply the one thing lacking to

[1] *Der irdische Besitz*, p. 61. But where in the story is anything of the kind so much as intimated?

[2] *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, pp. 220 ff.

his fitness for "eternal life" in the kingdom of God. If he did not do this, he could be "saved" only by a miracle. It were easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for him to enter into the kingdom. Nothing is said of the effect of such a disposal of riches upon the poor or upon society at large. No account appears to have been taken of this matter. Rather the indications are that the direction sprang out of a spontaneous sympathy for the poor, so far as the destination of the hindrance to be got rid of is concerned, and was not based upon any well-considered method of beneficence.

In the later Judaism, almsgiving assumed so much importance that it came to be synonymous with "righteousness," and a "propitiatory virtue" was ascribed to it. Accordingly, in writings nearly contemporary with Jesus are found such sayings as: "Shut up mercy[1] in thy treasuries, and it shall deliver thee from all affliction"; "Alms delivereth from death."[2] Similar ideas abound in the later Jewish ethics: "Through alms a man becomes a partaker of eternal life"; "He who gives alms is regarded as one who has fulfilled all commandments," and many more of like character.[3] No saying of

[1] ἐλεημοσύνην. [2] Ecclus. xxix. 12; Tobit iv. 10.
[3] See Weber, *Die jüdische Theologie*, 1897, pp. 284 ff.

precisely the import of these is ascribed to Jesus, although the idea of attaining perfection by selling one's goods and giving the proceeds to the poor borders upon it. The thought of a relation of man to God of the nature of a compact, according to which a man might by almsgiving buy himself the privilege of indulgence, was foreign to him. He regarded good works as the spontaneous fruit of trust and love. To be kind like God was the highest achievement.

It is worthy of note that we find no other use of riches recommended by Jesus than just this of almsgiving. By means of it, according to the passage in Luke[1] already referred to in a foregoing chapter, the followers of Jesus might procure for themselves "a treasure in heaven that faileth not," that is, goods in the kingdom of God that would be put to their account as a reward for their beneficence. Thus by selling that they have and giving alms they separate their heart from "this age" and place it where their treasure is, in "the age to come." In Matthew almsgiving is recognised and regulated so far as ostentation in the act is forbidden. "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." The alms given in secret the "Father who seeth in secret"

[1] Chap. xii. 33.

will note, and will "recompense" the giver.[1] Almsgiving has, accordingly, the divine approval, and the divine recompense will be given in the kingdom of God.

A dramatic representation of the Messianic judgment at the end of the age upon those who have done works of beneficence and those who have neglected to do them is given by the writer of Matthew.[2] While he has doubtless not reproduced actual words of Jesus, the fundamental thought of the passage corresponds to the saying about the certain reward for a cup of cold water.[3] The curtain is rolled up, behind which lie all the terrors and all the ecstasies of the close of the great drama of "this age." The Son of Man has come in his glory with all the

[1] Matt. vi. 1-4. "Always and everywhere in Christianity the benevolent giving of possessions to the distressed has been regarded as a specific proof of Christian love. This is quite right. The spontaneous, helping Christian love that asks no questions about right and requital is especially manifested in the gift of benevolence. But is the duty of placing one's possessions wholly in the service of love fulfilled in almsgiving? May we regard the greatest intensifying of this sort of giving as the Christian ideal? No. Almsgiving must be kept within certain limits, not because Christian love should be limited, but because Christian love itself prescribes these limits" (Wendt, *Das Eigenthum nach Christlicher Beurtheilung*, 1898, p. 119). The "limits" are, however, read into the teaching of Jesus. They are not even implied in the injunction to sell what one has and give alms (Luke xii. 33). The difference is manifest between the actual teaching of Jesus and the modifications of it that reflection and experience lead men to make.

[2] Chap. xxv. 31-46. [3] Matt. x. 42.

angels, and is seated upon the throne of his glory. All nations are gathered before him, and he separates them one from another. On his right hand are placed the "blessed" of his Father, who are to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. On his left hand are the "cursed," who are to be consigned to the eternal fire. What is the principle of the fateful separation? What is the standard of the æonian judgment? The declaration at the beginning of the Gospel that the good news was for the poor, the sick, and the prisoners is confirmed at the end of it amidst the lurid terrors of the great assize. The "blessed" are those alone who have been kind to the "brethren" of the Judge, "even these least," who have given them food when hungry, clothed them when naked, visited them when sick or in prison, offered them a cup of water when thirsty, or opened the door of hospitality to them as strangers. Those on the left hand, doomed to exclusion from the kingdom, having no inheritance in it, because they have laid up no treasures there, are such as have neglected these ministrations of charity. The selfish, the worldly, the hard-hearted—these are the chaff that the terrible winnowing-shovel prophesied by John separates from the wheat garnered for the blessedness of the age to

come. If any one thinks this to be an incomplete, one-sided judgment, let him reflect that the picture intensifies an aspect of the mission of Jesus that lay very near his heart—the proclaiming of the good news to the unfortunate children of men to whom unpitying fate or a heartless world had denied every other consolation.

CHAPTER V

THE TEACHING IN LUKE

MENTION has been made in a foregoing chapter of the intensification in Luke of some of Jesus' sayings regarding the rich and poor recorded in Matthew, together with the fact that the former Gospel has considerable material relating to the social question that is not found in the latter. The fact that, besides this particular material, Luke has narratives, parables, and sayings of Jesus that are not in the first Gospel, leads to the conclusion that the author of it had a source or sources not employed by the writer of Matthew. There can be no reasonable doubt, as has already been pointed out, that one of his sources was characterised by a decided sympathy with poverty and antipathy to wealth. A question arises here that fascinates the student by its elusive character—that of the comparative credibility of this source. The interest in this question is intensified when we

find different reports of the same sayings in the two records, such as are the conflicting recensions of the Sermon on the Mount.

There is little prospect of a satisfactory solution of the problem here presented. If, for example, the two beatitudes, "Blessed are ye poor" (Luke), and "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew), and "Blessed are ye that hunger now" (Luke), and "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew), were derived by both writers from the source probably used by both, the logia, or collection of sayings of Jesus, they must have had different recensions of the collection, or one must have changed these beatitudes by omissions or additions. On the other hand, if Luke had another source, he must have preferred it although knowing it to be contrary to the logia. That the four beatitudes were in the logia, and that Luke selected the two that relate to outward conditions, while Matthew reported those that have reference to a spiritual state, is altogether improbable. Which of the two versions of this part of the celebrated discourse is "original" is a question on which the most competent differ, and few can give convincing reasons.

It certainly contributes nothing to the solution of

the problem to declare dogmatically, in respect to the tendency in primitive Christianity toward antipathy to wealth and sympathy with the poor, that "a series of sayings of Jesus in this direction have been forged in Luke's Gospel,"[1] or that Jesus' attitude regarding the matter has been given a "coarse" expression in this Gospel.[2] Even J. Weiss contents himself with simply declaring that Luke's version of the beatitudes in question is "certainly not the original form," and adds that in deciding what are the genuine beatitudes, that is, the ones actually spoken by Jesus in this connection, one must not lose sight of the fact that "Luke or his source has selected in a rather mechanical manner only those that relate to conditions of external distress"[3]—as if both series of beatitudes had been spoken and recorded together, and Luke or his source had "selected" those regarding outward conditions. Are we, then, to regard both series as original, and the two records as supplementing each other? In that case what becomes of the question, Which are the "genuine" beatitudes? Weizsäcker, while regarding Luke's version of the Sermon the same that he found in his source, thinks it a later revision of that in

[1] Bossuet, *Die Predigt Jesu*, p. 47.
[2] Titius, *Die neutest. Lehre von der Seligkeit*, p. 77.
[3] See Meyer's *Commentar* on Luke, p. 388.

Matthew, because it contains fewer beatitudes.[1] But why should not the version having the more beatitudes be judged the later?

On the other hand, it is maintained that the report in Matthew cannot present the original state of the Sermon, because "it unites in an artistic construction various sayings of Jesus met with elsewhere in Matthew in a more natural connection, and also placed by Luke in different settings."[2] On the ground, moreover, that the beatitudes in Luke have no reference to the *conditions* of entering the kingdom, while the most of Matthew's have, and some have not, the originality of the former is argued. In Luke the emphasis falls on the *worth* of the salvation of the kingdom, and those who in "this age" are unfortunate are pronounced blessed on account of their prospective participation in that salvation. The woes that in Luke are pronounced on the rich and fortunate are in accord with this point of view, since "they signify that earthly happiness is no true happiness."[3] Luke's version accordingly presents a unity that is favourable to the hypothesis of its originality.

An easy method of solving the problem, by cutting

[1] *Das apostol. Zeitalter.* 2te Aufl. p. 389.
[2] Holtzmann, *Handcommentar*, 1889, p. 101.
[3] Wendt, *Die Lehre Jesu*, i. pp. 53 f.

rather than untying the knot, is to assume that besides the logia Luke had an independent document containing a discourse spoken on some other occasion, but so like the Sermon on the Mount as to be identified with it by him. "The Sermon in Luke is, therefore, a compound of the reports of two similar but different discourses; and in this compound the elements derived from the logia are dominated by those derived from the independent document."[1] And again: "It seems simpler to suppose that Luke took the whole of his report from the document that contained this very similar, but different Sermon."[2] It appears, then, highly probable that the beatitudes and woes reported in Luke were actually spoken by Jesus. Whether Luke's source was the logia, which was altered and enlarged by the writer of Matthew, or another and "independent" one, the credibility of his record is supported by his declaration in his prologue that he had "traced the course of all things accurately from the first." Favourable to the originality of the report of the Sermon in Luke is, moreover, the contention that this Gospel was written prior to that according to Matthew—a

[1] Sanday, *Expositor*, April 1891, p. 315.

[2] Plumer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 1896, p. 177.

position that has many considerations in its favour.[1]

The beatitudes were addressed to the "disciples," not merely the twelve apostles, who had just previously been chosen from the larger number of followers.[2] "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." The use of the second person is regarded as favourable to the originality of Luke's report in contrast with the vaguer and more general third person in Matthew. The unqualified "[ye] the poor" (οἱ πτωχοί) can mean only the poor in worldly possessions. These are declared to be

[1] See Pfleiderer, *Das Urchristenthum* and J. Weiss, Meyer's *Commentar* on Luke. With respect to the assumed special source of the third Gospel, Soltau remarks that it must with "necessity" be concluded from the facts in the case that the third evangelist, who was "a gentile Christian without a specially prominent partisan point of view," had the beatitudes in a Jewish-Christian revision, which ascribed an exceptional worth to poverty and promised a reward to external works (*Unsere Evangelien, ihre Quellen und ihr Quellenwerth*, 1901, p. 45). It may be questioned, however, whether the assumed "revision" must be conceded to have rendered the source untrustworthy, and whether the painstaking author of the third Gospel would have been likely to employ a recension of the logia that did not contain the actual teaching of Jesus. Soltau concedes that the greater originality is sometimes on the side of Luke, and that "his source alone furnished a series of the most excellent parables and sayings of Jesus—the gospel of the poor and abandoned, of the Samaritans and sinners." It should be borne in mind in this connection that Luke's beatitude for the poor is in accord with Jesus' words, recorded in Matthew: "The poor have the good tidings preached to them."

[2] Luke vi. 20 f.; cf. verse 13 f.

"blessed" *as poor* and as disciples—as poor disciples. The reason for the beatitude is, "for yours is the kingdom of God," in accordance with the Old Testament promise of the Messianic blessedness to the poor and wretched. There appears to be implied here a strong sympathy of Jesus with the poor, doubtless based on the recognition of a special susceptibility on their part to his message. At a time when all the people were looking for the advent of the kingdom, the most intense longing for it must have been felt by those for whom this world had so little joy. Hence the special beatitude for the poor, whose predisposition for the kingdom, proceeding from their poverty, renders them "blessed." In the kingdom they will have their eternal compensation, just as in Mary's song those of low degree are to be exalted.[1]

The next beatitude requires a similar interpretation. It is pronounced upon the disciples before Jesus, who by reason of their poverty are hungry now (*οἱ πεινῶντες νῦν*). These words, like "the poor" in the first beatitude, are to be taken in the literal sense. They hunger for want of the necessary physical nutriment. The promise, "ye shall be filled," must also be understood literally, and not, as

[1] The *ταπεινοί*, chap. i. 52.

Plumer will have it, of "the spiritual abundance in the kingdom of God." Nothing of the kind is indicated in the passage or its connection. The words are an echo of those in the song of Mary: "The hungry hath he filled with good things." In the kingdom of God, which was to be established upon the renewed earth, the "good things" would not be lacking.[1] We should be on our guard against substituting our idea of the kingdom for that of Jesus and his contemporaries, and against intruding spiritual or figurative meanings where they are not required or justified by the context. If the promise is to be understood to mean "spiritual" satisfaction, then "ye that hunger" should be interpreted, "ye that spiritually hunger." Nothing could be more inept than to declare a literally hungry man blessed as hungry, because he is going to be spiritually fed!

In the same vein of sympathy with the unhappy, the victims of adverse fortune, a beatitude is next pronounced upon the sorrowing: "Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh." In the kingdom of God the unfortunate, who now cry out (*οἱ κλαίοντες νῦν*) on account of their grief and wretchedness, will outwardly express their joy in laughter. Perhaps

[1] See Matt. viii. 11; xxvi. 29; Luke xxii. 30.

no more appropriate word than "laugh" could be set over against "weep," and it has the appearance of hypercriticism to say, as J. Weiss does, that the former term indicates "the coarse expression of the whole." The word occurs frequently in the Old Testament poetry, and even God is said to laugh.[1]

The last beatitude is the only one that mentions suffering for the sake of Jesus, and it recalls Matthew's blessing on those persecuted "for righteousness' sake." The separation has reference to excommunication from the synagogue, and perhaps exclusion from daily intercourse. Let them "rejoice and leap for joy" in view of the great and blessed "reward" that is reserved for them in the kingdom of heaven, or rather that is reserved in heaven against the establishment of the kingdom, when they will enter upon the enjoyment of it.

Following these four beatitudes are four woes, each the direct antithesis of each of the beatitudes—a woe for the rich, for those that have abundance of food, for those that laugh now, and for those that are well spoken of by all men. These must be regarded as addressed to the rich and prosperous in general, the rich of the time, and not necessarily to any present at the moment, least of all to the disciples.

[1] Psa. ii. 4; xxxvii. 13; cxxvi. 1, 2.

This appears to be the intention of the writer, to whom the literary form must be ascribed, since in verse 27 he denotes a return to those present by the words, "But I say unto you that hear." The woe is pronounced upon the rich because they have received their consolation. They have had their "good things" in "this age," like the rich man in the parable. In the blessedness of "the age to come" they will not have a part along with the poor. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"

As to those that "are full now," a woe is pronounced upon them, to the effect that they will hunger. They too have had their good things, and there is no consolation for them in the age to come. Will they perhaps be of those who will find themselves "cast forth into the outer darkness," when "many shall come from the east and the west, and shall recline [at table] with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven"?[1] In like manner the great requital of the Messianic age will change into weeping the laughter of those who rejoice in the fulness of earthly goods, and an unnamed judgment is reserved for the believers of whom those (the Jews) speak well whose fathers flattered the false prophets.

[1] Matt. viii. 11 f.

One cannot but be impressed with the limitation that attaches to these beatitudes and woes—the few classes of men on whom blessings and woes are respectively pronounced, and the few qualities, good and bad, that are included in the approval and the denunciation. Certainly these men cannot have been all the best and the worst of their time known to Jesus. Of all the fragmentary reports of the sayings of Jesus preserved in the Gospels this fragment is the most unsatisfactory. It appears to have been inserted in a quite one-sided interest, the interest that in Luke's source had a predominant importance —that of showing Jesus' attitude to have been friendly to the poor. This supposition is supported by the fact that the beatitudes and woes are declared for the poor and hungry and unhappy, and against the rich and well-fed and jovial for no other reason, expressed or implied, than that the respective conditions are on the one hand unfortunate and on the other prosperous.

A series of sayings peculiar to Luke, concluding with a "parable," or more properly a narrative furnishing an example,[1] may well be considered here, since the section is evidently intended to show Jesus' attitude toward wealth and its possessors.

[1] Luke xii. 13-21.

After refusing to act as "a judge or a divider" in a contest of two brothers over an inheritance, Jesus admonishes his hearers: "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness,[1] for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth," that is, life, so far as it is concerned with earthly possessions, is not dependent on the abundance of them, is not *of*[2] these things, which can give it neither value nor permanence.[3] This is shown by the well-known illustrative story of the rich man who could find no place to store his abundant harvests, and who said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God calls him a fool, and says to him that this night his soul is required of him.[4] "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

The lesson of the narrative is to show the folly of the fancied security in riches that leaves God and one's responsibility to Him out of account. In the

[1] πλεονεξία, greed, avarice.

[2] ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων.

[3] See Psa. xlix. 11, 20: "They call their lands after their own names. . . . Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish."

[4] "When he says, Now I can give myself rest,
And now will I consume my goods,
He knows not how much time still remains for him,
And he must leave it to others, and die."—Ecclus. xi. 19.

sudden death and disappointment of the rich man is distinctly indicated the divine disapproval of the accumulation of riches with the sole intention to "fare sumptuously," and of "the greed, the boundless selfishness of which forgets all duties to the poor, in whom God comes near to us."[1] If the greed and selfishness here condemned are not conceived as inseparable from wealth, they are at least regarded as perils attendant upon it, against which men need to be warned. The concluding words of the section indicate that those who escape the fearful fate of this man, which we may read between the lines to have been that of the rich man at whose gate Lazarus lay, are such as are "rich toward God" (εἰς θεόν), who devote their lives to God's purposes, who give alms, and make for themselves a treasure in the heavens that faileth not. To them the Judge will say on the great day, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto these my brethren, the least of these, ye did it unto me." There appears to be no good reason for saying in regard to this section with B. Weiss: "It is hardly to be denied that Luke

[1] Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, ii. p. 67. This scholar finds nothing "specifically Christian" in the narrative, nothing that "a wise Israelite might not have said." He is not disposed, however, on account of this to deny the origin of the words with Jesus.

shows an ascetic view of the world that sees in wealth in itself something sinful (cf. vi. 24 f.), and therefore regards the renunciation of it and the devotion of it to alms as the only way to purify oneself from it."[1] For no grounds have been shown for regarding the writer of Luke rather than his sources as responsible for the passages in the third Gospel that denote "an ascetic view of the world."

In the parable of the Unjust Steward, referred to in Chapter II., or in its applications at least, which may have originated with Luke, or have been derived from another source than the logia, the "prudent" use of wealth in benevolence with a view to assuring one's future in the kingdom of God is recommended.[2] In the first seven verses (pure parable) it is related that a steward about to be discharged for reputed malfeasance makes friends with his lord's debtors by reducing the accounts against them, in order that on his dismissal he may not have to "dig" or "beg," but may be received into their houses. Of this section we may, according to Jülicher, be sure. The teaching is simply: Use the present life to prepare for the future. No stress is to be laid upon the means employed, however badly chosen we may

[1] *Leben Jesu*, dritte Aufl. ii. p. 57.
[2] Luke xvi. 1-12.

think the subject is, just as no significance is to be attached to the "oil" or the "wheat."

From this point there follow (vv. 8-12) interpretations of the parable. Of these the first (v. 8) is, according to J. Weiss, derived from Luke's separate source, and is to the effect that the Lord[1] (Jesus) commended the unrighteous steward for his wisdom, not, of course, for his unrighteousness, which is here for the first time mentioned. He is represented as one of the sons of "this age," the age of wickedness, in contrast with the coming Messianic age. The second interpretation (v. 9) runs to the effect that the persons addressed, probably the Pharisees (v. 14), should make to themselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, in order that, when it fails, they may receive them into "the eternal tabernacles," that is, into the Messianic kingdom. Here wisdom, which was the leading idea in the parable proper, is lost sight of, and we have what is called an "allegorising" of the real parable. Earthly possessions, personified as Mammon, the demon or idol of

[1] The revised version reads "his lord," that is, the steward's employer, without any warrant in the text. The last clause of the verse could not have been spoken by the lord of the steward. See Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, ii. p. 503. "The words are to be regarded as the report on the application that Jesus had made of the parable."—Weizsäcker, *Die evangelische Geschichte*, p. 213.

riches, are characterised, according to the Hebrew idiom, as "the Mammon of unrighteousness."

It is not allowable to read into this phrase the designation of any part of wealth, such as that unjustly acquired, as pertaining to unrighteousness. The term is comprehensive of wealth as such, and the gist of this interpretation of the parable is that riches, to which so much that is sinful necessarily clings, are good only to be employed in gaining, through a charitable use of them, friends who will receive the benefactor into the everlasting habitations of the age to come.[1] According to the proceeding at the great assize, Jesus, as the representative of the unfortunate who have received kindnesses, receives their benefactors into the kingdom. A third (allegorising) application of the parable (vv. 10-12) draws from it the teaching that man is not the owner, but only the steward of earthly possessions, the unrighteous Mammon, and that if he follows the example of the unrighteous steward in dealing with them as if they were his own, "the true riches," the Messianic inheritance, will not be entrusted to him. "God has only temporarily and by way of trial

[1] "He that hath pity upon the poor
lendeth unto the Lord,
And his good deed will He pay
him again."—Prov. xix. 17.

entrusted Mammon to His children in order, according to the use they make of it, to commit to them the true goods, of which that is only a deceptive phantom." This difficult section is intelligible only from the point of view previously indicated (see Chapter III.).

It is hardly possible more completely to misunderstand this parable and its applications than by referring them to the earthly social order: "As he [the unjust steward] by trickiness, not to say dishonesty, had won for himself friends, so it is possible in a nobler way for men so to use wealth as to bind others closer to themselves. This is one of the tests of character, this making of friends by money."[1] The hazards are certainly great of reading the New Testament apart from its historical connection, as if it were a product of the nineteenth century instead of a product of the first.

The parable of the Unjust Steward is connected with that of the Rich Man and Lazarus by a series of sayings directed against the Pharisees, who, as "lovers of money" (*φιλάργυροι*), scoffed at the teaching about the use to which the Mammon of unrighteousness should be put. Jesus tells them that they are not really so "exalted" as in the pride

[1] Shailer Mathews, *The Social Teachings of Jesus*, 1897, p. 144.

of their wealth and station they think themselves to be.[1] God knows their hearts, and that which is exalted among men is an abomination to Him. These words furnish an intelligible introduction to the following parable, in which it is shown that social eminence, prosperity, and riches are no evidence of acceptance with God, since death may change the fortunes of rich and poor. A very natural place for the parable is after verse 15. This was perhaps its original position.

The contrasts in the parable are forcefully and vividly drawn. On the one hand, a rich man splendidly dressed and making merry on a magnificent scale every day (*εὐφραινόμενος καθ' ἡμέραν λαμπρῶς*); on the other, a wretched beggar flung down at his gate, full of sores, and "desiring to be fed with the crumbs" from the other's table. Then the sudden interference of undiscriminating Death, and the reversal of relations in the underworld. The beggar is borne by angels into Abraham's bosom, the paradise of the underworld,[2] while the

[1] "I fancied that I was full of righteousness,
Because I was fortunate and rich in children."—Ps. Sol. i. 3.

[2] The current ideas of the times respecting the conditions in the life after death are simply assumed in the parable. No doctrinal importance is to be attached to this feature of the passage, just as no conclusions are to be drawn from the representation of the possession of bodily organs and sensibilities in the life in the

rich man in the place of torment begs of Abraham that he will send Lazarus to alleviate his pain by the slight service of dipping his finger in water and applying it to the tongue of him who was suffering in the "flame." The mercy prayed for cannot, however, be granted, even if Lazarus were disposed to relieve the misery of the man who on earth had made no friends by almsgiving with his "Mammon of unrighteousness." Abraham gives two reasons for refusing to grant the request, the second of which renders the first unnecessary. But the first, Luke thought, must be stated, since in it lies the gist of the parable: "Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish." Here closes the first part of the parable.[1]

Considered by itself, apart from the supposed allegorising addition (vv. 27-31), the parable presents

underworld. The parable has but one didactic object, one teaching to set forth, and to this the interpreter must hasten on, as does the narrator, not turning aside to weigh irrelevant matters. "Jesus felt no need of correcting the popular ideas on this point according to the wishes of a later dogmatic. They satisfied him and his disciples, and almost the worst misconstruction that the story could suffer were the delusion that it was composed in order to promulgate new revelations on the conditions in the other world."—Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, ii. p. 623.

[1] Luke xvi. 19-26.

no difficulty to the interpreter who will refrain from importing into it ideas that are foreign to its purpose. It contains no general doctrine of salvation and condemnation in the life to come. The lesson simply is, that after death the poor and wretched man goes to paradise, and the selfish rich man to the place of torment. It is a vivid commentary upon the beatitude for the poor and the woe for the rich in Luke's report of the Sermon on the Mount. It is a solution of the old problem of the cruel inequalities of life, showing how in the divine order a swift and summary adjustment is hereafter made of unequal conditions that find no adjustment in this world. There is no intimation either that Lazarus had merited paradise by any good works or even by penitence and faith, or that the rich man had deserved the tormenting flame by an evil life or on account of impenitence. The most that can be inferred as to his character is, that he had taken his ease and made merry, and had not relieved the beggar, even if he had ever seen him. Nothing is said of this matter, because it is remote from the object in view. This will be felt as a deficiency only by those who want to find an entire system of theology in a parable, and who in trying to find too much find nothing.

If the section, vv. 27-31, constitutes a part of the

original parable, then it contains an intimation that penitence and impenitence were the reasons for the destinies of the two men (vv. 28, 31). The section is unrelated to the leading idea and the distinctive purpose of the first part, and is regarded by some of the highest authorities as an addition to the words of Jesus. Without entering upon the discussion of this matter, the question may be raised whether Jesus' hearers would have understood him to imply in verses 19-26 another reason for the relative conditions of the two men in the underworld than riches and poverty. Abraham gives the rich man no reason why he is in torment, but only reasons why his sufferings cannot be relieved—the great gulf and the fact that in the world he had had his "good things." The rich man does not, in fact, ask why he is in the flame. He appears to have assumed that he had gone to "his own place." According, however, to the doctrine of the Pharisees as to rewards and punishments for the righteous and wicked in the underworld,[1] the hearers of Jesus must have regarded the fate of the men as determined by their lives, and not merely by the fact that the one was

[1] "The righteous will rise to eternal life in the glory of the Messianic age, but the unrighteous will be punished with eternal pain."—Schürer, *Gesch. des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Christi*, dritte Aufl. ii. p. 391. Cf. Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* ii. 8, 14.

rich and the other poor. Although this fact cannot be taken into account in the exegesis of the parable, it is admissible in its historical interpretation. We have already mentioned some of the reasons for Jesus' beatitude upon the poor and his sympathy with the unfortunate. The rich man, living in pomp and luxury every day, must have seemed to him to be as averse to the kingdom of God as the poor were in general predisposed to it.

The words of Abraham to the rich man, "Thou receivedst thy good things in thy lifetime," appear to rest upon the doctrine that a man is entitled to a certain amount of happiness, which, if he has enjoyed it in this life, will not be again accorded him in the life to come, and *vice versa.* To this effect runs the rabbinical principle that "earthly good fortune is a misfortune, since it may serve as a reward for our merits, and rob us of heavenly blessedness." It is interesting to note the contact of modern philosophy with ancient thought that appears when we compare with this doctrine Kant's deduction of the belief in immortality from the intuition of "the practical reason," that there must be another life, in order that the due ethical compensations may be made.

There remain to be mentioned a few more unique

features of this Gospel that relate to the equalising of earthly inequalities, the renunciation of the things of "this age," and sympathy with the poor. The completeness of this chapter requires consideration of one or two passages that have already been referred to. In a section peculiar to Luke (iii. 10-14), John, when asked by "the multitude" what they should do, says: "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise." In the Sermon on the Mount the saying about giving is reported in a more intense form than in Matthew: "Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again."[1] And again: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom."[2] The recompense so extravagantly delineated will be made in the divine judgment, or in the age to come. The rendering, "men will give," is tame and unwarranted.

An unqualified injunction about almsgiving requires of disciples that they sell that they have,

[1] Chap. vi. 30. Cf. Matt. v. 42.

[2] Chap. vi. 38. "They will give" (*δώσουσιν*). Meyer understands "they" to refer to the angels who will take part in the judgment. The verb is "almost impersonal" (Plumer), and is equivalent to "one will give," or "will be given."

and give alms.[1] Kindness to the poor in a quite impracticable way is enjoined in the requirement not to invite to a dinner one's friends, kinsmen, or rich neighbours, but the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, lest "a recompense be made" by a return of the courtesy. He who obeys this injunction will be "recompensed in the resurrection of the just."[2] The hard condition of discipleship, that one must "hate" one's own nearest kindred, must have been uttered in an exalted mood of renunciation in which the ties of "this age" appeared only as hindrances to the attainment of the "age to come."[3] It must have been in such a mood that the uncompromising words were spoken: "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."[4]

In a section without a parallel in the other

[1] Chap. xii. 33. Without warrant Plumer weakens this to "We must be ready to part with our possessions."

[2] Chap. xiv. 12-14. Plumer interprets the "present imperative," μὴ φώνει, "Do not *habitually* call"! But κάλει in the next verse is "present imperative." Hence one should "habitually" invite the poor, lame, etc.!

[3] Chap. xiv. 26. Here μισεῖν cannot be softened to, "hold in less regard than me." There can be no double service. One will either "hate the one and love the other, or will cleave to the one and despise the other." If the kindred do not go the way of the disciple, is the only qualification that can be implied, and it is not certain that we have a right to assume this.

[4] Chap. xiv. 33. "*Ready* to renounce" (Plumer) is by no means the meaning of these great words.

synoptics, and belonging to the discourse in answer to the question when the kingdom of God would come, Luke adds to Matthew's illustration from "the days of Noah" one from "the days of Lot," with the admonition to "remember Lot's wife," thus pointing out the peril of attachment to earthly possessions.[1] In concluding the consideration of the third Gospel with a few words about the episode of Zacchæus it is necessary to dwell only upon the feature of it that concerns our subject. This rich chief of the publicans is declared to have received "salvation" because he made a vow to give half his wealth to the poor and to make fourfold restitution to any whom he may have wronged.[2] Repentance for any exactions that he might have committed is undoubtedly implied, but there is no hint of his penitence for other sins. Is it to be assumed that these were regarded as atoned for by the almsgiving? If not, the ground of his salvation is not apparent. A representation of the matter, however, that should make kindness to the poor "cover a multitude of sins" would not be surprising in this unique and remarkable Gospel.

[1] Chap. xvii. 28-30. [2] Chap. xix. 1-10.

CHAPTER VI

"ALL THINGS COMMON"

THE author of Luke presents in his second work, Acts, written about the end of the first century or in the first quarter of the second, two or three rather obscure statements as to the relations of rich and poor and their manner of living together among the primitive Christians. The long period of time that separated the writer from the events recorded and our ignorance as to his sources and his manner of using them, render it very difficult to ascertain the facts in the case.[1] It is no wonder, then, that expositors are

[1] "Before we question a source as to any historical fact, we must discern its attitude in general toward the fact concerned. . . . The title, 'according to Luke,' is completely confirmed in view of the fact that Acts in its portions treating of the missions of Paul contains certain sections that are distinguished as to form from the rest of the book by the sudden change of the narrative to the first person, and as to contents by the greatest vividness and palpableness. That part of the writing in which these sections are embedded suffers from obscurities and difficulties of the most manifold sort, especially from contradictions with the most credible state-

not agreed in the interpretation of the three or four passages relating to the matter. Whatever conclusion may be drawn from the exposition of these passages, the fact should be kept in mind that the object of the inquiry is only to determine the actual historical situation. The way in which the little band of believers in Jesus may have lived together for a short time in Jerusalem can have no other interest for us than that which attaches to a matter of history, except in so far as the spirit that determined their mode of life may furnish an impulse to us. There is no reason for regarding their procedure as an example for our imitation.

The first passage relating to the matter is as follows: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people."[1] Another

ments of the genuine Pauline Epistles. Among all the known companions of Paul the sections having the narrative in the first person can have had Luke alone as their author."—Holtzmann, *Die ersten Christen und die sociale Frage*, 1882.

[1] Acts ii. 44-47.

account of the matter is the following: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. . . . For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need."[1] Following this latter account, express mention is made of the fact that Barnabas, "having a field, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."[2] Furthermore, in the immediate connection it is related that when Ananias and Sapphira kept back a part of the proceeds of the sale of "a possession," Peter in pronouncing judgment upon them plainly indicates that it was optional with an owner of property to sell it or not, and that he might, after it was sold, retain the money.[3]

The prominence here given by the writer of Acts to indifference on the part of Christians respecting worldly possessions and to extraordinary measures taken for the benefit of the poor, corresponds to the predilection that he shows, as we have seen, in the

[1] Acts iv. 32-35. [2] Acts iv. 36 f. [3] Acts v. 1-4.

third Gospel for collecting sayings of Jesus relating to the hindrance of riches to the spiritual life and the meritoriousness of almsgiving. This predilection is shown in other places in this book in a diligent collecting of all facts that go to prove the charitable disposition of persons prominent among the believers. Dorcas, who was "full of good works and almsdeeds that she did," is made the subject of an astounding miracle.[1] On the ground of a prophecy of Agabus foretelling "a great famine," the Antiochian believers send relief, "every man according to his ability," to the brethren in Judæa.[2] Cornelius, "a devout man, who gave much alms," is especially honoured by the fact that his "alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God."[3] Peter's contempt for money appears in his words to Simon the sorcerer, and Paul is made to say that he coveted "no man's silver or gold or apparel."[4] "If Luke followed an inward impulse in communicating these facts, it was also his intention to draw for Theophilus, who was still a heathen, an affecting picture of the love that animated the Christian community—a love for which the Græco-Roman heathenism had little susceptibility."[5]

The historical character of the account of the

[1] Acts ix. 36-41. [2] Acts xi. 28 f.
[3] Acts x. 2, 31. [4] Acts viii. 20; xx. 33.
[5] Jacoby, *Neutest. Ethik*, p. 418.

social relations of the primitive Christians in Jerusalem has been called in question even by conservative expositors. Neander finds much in Acts itself that opposes the idea of such a community of goods as is indicated in the narratives quoted above. "Peter says expressly to Ananias that the latter could do as he pleased about selling his property and about retaining or giving over the proceeds in case he sold it. In the sixth chapter of Acts mention is made only of a relative distribution of alms to widows, and by no means of a common fund for the support of the entire Church. We find in chap. xii. that Mary [the mother of John Mark] had a house of her own in Jerusalem, and accordingly that she had not sold it for the benefit of the common purse. These intimations prove clearly that we are by no means to imagine in this first Christian community a dissolution of all property-relations."[1]

Baur finds that nothing else than just such a state of things is declared in plain terms by the writer of Acts. The contradictions that Neander points out lead him, however, to conclude that we are not simply to say with that scholar that the account is not to be taken literally, but that we "must recognise

[1] *Gesch. der Pflanzung und Leitung der Christlichen Kirche*, vol. i. p. 62.

another interest than the historical at the basis of it—the interest, namely, to make that first community appear in the light of a union that had removed from its midst everything that intervenes to disturb or separate in the social relations of men, above all, the distinction of wealth and poverty. Such a state of things, however, did not, and in the nature of the case could not, exist. For how can it be thought that in a community consisting according to the writer's own statement of five thousand men, all who possessed real estate, lands and houses, sold even their houses, so that no one in the whole congregation had a residence of his own? And if it was a general rule that every one who had property sold it, and converted it into money for the general fund, why is prominence given to the act of Barnabas as especially commendable, that he sold his field, and laid the proceeds at the apostles' feet? We must conclude from this that what the writer had before stated to be a general rule in the first Christian society did not really exist as such."[1]

The interpretation given by Weizsäcker to the account in question is to the effect that although there were always poor in the society, for whom the brethren had to care, the declaration in Acts iv. 34,

[1] *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi*, 1845, p. 30.

that "there was not any that lacked," was made only in an ideal sense. And when it is said that no one any longer spoke of anything as his own, the conclusion drawn from this circumstance, that "they had all things common," must be understood in the same sense. "Indeed, the very fact that the support is represented as continued and permanent shows that no general distribution took place." From the statements that some of the believers sold their property and "parted" the proceeds "to all according as any man had need," and that others laid the money received for possessions sold at the feet of the apostles, who made distribution to each according to his need, Weizsäcker draws the conclusion that "not community of goods, but relief of the poor was carried on." "There lies in the spirit of the gospel not merely the helpful love of the neighbour, but also the separation from possessions as a hindrance to the service of God and righteousness in His kingdom. Prudent calculation as to the future could not restrain the tendency in this direction; for the belief was current that it was a question of a brief space of time in which the kingdom was to be expected." "The attitude toward the poor rested upon the purely religious motives of depreciation of outward earthly possessions and the consideration of the companions

in the faith as members of the kingdom of God and brothers in this sense."[1]

On the contrary, H. Holtzmann maintains, in a scientific discussion of the subject,[2] that the writer of Acts intended to represent the primitive-Christian community in Jerusalem as living in a relation of an actual community of goods. This mode of life is not only stated in so many words, but also the way in which it was effected is mentioned, namely, the sale of possessions. Yet in the immediate connection and in other places in Acts are found statements that are incompatible with such a condition of things. Barnabas' sacrifice of his property is mentioned as an example of the correct procedure in the case, while Ananias is told that he might have retained his. Moreover, Christians are elsewhere represented as having houses in Jerusalem. Finally, the fact that certain widows were not provided for is inconsistent with the declaration that no one lacked anything on account of the community of goods.

The statement, then, that the Christians "had all things common" is found to be an exaggeration. From all that can be learned of the social condition of the primitive Church there is no indication that

[1] *Das apostol. Zeitalter*, 2te Aufl. p. 45 f.
[2] *Die ersten Christen und die sociale Frage*, 1882.

community of goods was even temporarily practised. "It is a fact that no branch of the mother-Church ever followed its reputed example in this respect, and that despite the authority that its example must have had, nowhere does the thought of a community of goods appear as an ideal, as something that ought of right to exist." Paul, while urging his churches to make contributions for the poor, intimates no knowledge of a community of goods, and his Epistles presuppose the fact and the justification of private property.[1]

Rather than attempt an historical construction of primitive Christianity on the presumption that it seized upon an existing social movement in Palestine, and established a community of "God's poor," in which there was no question of personal possessions,[2] or adopt the theory that assumes an actual community of goods set up in imitation of the Essenes, Holtzmann derives the social ideal expressed in Acts from contact of the writer with tendencies of the time that are traceable through the New Pythagoreans to Plato. This hypothesis is supported, in the first place, by the predilection of the writer of Acts that has been shown in the foregoing chapter

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 11 ; 1 Cor. xiii. 3 ; xvi. 2 ; 2 Cor. viii. 14 ; xii. 14.

[2] See Renan, *Les Apôtres*, pp. 115-131, and Heber Newton, *Unitarian Review*, 1882.

for the reputed sayings of Jesus favourable to the poor and against riches as a hindrance to the righteousness of the kingdom of God—the point of view that riches are in themselves pernicious, while poverty is essentially promotive of salvation.

Another consideration that supports this hypothesis is that the writer of Acts represents a widespread social tendency, contemporary with him in the second century. In the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas, written in the first quarter of the second century, we find, for example, such sentiments as the following: "Thou shalt communicate to thy neighbour of all thou hast; thou shalt not call anything thy own: for if ye partake in such things as are incorruptible, how much more should you do it in those that are corruptible."[1] In like manner, Justin Martyr, speaking for himself and his fellow-Christians of the middle of the second century, says: "We who were formerly occupied by preference with possessions and goods now bring what we have to the community, and share it with every one that has need."[2] At about the same time, Lucian, in his treatise on the death of Peregrinus Proteus, speaks of the Christians as holding all things in common, intending, according to the connection, to say that they

[1] *Barab. Ep.* xix. 8. [2] *Apol.* i. 14; cf. xiii. 67.

regarded themselves as obligated to assist all their needy brethren without distinction. Other testimonies to the same effect are quoted from the Clementines and the Shepherd of Hermas. Toward the end of the second century, Tertullian attributes community of goods to his fellow-Christians, plainly implying, however, that it is an ideal communism and is accompanied by no compulsion. In fact, a legally organised communism did not, and could not, exist either in the apostolic or the post-apostolic Church, for the reason, as Holtzmann points out, that the institution of the family was maintained. "Upon this point Christianity jealously guarded the honourable inheritance of Judaism, and absolutely rejected all Platonic theory and practice."

From these considerations the conclusion is regarded as not "too hazardous" that the "social ideal" of the author of Acts and of the gentile Church of the second century is represented as realised in "the sacred primitive time" of Christianity. The basis of the account in Acts is found in the ascetic-socialistic tendencies of the age in which the book was written—tendencies that find a decided expression in the Gospel of Luke, and that become stronger in the later period of the development of monasticism. Indeed, "Chrysostom rightly

found the prototype of the monastic judgment of property in the communism of Jerusalem." Monasticism, moreover, shows in its history that its original basis was the "primitive-Christian idealism" of the so-called Ebionite sections in Luke's Gospel and the apostolic community of goods in Acts.

Pfleiderer's construction of the matter in question finds in Luke's account a delineation of the inner life of the primitive community as that of "a religious-socialistic brotherhood, united partly by a common edification through apostolical preaching and prayer, and partly by common fraternal meals and a far-reaching community of goods."[1] This latter condition, he thinks, is "without doubt extravagantly represented" in Acts, when it says that all possessors of houses and lands sold them, and laid the proceeds at the feet of the apostles, since in that case there would have been no poor to be cared for, as there were, according to chap. vi. Moreover, the special mention of Barnabas and Ananias indicates that their procedure was not the general rule. Yet these latter statements, which "clearly rest upon a definite tradition, show us that the representation of Acts, although extravagantly idealised, has for all that an historical kernel, and

[1] *Das Urchristenthum*, 1887, p. 555.

is by no means to be regarded as a legendary illustration of the world-renouncing disposition of the primitive Christians." "One should keep much more in mind than German criticism has hitherto been accustomed to do, the incontestable fact that the primitive community was not a school that gathered about idealistic theories, and not a Church that assembled around spiritualistic dogmas, but simply a religious brotherhood that hoped, from the early coming of the heavenly Messiah, Jesus, for a blessed new order of things upon the earth. How could such a hope have kept itself alive, and held the community together, if it had remained an empty hope, and had not realised itself in a practice that should at least preliminarily anticipate the hoped-for condition of blessedness in the form of a life in a society for mutual support?" This opinion is doubtless based upon a right view of the character and feelings of the primitive-Christian brotherhood, with its idea of fellowship (*κοινωνία*) and mutual helpfulness; and when we compare this interpretation with that of Holtzmann, we appear to be obliged to choose between an "extravagant" statement of the matter of community of goods by the writer or his source and an "idealising" of it by the former from his socialistic point of view and that of his age. In like

manner, Wendt, while not concluding from the statements in Acts that there was no community of goods at all, denies that it could have existed in the extent ("universality") represented by the writer of that book. A distinction is, however, made between the *source* and the construction that the writer put upon it—the former having originally had reference only to a community of *use*, while the latter indicates an actual community based on the sale of property.[1]

The discrepancies in the several accounts in Acts of the social conditions in question [2] have suggested an explanation of the matter based upon the hypothesis of a plurality of sources. In ii. 45 and iv. 34 the sale of all possessions for the common use is stated as the general practice. In iv. 32 nothing is said of a sale of possessions, and "the idea is that the owners placed their property in a general way at the disposal of the community at large," without the establishment of a common fund. But according to v. 1, 3, "the sale of property cannot have been universally prescribed, or even generally customary." From these and other related considerations Schmiedel draws the conclusion that the preference among the different accounts is to be given to the simplest,

[1] In Meyer's *Commentar* on Acts, 8te Aufl. p. 103.
[2] Chap. ii. 42, 45; iv. 32, 34 f.; v. 1, 3 f.

that, namely, which indicates that without a sale of possessions and a common fund those who had property contributed to the support of the needy members of the community. It is added, however, that "An account of any institution of the kind, clothed with the glamour of the ideal, is sure to have been exaggerated by writers with incomplete information."[1] Thus this explanation comes to substantially the same result as those previously mentioned, while resting upon the somewhat precarious basis of a discrimination of sources in Acts—a matter still involved in great uncertainty.

However one may solve the difficulties presented in the passages in question, if, indeed, they can be solved at all, it appears from the foregoing considerations very evident that among the primitive Christians in Jerusalem no organised communism, in which the property and productivity of all were required to be merged and administered in a common fund, could have existed. That the most of these persons were poor is quite likely. The teachings and spirit of the Master, still fresh in the minds of his disciples, must have produced an enthusiasm of fraternity and helpfulness. In view of his words

[1] Art. "Community of Goods" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, vol. i.

about the renunciation of worldly possessions as a condition of discipleship, it is not surprising that those of the community who had property placed it at the disposal of the needy. Men who had been taught that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, would very likely be ready to say that nothing that they possessed was their own. It is altogether natural that among these believers in Jesus his words to his disciples, when he sent them on their mission, should have had an influence: "Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses: no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff."[1] They must have remembered, too, how he had lived, "ministered unto of the substance" of Joanna and Susanna and Mary.[2] He wanders in vain, then, among the mazes of the exegetical difficulties attending these passages who does not discern the incontestable fact that in this little community in Jerusalem was cherished the deathless spirit of Jesus, the love that never tires in the endless tasks of kindness—was cherished and kept alive, to be passed on by this feeble band to its long course of beneficence through the ages.

[1] Matt. x. 9 f. [2] Luke viii. 3.

CHAPTER VII

THE APOSTLE PAUL

In striking contrast with the procedure of the primitive-Christian community in Jerusalem, considered in the foregoing chapter, is the attitude of the apostle to the gentiles toward the social question. Instead of the empirical enthusiasm of the first Christian socialism, which evaporated before it could be permanently realised, and which has left no other result than a doubtful record in Acts, we have received from the reasoner Paul a few fruitful principles, out of which have proceeded issues that show him to have builded better than he knew. To practical problems it was the apostle's method to apply the touchstone of a fundamental doctrine assumed to need no proof. Thus he deals with the question of marriage, of divorce in case one of the parties is an unbeliever, of the participation of women unveiled in the public services of religion, of

the eating of flesh offered to idols, and of the right use of spiritual gifts.[1]

It is, then, rather with inferences from grounds supposed to be accepted by the Christian consciousness of the time than with direct and explicit teachings that we have to do in the study of the apostle's attitude toward the social issues in question. Of pointed expressions of sympathy with the poor and of antipathy to wealth there are no examples in his writings. He does not appear to have realised so keenly as did Jesus the perils of riches to the spiritual life, and the distress and suffering of the poor did not move him to pronounce a beatitude upon them, as if he thought them especially susceptible to the invitation and the motives of the kingdom of God. He was not, moreover, so intensely occupied as was Jesus with the social question. His attention was directed in the main to the elaboration and defence of his "gospel," his original doctrine of salvation through Christ, of atonement, and justification by faith. The great gentile mission and the contest with the Jewish-Christian apostles in Jerusalem that the advocacy of it brought upon him, made large demands upon his interest and his

[1] See the writer's *Paul: the Man, the Missionary, and the Teacher*, 1898, pp. 40-46.

energies. It is, accordingly, not surprising that social questions are in the main only incidentally treated in his Epistles, which were writings of the occasion, called forth by the special needs of the little bands of believers, and that it sometimes appears as if he would not have addressed himself to them at all but for the particular exigencies made known to him by messengers or letters from the churches.

A striking feature of the apostle's ethics is the fundamental importance of the religious interest to the solution of moral problems. Through this interest, which lay very near his heart, the religious doctrine of the common sonship of God pertaining to all believers is made the basis of the principle of social equality: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus."[1] The distinctions of nationality, of rank, of station, of outward condition, of slave and freeman, of man and woman, disappear, are no longer taken into account, among those who through baptism have come into the mystic fellow-

[1] Gal. iii. 26-28.

ship with Christ, "where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman: but Christ is all, and in all."[1] They all having been "made to drink of one Spirit," henceforth "know no man after the flesh"; being "in Christ," they are a "new creation," "the old things are passed away; behold, they are all become new."[2] The principle as here stated by the apostle suffers from the limitation that its application is only to the believers, to those who have entered into the mystic fellowship with Jesus.

The idea, however, contains the potency of social and political transformation. So far as it might reign in the hearts of men, and become effective in human society, it would remove the barriers of enmity between nations, dissolve hatred and bitterness between antagonists, turn the hearts of the rich toward the poor, break down the division-walls of class and caste, and establish the supremacy of human brotherhood. "It is a great error to think that such principles could remain without outward effect. . . . Would the thought be able to make its way that slave and freeman are equally good without altering the condition of the slave; or that man and woman are equally good without transforming the outward

[1] Col. iii. 11. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 16, 17.

position of woman; or that all nationalities are of equal worth without producing a different relation between nations? He who thinks this only shows thereby how little he understands that the *idea* is irresistible in its operation, is a power that *must* work itself out, because it is the most living thing, is, in fact, immortal." [1]

Another principle of the apostle's ethics that finds so frequent expression in his Epistles as to show how much he had it at heart, is that of love among the brethren, who, being "one man in Christ Jesus," should be united in bonds of sympathy and affection. In his immortal Hymn to Love, in which the poetic genius of his race found its finest classical expression, he sets forth with masterly comprehension and in felicitous phrases the excellences of this divine principle.[2] His admonition to the brethren is that they "let love be without hypocrisy," that they be "tenderly affectioned one to another in love of the brethren," and that they "owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law." [3] A man is, indeed, accounted righteous on the ground of his faith, but love is greater than faith,[4] and this latter becomes effective

[1] Bugge, *Das Christenthum als Religion des Fortschrits*, 1900, p. 15.

[2] 1 Cor. xiii.

[3] Rom. xii. 9, 10; xiii. 8

[4] 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

as a principle of life only when "working through love."[1] From this point of view the apostle expresses in a few words the great principle of the ideal social order, when he tells the believers that they "were called for freedom," but that they should not use their freedom as an occasion to the flesh, but "through love be servants one to another."[2] He who could address this exhortation to service to all the members of a Christian community without regard to distinctions of class, rank, or station, could have recognised no differences of outward circumstances, of riches or poverty, as essentially separating men from one another and exempting them from the duty of reciprocal helpfulness. Not otherwise could he teach to whom the crown and consummation of the Christian life was the possession of the Spirit, the "fruits" of which are "love, longsuffering, and kindness."[3]

On no exhortation to the believers does the apostle place more emphasis than on this exhortion to brotherly love, to none does he more frequently return with heartfelt interest and with abundant variation of expression. Being "one body in Christ," the believers are "severally members one of another."

[1] δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη, Gal. v. 6.
[2] διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις, Gal. v. 13.
[3] Gal. v. 22.

"In love of the brethren" they should "in honour prefer one another," and no man should "put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." He walks not in love who by any self-gratification causes his brother to be "grieved" (λυπεῖται, morally disturbed), for "love worketh no ill to the neighbour." This principle is regarded as having the divine sanction, for "ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." Its application is extended beyond the circle of the Christian fraternity, and in this wider sweep is declared to be essential to the attainment of participation in the blessedness of the impending kingdom of God. "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you; to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints." Out of the fulness of his heart he exhorts that love be made to "abound more and more."[1]

In accordance with the religious principle already referred to, that all the believers are "one man" in Christ, we should expect to find in the apostle an inclination to a levelling of outward social distinctions. Such in fact is the tendency of the

[1] Rom. xii. 10; xiv. 13; 1 Thess. iii. 12; iv. 9, 10.

kindly words to the Corinthians respecting the lowly estate of their little community. Although they are for the most part men of humble callings, "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble," yet in their Christian profession and function they are chosen of God to "put to shame them that are wise." The weak and base things of the world, the despised, are appointed to bring to nought those things that in the view of "the world" are high and strong, "that no flesh should glory before God." The poor are thus placed not on an equality with the rich, but above them by reason of the spiritual ministry that they perform, just as in another place he speaks of the same persons "as poor, yet making many rich."[1]

A similar kindly disposition toward the poor is manifested in the apostle's reproof of the Corinthians for their unseemly observance of the Lord's Supper. It is not possible for them, he says, really to eat the Lord's Supper, when the rich bring their abundant provisions of food and drink, and the poor have nothing, so that "one is hungry, and another is drunken." The reproof falls like a blow upon those who forget the needy in the pointed question: "Despise ye the congregation of God, and put them

[1] 1 Cor. i. 26-29; 2 Cor. vi. 10.

to shame that have not?"[1] While the stress of the censure is laid upon the unfitting observance of the sacrament in making it a feast, wherein he "drinketh judgment unto himself" who does not rightly "discern the body" of the Lord, the incidental reference to those who "despise" and "put to shame" the poor and lowly shows the quick sympathy of the apostle with this class of persons. These should be duly esteemed as belonging to the Christian community, and though "feeble," yet "necessary," just as we "bestow more abundant honour" upon "uncomely" parts of the body.

Occasion will be taken farther on to speak of the apostle's attitude toward worldly goods in general. It is appropriate to mention here his deep aversion to the greedy pursuit of wealth. This he regarded as totally unfitting a man for the kingdom of God. Wealth itself he nowhere declares to be a disqualification for this great inheritance, and does not appear to have thought that it would require a miracle of grace to save a rich man. He however classes the "covetous" and "extortioners" with fornicators, idolaters, and drunkards, and forbids the Corinthians to eat with them. Again he mentions them with abusers of themselves with men, adulterers, and

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 20-22.

thieves, and declares that they "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."[1] The harshness of the language and judgment in these passages shows not only the apostle's deep-seated hostility to the eager pursuit of gain, but also his conviction that the greedy disposition involves a spirit and feeling incompatible with fitness for the kingdom of God.

The seeking of gain at the expense of another, wronging, defrauding a brother, incurs the apostle's unqualified censure in writing to the Corinthians about going to law on account of disputes over property.[2] The stress of the rebuke falls on the practice of taking their contentions about possessions before heathen magistrates rather than having tribunals of their own, since they, who are, in the Messianic kingdom, to judge the world and even angels, ought to be competent to decide their temporal affairs among themselves. "It is altogether a defect" in them, he says, that they have lawsuits one with another. "Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded?" Let those who do wrong, and defraud their brethren, know that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The teaching that one should suffer wrong and

[1] 1 Cor. v. 11; vi. 9, 10. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 1-10.

be defrauded without seeking redress at law reminds us of Jesus' words as reported in Luke: "Of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again."

While the stress of the reproof was doubtless due to a desire to keep his believers from association with unbelievers, the words quoted denote a contemptuous disregard of earthly possessions, which are of so small importance that it is better to suffer fraud than seek them when illegally taken away. Accordingly, we find the apostle scrupulously abstaining from making gain out of his labours as a missionary. The right, however, to receive from his churches a living he unequivocally maintains. As an "apostle," he asserts that he may fairly demand from them support for himself and a wife, had he had one, and to "forbear working." The soldier does not serve "at his own charges," and he who plants a vineyard "eateth the fruit thereof." In support of this contention he quotes a current "word of the Lord," and by means of the allegorical interpretation buttresses his argument with a quotation from the Old Testament about not muzzling the ox that treads out the corn. Having "sown spiritual things," he thinks it not a great matter that he should reap of their "carnal things"—a declaration

in which is plainly implied a depreciation of material possessions.[1]

A poor man, obliged to work at a wretched handicraft for his subsistence, the apostle writes no word of repining at his condition and no word denoting envy of the rich. He glories in his renunciation of support from the Corinthians, as if there were internal conditions in the Church at Corinth that rendered such a renunciation advisable. He plainly intimates that his refusal of support was prejudicial to his apostolic dignity, and asks whether he had sinned in abasing himself that the church there might be exalted, because he had preached to them the gospel of God for nought.[2] Consistently with the principle that the labourer is worthy of his hire, he received contributions to his subsistence from the Philippians, "robbing other churches," as he writes to the Corinthians, that he might minister to them. Accordingly, he writes to the Philippians that he rejoices greatly in the Lord that they "have revived their thought" for him. He disclaims having actually been in want, and says he has learned in whatever state he is, therein to be content. The higher uses of giving are indicated in the declaration that he did not seek the gift for itself, but for

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 1-19. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 7.

the "fruit that increased to the account" of the Philippians. Their offering he calls an "odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." The reward of the givers will be abundant in the Messianic kingdom.[1]

The most striking indication of the apostle's interest in the poor appears in his zeal for the collections in his churches in behalf of the needy believers in Jerusalem. The general principle upon which he proceeded was the duty of ministry (*διακονία*) to the sick, the poor, and strangers, for which an office was established in the churches. Accordingly, he exhorts the Romans to communicate (*κοινωνέω*) to the necessities of the saints, and commands that those whose function is ministry should wait on their ministry.[2] He declares that he was "zealous" to fulfil the wishes of the apostles in Jerusalem, expressed at the Conference, that he should "remember the poor."[3] Although he demands of his churches no such extreme sacrifice as the devotion of all one's possessions for this purpose, he shows a keen sense of the worth of renunciation as a moral principle in the citation of the example of Jesus, who, although he was rich in his pre-existent

[1] Phil. iv. 15-19.
[2] Rom. xii. 7, 13; 1 Cor. xvi. 15; 2 Cor. viii. 4; ix. 13.
[3] Gal. ii. 10.

state, yet in assuming flesh became poor for the sake of men.[1] Far from wishing to lay upon his churches a grievous burden on account of this charity, he deprecates a too liberal giving on the part of those in Macedonia, and asks the Corinthians to "lay by in store, as each one may prosper," in order that the collection may be ready when he comes.[2] He recognises the principle of freedom, abstains from the use of constraint, and attaches due importance to the disposition of the giver. Each one should give as he has "purposed in his heart." None should give "grudgingly, or of necessity," for this would not be religiously right, since God loves cheerfulness in giving.[3]

It is not without interest to observe that the whole matter of the collection for the poor of the Jerusalem Christians is regarded by the apostle from a religious point of view. This is apparent in the stress that is laid upon the compensation that would be made to the givers. These would be rewarded, he says, by a special act of divine grace. The Corinthians are assured that far from coming to want by reason of their liberality, God is able to make all grace abound to them, so that they will

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 5. [2] 1 Cor. xvi. 2.
[3] 2 Cor. ix. 7 f.

always have sufficient of everything. He that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply their seed for sowing and increase the fruits of their righteousness or benevolence. In urging upon the Corinthians "readiness" in the matter of the contribution to the poor believers in Jerusalem—a readiness that is "acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not"—he disclaims exhorting them to give "that others may be eased," and they "distressed," but "that there may be equality," their "abundance being a supply at this present time" for the want of the saints in Jerusalem, that the abundance also of the latter may become a supply for the want of the Corinthians in the future. This exhortation is grounded on the story of the manna, he that gathered much of which had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.[1] This citation from Exod. xvi. 18 furnishes an appropriate analogy only as "the general purpose of the divine guidance of the world admits of its application to the circumstances," since in the case of the manna there was no mutual adjustment of unequally divided goods.[2] But one may fairly presume

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 14 f.; ix. 8 f.

[2] See Schmiedel in *Handcommentar* on the passage.

that to Paul the whole matter was in the hands of God.

Although the apostle recognised the fact and the right of private possessions, the obligation to work and attend to one's own business, and the duty of parents to lay up for their children,[1] his feeling toward property and the material concerns of the world was on the whole one of indifference and depreciation. His belief in the impending end of the world disturbed his perspective of social relations and of all temporal affairs. "I say brethren," he writes to the Corinthians, "the time is shortened, that henceforth both those that have wives may be as though they had none; and those that weep, as though they wept not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy, as though they possessed not; . . . for the fashion of this world passeth away."[2] An ascetic view of life, grounded on his doctrine of the flesh, appears to have co-operated, with this limited perspective, due to his looking for the great advent of Christ, to determine his attitude toward marriage.[3] Since, moreover, the affairs of the world were so soon to come to an end, it was not worth while to enter upon a campaign of social reform. Hence the passive

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 14. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 24 f.
[3] 1 Cor. vii. 1-7.

and tolerating attitude toward slavery. Hence the exhortation to the slave to be content in his bondage. It is enough that he is "the Lord's freeman," and that at the early coming of the Lord he would, as a Christian, enter into "the liberty of the glory of the sons of God." While, then, the apostle's teaching contains some fruitful principles of social life, there could obviously not be made at his hands an application of them to the wide domain of the social order.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LATER EPISTLES AND OTHER NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS

A DISCUSSION in detail of the authorship and date of the various New Testament writings is foreign to the purpose of this work, and a dogmatic expression of opinion on the matter is foreign to the writer's disposition. Accordingly, in considering the teaching of some of the Epistles traditionally ascribed to Paul along with the later writings, he simply indicates his inclination to the critical judgment that questions their genuineness.[1] In the present case no issues of importance follow from the classification of the several books, since in the Epistles in

[1] For a detailed discussion of Hebrews, Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles, the reader is referred to the writer's volume (iii.) in the *International Handbooks to the New Testament*, 1901, and for a summary consideration of James, the Petrine Epistles, and Jude, to his articles in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, vols. ii. and iii.

question the teaching on the social problems does not essentially differ from the indisputably Pauline.

We find, then, that the attitude toward wealth and poverty of the writers whose works date from the end of the first and the beginning of the second century is not essentially different from that assumed in the earlier books of the canon. Wealth is regarded as a peril and a hindrance to the Christian life, although no vigorous denunciation of the rich appears except in the so-called Epistle of James. As in the time of Paul, the church is composed chiefly of the poorer class of the people. The church in Smyrna is addressed as in "tribulation and poverty," and in James the readers are said to be the "poor of this world, rich in faith," and the rich are charged with oppressing some of them who, as labourers, have reaped their fields.[1]

After the manner of Paul, the writer of Ephesians classes avarice with the basest offences: "For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man,[2] which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ"; "But fornication, and all uncleanness, and covetousness

[1] Rev. ii. 9; James ii. 5; v. 4.

[2] πλεονέκτης, eagerly desirous of gain, avaricious.

[avarice], let it not be named among you."[1] Likewise the writer of Hebrews exhorts his readers to cast themselves upon the divine care with respect to worldly possessions and the conditions that may arise from want of them: "Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say,

> The Lord is my helper; I will not fear:
> What shall man do unto me?"[2]

These words remind us of the sublime faith in Providence implied in Jesus' exhortation to take no anxious thought about food and clothing and the things of to-morrow. Quite in the spirit of the apostle, whose zeal in behalf of the collection for the needy believers in Jerusalem we have considered in the foregoing chapter, the same writer declares that, instead of stealing, a man should "labour, working with his hands, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need."[3]

At the time of the composition of the Pastoral Epistles, probably in the early years of the second

[1] Eph. v. 3, 5. [2] Heb. xiii. 5.
[3] Eph. iv. 28.

century, the presence of rich men in the church calls forth from the writer some special admonitions for their benefit. They are exposed to danger to the spiritual life, and need to be reminded of the frail tenure by which they hold their possessions: "But they that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows." "Godliness with contentment" he regards as "a great gain," and he reminds his readers, some of whom may be assumed to have been tempted by the allurements of riches, that "we brought nothing into the world" and "can carry nothing out of it." With "food and covering" they should be content. To those who are actually rich he addresses the sound admonition: "Charge them that are rich in this present world [age, *ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι*], that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate [*κοινωνικούς*, free in giving]; laying up in store for

themselves a good foundation against the time to come." [1]

That persons possessing considerable fortunes had attached themselves to the church is further apparent from the admonition addressed to the women among them by the author of the Pastoral Epistles against extravagance and display in dress: "In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works." [2] In similar terms the writer of First Peter exhorts the women to let their adorning be "not that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on apparel; but the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, a meek and quiet spirit." [3]

The writer of these Epistles shows a keen

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 6, 9, 10, 17-19. The exhortation to benevolence reminds us not only of Jesus' teaching but also of words in *Didache*, i. 5, iv. 8: "Give to every one that asks, and demand it not again, for it is the Father's will that out of the gifts of grace that each one receives it be given to all." "Thou shalt not turn the needy away, but shalt share all things with thy brother, and thou shalt not say that anything is thy own property, for if ye are companions in the things that are immortal, how much more in those that are perishable?" See essentially the same teaching as this last in Barnabas xix. 8. It is evident that the writer of the Pastoral Epistles expressed a prevalent social ideal of his time.

[2] 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

[3] 1 Peter iii. 3, 4.

appreciation of worldly possessions when they take the form of compensation for the services of the minister. He appears to have known nothing of Paul's self-sacrifice in serving his churches without pay and of his glorying in not being a burden to them. The apostle's theory, however, that the labourer is worthy of his hire he sets forth with great definiteness and force. Just as the soldier is paid so as to be free from entanglement with the affairs of this life, and just as the husbandman who labours must be the first to partake of the fruits, so, he would have it to be inferred, they who serve the church should be duly compensated. Even "the elders that rule well" should be counted worthy of a "double honour," that is, *honorarium*, "especially those who labour in the word and in teaching."[1] Yet the writer's *odium theologicum* did not suffer him to let those men who taught "a different doctrine" for pay go without sharp censure for "supposing that godliness is a way of gain," teaching that they ought not "for filthy lucre's sake."[2]

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 4-6; 1 Tim. v. 17. The right of the "true teacher" to support, like that of the workman, is maintained in *Didache*, xiii. 2.

[2] 1 Tim. vi. 5; Tit. i. 11. Rogge calls attention to the fact that the degeneracy in the ethical point of view in all these circles is indicated in these later Epistles with one exception by the appearance in the place of the word πλεονεξία of the drastic and material designations, φιλαργυρία and αἰσχροκερδής.

In the later Epistles that form the subject of this chapter the rich man, as such, does not appear to be regarded as in danger of exclusion from the kingdom of God. There is no expression of Jesus' doubt conveyed in the comparison of the camel and the needle's eye, although, as we have seen, the temptations to which the rich are exposed find distinct statement, and the avaricious are classed with those who cannot be saved. Otherwise, rich and poor, high and low, are undiscriminated with respect to the divine favour and the divine judgment. The revelator sees the kings of the earth, the great, the rich, the mighty men, hiding themselves with the slaves in the great day of wrath from the destroying fury of the Lamb; the small and great, the rich and the poor, the free and the bond, receive the mark of the beast; and among the "saints" are reckoned those of high and low degree.[1] The writer of James deprecates "respect of persons," and recommends the fulfilment of "the royal law," the love of the neighbour as one's self, whether the neighbour be rich or poor. If "the brother of low degree" should rejoice in that he is exalted, the rich man should rejoice in that he is made low, brought into a state of due humiliation before God. The

[1] Rev. vi. 15; xi. 18; xiii. 16.

warning against "respect to him that weareth gay clothing" and against the obsequious haste to assign such a one "a good place" in the assembly or synagogue plainly indicates that there was no inclination to oppose the admission of rich men into the Church.[1]

That the possession of riches was regarded as a serious hindrance to the service of God is evident from the tone and manner in which the rich are addressed by the writers of these Epistles. It seems to have been thought necessary to admonish them not to be "highminded" and not to put their "trust in uncertain riches," as we have seen in the case of the writer of First Timothy. The writer of James strikes a note of warning against the absorption of the rich in the affairs of this world, in trade and the prosecution of legitimate business; for there is no intimation that the procedure of those whom he addresses was dishonest. "Go to now," he exclaims, "ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain." He appears to think that the entire secular life of the believers who have great possessions should be dominated by a religious interest, and consecrated by a dependence upon God. They

[1] Jas. i. 10; ii. 2, 3, 8.

should not glory in their "vauntings," but rather they ought to say, "If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that." "All such glorying is evil."[1]

The transitoriness of worldly possessions, the insecure tenure by which they are held, is regarded as a reason for not trusting in them, since the fortune of the rich is involved in that of their riches. The rich man "shall pass away as the flower of the grass. For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass: and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so shall the rich man fade away in his goings."[2]

[1] Jas. iv. 13, 14. In Hermas a kindred idea is expressed. Just as a round stone is not suitable for a building until something is cut off from it, and it is made rectangular, so riches must be lopped off, since those rich in this world (αἰών) cannot be useful to God unless their riches are removed (*Vis.* iii. 6, 6). And again the writer declares that those who are much occupied with worldly affairs sin much, being distracted about their business and not serving God (*Sim.* iv. 5). The interference of riches with the spiritual life is set forth to the effect that although the rich man has great earthly possessions, yet he is poor toward God, being drawn away by his care about wealth, so that he makes very little confession and prayer to God, and what he does make is feeble and without power to ascend (*Sim.* ii. 5).

[2] Jas. i. 10, 11. This is said of the rich man simply because he is rich, and not because he has gained his wealth by injustice or dishonesty, or because he makes a wrong use of it.—Hermas finds also that those who gain possession of this world (αἰών), and grow old in their riches do not lay hold upon the goods of the future (*Vis.* i. 8). Likewise those who indeed have faith, but also possess the riches of this world, deny their Lord when tribulation

We have seen the attitude of one of the sources of the third Gospel toward the rich, and it is in place here to call attention to a similar note of hostility to wealth and its possessors struck by the writer of the Epistle of James. After the general condemnation of the rich for trading and getting gain that has already been considered, he breaks out in the following sweeping denunciation of them: "Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out:

comes, since they are so much concerned about their wealth and the prosecution of their affairs (*Vis.* iii. 6). The rich also with difficulty associate with the poor "servants of the Lord," because they fear that they may be asked for something. Such will hardly go into the kingdom of God. It will be as difficult for them to enter into the kingdom as for a man to walk on thistles with bare feet (*Sim.* ix. 20). Furthermore, just as the author of the Pastoral Epistles finds that wealth induces pride, so the writer of James sees in the rich the oppressors of the poor, whom they "dishonour," and whom they drag before the judgment-seats, while they "blaspheme the name" by which the believers are called (ii. 6, 7). So *Didache* classes among those guilty of all abominations, among haters of the truth, persecutors of the good, lovers of a lie, and murderers of children, those who have no pity on the poor, comforters of the rich, and lawless judges of the needy (v. 2).

and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you."[1] The "miseries" about to come upon the rich were doubtless connected in the writer's mind with the impending judgment at the Parousia. There is, however, no threat of their exclusion from the kingdom of God. The "rust" upon their riches, which would show them the perishable nature of wealth, will "eat their flesh as fire." Physical pain is the most that can be implied, and we are reminded of Paul's judgment upon the incestuous man—the deliverance of him to Satan "for the destruction of his flesh," that his "spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord."[2]

The condemnation expressed in this passage is evidently directed against the rich as they were in general known to the writer. If there were any notable exceptions, he neither mentions nor implies them. The rich are grasping, greedy, hard-fisted, and dishonest. They not only live in luxury, but they also defraud the poor labourers who have worked for them. They are of course deaf to the

[1] Jas. v. 1-6. [2] 1 Cor. v. 5.

appeal of charity. In lines not so strongly drawn and in a tone without bitterness the writer of the first Epistle to John describes the loveless rich: "Whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?"[1] The version of the story of the rich young man, as given in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, is interesting in this connection. Jesus says to the man: "Behold, many of thy brethren, sons of Abraham, perish in filth, and die of hunger, and thy house is full of many goods, and nothing comes out of it for them."[2]

The conclusion that must be drawn from the study

[1] 1 John iii. 17. The writer of Hermas takes a less pessimistic view of the rich, and assumes their charity while expatiating on its advantages both to them and to the poor: "The poor man, being aided by the rich man, prays for him, giving thanks to God for the one who gave to him. The other is zealous in the interest of the poor man, knowing that the prayer of the latter is acceptable to God. Therefore both accomplish the work: the poor man offers up the prayer in which he is rich, and the rich man likewise gives to the needy the riches that he receives from the Lord. This is a great work and acceptable to God. . . . Both, then, become participators in the work of the just. He who doeth these things will not be forsaken of God, and will be enrolled in the book of the living. Blessed are those who have [wealth], and know that they are rich from the Lord" (*Sim.* ii. 6, 7, 9).

[2] In like manner Hermas exhorts the rich to buy afflicted souls rather than fields and houses, and to look after widows and orphans. For this purpose the Lord made them rich, that they might perform all such ministries. This is the beautiful and sacred expenditure that has no grief or fear, but joy (*Sim.* i. 8, 10).

undertaken in this chapter is that the doctrine of the books in question respecting earthly possessions and the relation of rich and poor is substantially that of Jesus set forth in the synoptic Gospels, while the absence of reference to him and his teachings and example is remarkable. His spirit rather than his words and life appears to have come down to these writers. Their disregard of the Gospel-tradition is one of the problems of primitive Christianity.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRANSIENT AND THE PERMANENT

The foregoing discussion of the points of view and teachings of Jesus and the several New Testament writers regarding earthly possessions, riches, and poverty, has, it may be hoped, established the proposition already laid down in the course of it, that we are not justified in looking to them for a detailed consideration of social problems as they exist in a complex society like that of our day. Much less are we warranted in expecting from them a solution of such problems. Without assuming that such questions did or did not lie in the horizon of their thought, it is sufficient to note the fact that they touched them only in a general way, sometimes by laying down principles applicable to human nature in the most diversified relations, and again by making requirements that could have only a very limited application.

There is accordingly suggested an important discrimination that should be kept in mind by all students of the New Testament—the distinguishing of the transient from the permanent in its contents. The recognition of these two features of these writings, the one presenting matters that are of only temporary application, and the other principles that have perpetual validity and worth, is the logical consequence of the judgment that the New Testament books are to be regarded as literature. For by this term we connote writings the authors of which were true children of their age, wrote in its language, adopted its terminology, shared in some degree its limitations, interpreted nature by its science, were influenced by its social conditions and development, and in general looked upon the world and human life from its predominant points of view. So far as they transcend their age, and declare truths that are everywhere and always fruitful and valid, we hail them as children of God, "bearers of the Spirit" (*πνευματόφοροι*), endowed with a divine insight, heralds of the kingdom of Truth.

What we have *a priori* good reason to expect we find in fact in the case of the New Testament writers. They show themselves to have been true children of their age in their subjection to the prevailing

theological, religious, and social ideas of their time and people, and in their inability in some respects to rise above the general view of the world current among them. We find, accordingly, such conceptions as that God is "well pleased" with certain "sacrifices," and that He entertains "wrath" against men, which will be manifested in a "day of wrath," when "eternal destruction" will fall upon them that know Him not.[1] The Jewish conception of demons and demoniacal possession is assumed as the explanation of certain psycho-physical phenomena along with the tacit or open acceptance of the doctrine of a mighty personal power of evil, the devil, Satan, or the prince of the power of the air.[2] Another example of the limitations in question is the employment by the New Testament writers of the erroneous method of interpreting the Old Testament that was in use by their contemporaries and known as the allegorical, by means of which Scripture was perverted from its original meaning.[3]

We find here also such a conception of prophecy as that a prophet might foretell several hundred

[1] Heb. xiii. 16; Rom. ii. 8; v. 9; ix. 22; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9.

[2] Matt. iv. 1; xvii. 18; Mark vii. 29; John xiii. 2; 1 Cor. v. 5; vii. 5; 1 Thess. ii. 18; Eph. ii. 2; vi. 11; 1 John iii. 8; Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2.

[3] Matt. ii. 15, 18; xxi. 5; 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10; Gal. iii. 16; iv. 22-27; Heb. ii. 6-8; x. 5.

years beforehand the appearance of a definite personality together with details of his life; the *naïve* acceptance and record as facts of such legendary stories as the opening of graves at the crucifixion of Jesus, the rising of "saints," and their appearance in Jerusalem after his resurrection ; and an unquestioning belief in the personal coming of Jesus in glory to establish the kingdom of God within a generation or two after his death.[1] Again, those writers of New Testament books cannot be regarded as looking at the world and human life from a point of view in advance of their times who while giving directions for the conduct of slaves, neither indicate nor intimate any sense of the wrong and evils of the institution, and make no recommendations looking to its abolition, while with respect to the status of woman they declare her subordination to man, and simply tolerate marriage as the less of two evils, giving celibacy the preference.[2]

It would take us too far from the present purpose to undertake the application in detail of the distinction of transient and permanent to the teaching of Jesus, to inquire whether on the ground of his

[1] Matt. ii. 6 ; iii. 3 ; iv. 14 ; xxvii. 52, 53 ; John xii. 38 ; 1 Thess. iv. 15-18 ; 2 Thess. i. 7-10.

[2] 1 Cor. vii. 1, 2, 7-9, 20-24, 38 ; xiv. 34-36 ; Eph. v. 22, 23 ; vi. 5 ; 1 Tim. ii. 11-15 ; Tit. ii. 5 ; 1 Pet. iii. 1.

human intelligence he must be assumed *a priori* to have been liable to error, whether in fact he did err in any matters, and if so whether these were vital to his spiritual mission or not. It is certainly not of great importance that two of his biographers naïvely call attention to a disappointed expectation on his part with reference to finding fruit on a fig-tree when he was hungry. It is of greater moment whether or no we should assume that without having pursued critical Old Testament studies he should be certain of the Davidic authorship of a Psalm that modern students of Hebrew literature assign to the Maccabean age; whether his quoting of two central incidents from the Book of Jonah establishes the historical character of that writing; and whether his prophecy of his second coming discredits his prevision as to the kingdom of God.[1] If he "advanced

[1] Matt. xvi. 4, 28; xxi. 19, 20; xxii. 42-45; Mark xi. 20, 21; xii. 35-37; Luke xi. 29, 30; xx. 41-44. "We concede that Jesus cherished and kindled in his followers a hope in reference to his second coming that was not fulfilled—a hope that in just the time when the New Testament writings arose called forth and nourished ascetic feelings, and lent to his picture of the future the most glowing earthly colours. But the fact proves only that Jesus was subject to the limitations of human knowledge and certain ideas of his time, but proves nothing against the greatness of his ethical character. . . . May not one detect in the forms conditioned by the history of his age the splendid powers of a soul flaming with divine inspiration?"—Bonhoff, *Christenthum und sittlich-soziale Lebensfragen*, 1900, p. 13 f.

in wisdom"; if he did not know the precise time of his coming in glory, which was not known to the "angels," but to God alone; if he accepted the demonology of his time,—then he appears to have been subject to certain limitations, and it is only by a study of his teaching that it can be determined where and to what extent they are to be assigned an influence. An *a priori* judgment is not admissible.[1]

While it would be hazardous to affirm that teachers like Jesus and Paul must be assumed to have been bound by the limitations of their age so as to be unable to transcend it in spiritual insight and bring into it inspirations and motives that were hitherto unknown, it would be equally hazardous to maintain that even such pre-eminent teachers could remain unaffected by their intellectual *milieu* and environment, the spiritual atmosphere into which they were born, the literature by which they were nourished, the science, the geography, the view of nature and the world in which they were educated, the social conditions and ideals that moulded their character, the theological and religious ideas and hopes with which they were imbued from childhood

[1] Luke ii. 52; Matt. xxiv. 36; Luke x. 18; xi. 20, 24; xiii. 32. See Schwartzkopff, *Konnte Jesus irren?* 1896; *Die Weissagungen Jesu Christi vom seinem Tod, seiner Auferstehung und Wiederkunft und ihre Erfüllung*, 1895.

—in a word, by all that gave their age its quality, its distinction, and its limitations.

In fact, an examination of the New Testament books shows that the spiritual prophets, teachers, and writers of primitive Christianity could not but employ for the *form* of their teaching the mould supplied by their age. Its language and to a considerable degree its terminology they were obliged to adopt. Otherwise they could not have delivered a message intelligible to the people they addressed. They could not, for example, deal with supposed demoniacal possession, either in the matter of so-called exorcism or in writing accounts of the phenomena that it presented, except upon the plane of the common popular belief. In employing the sacred Scriptures of the Jews for didactic purposes they were under the necessity of assuming the inerrancy of these writings in accordance with the prevalent opinion of their Jewish contemporaries. When they quoted these Scriptures in proof of the fulfilment of prophecy they could employ no other method of interpretation than the one in vogue in their time, however imperfect this might be.

While we must be on our guard against charging Jesus and the New Testament writers with an adaptation to their hearers and readers in the sense

that they put into their words a meaning unknown to those whom they addressed,—a procedure that could be nothing short of a covert deception,—we must regard it as fortunate for the accomplishment of their work that they employed the language and terminology of their time in all that pertained to the form of their teaching. Without the terms "Messiah" and "kingdom of God"—Jewish designations of a very definite import—we cannot conceive of the message of Jesus as so influencing the thought and imagination of men as to have produced the Christian Church. The slight change in the old content, plainly indicated as it was, did not deprive them of their essential antique force and significance.

In no part of the teaching of the New Testament is the application of the discrimination of transient and permanent more important than in that which has reference to the social relations. Here the *perspective* of the writers and teachers must be taken into account, the impending end of the age, the early dissolution of the existing social order, and the advent of the kingdom of God. It must be considered whether, in view of such a futurity as presented itself to them, they could regard the relations and duties of men as they would have regarded them with a different perspective. Could they have

spoken to men whom they thought to be standing at the end of one great world-period and the beginning of another as they would have addressed the men of a hundred generations in the future, had such a period of human evolution and complex social life come within their vision?

It may be hazardous to attempt to determine what the great Teacher would do if he were in Chicago or in the editorial chair of a modern newspaper, but one risks little in saying that his words about non-resistance would be greatly modified if addressed to such a social order as ours, to the very existence of which resistance to the evil-doer is essential. The defence of one's insulted honour may not require a blow for a blow, but it is evident that tame submission to an outrage, the turning of the other cheek, would be the greatest disservice to society and to the evil-doer himself. Unresisted rascality will multiply itself a hundred-fold, and destroy the social order that submits to its depredations. We cannot with impunity give our cloak to the man who by the forms of law takes away our coat. We must not put the law itself into the hands of lawlessness.[1]

[1] Matt. v. 38, 40. The injunctions about non-resistance were not addressed exclusively to the apostles as a guide to them in their mission, but to the "multitude of Jesus' disciples," according to Luke vi. 17, and to the "multitudes" according to Matt. vii. 28.

When to "inherit eternal life" meant to have a part in the kingdom of God, which was expected soon to come, the question as to what a man should do in order to secure that great inheritance might well be answered: "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."[1] It may, however, be questioned whether the same Teacher, standing in the social order of the twentieth century and looking with his keen insight upon the unfolding of its vast and complicated drama, would give the same answer to the same question—whether, knowing all the beneficent utilities of wealth in the promotion of human welfare, he might not see a better use for it than to give it to the poor.

Would the same Teacher now have no more to say without discrimination to men of great wealth than: "Woe to you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation"?[2] One might, indeed, with all reverence ask whether he would say this to them at all. Doubtless the eager, all-absorbing pursuit of riches for no other purpose than selfish gratification, with a passion that knows no scruples and a heart that is dead to charity, is a grievous sin against humanity, and deserves a three-fold woe. But what they most need who bow the knee to Mammon, and

[1] Matt. xix. 21. [2] Luke vi. 24.

sacrifice on his polluted altar their strength, manhood, honour, and spiritual susceptibility, is not so much condemnation as direction and inspiration toward the divine uses to which they might consecrate their powers and their accumulations. There are, moreover, many rich men whose capital, wisely employed, is a beneficent social force, or whose wealth is bountifully bestowed upon great charities—men who are finding their "consolation" in seeing the vast utilities that their riches are producing and in devising others that shall be more beneficent.

It may be questioned, moreover, whether, knowing the rich men of our day, and seeing what great and fruitful charities they have endowed, and what helpful utilities their wealth promotes in commerce, in education, in the Church, in the feeding and clothing and sheltering of the multitudes dependent upon it, Jesus would have no more to say to them than to recount the fearful doom of the rich man of the parable, or tell the story of the other man of great possessions, whose soul was to be required of him the very day when he was planning to enlarge his storehouses, and whom we may assume no better fortune awaited than torment in the flames.[1]

An undiscriminating blessing upon the "poor"

[1] Luke xii. 16-21; xvi. 19-26.

could hardly be pronounced in this age when the kingdom of God, the inheritance of which was promised to them, is regarded, in the sense in which it was apprehended in the time of Jesus, as an unreality, a dream, an illusion. No doubt, moreover, poverty has its temptations and perils no less than riches. The state of mind induced by poverty, the gnawing care, the depression, the pessimistic view of life, the distrust of the order of the world, the keen sense of the injustice and oppression suffered from men and from a share in which heaven is not excluded, the revolt under the burdens to be borne, the unrest in view of the uncertainty as to the future, the absorbing anxiety for the fate of loved ones, the wolf at the door,—all this sad inheritance of penury is quite as unfavourable to the spiritual life as is the "deceitfulness of riches." The qualifications of Lazarus for paradise are not apparent.

The injunction to take no anxious thought for the morrow, for food and clothing, because the heavenly Father feeds the fowls and clothes the lilies, and that of the writer of Hebrews, "Be content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I forsake thee,"[1] must be regarded as transient because incomplete

[1] Matt. vi. 25, 26; Heb. xiii. 5.

and not founded upon the actual relation of man's future fortune to his present activity and achievement. Such teaching might do for men who were looking for the immediate advent of the kingdom of God, but it is not adapted to an order of life that is controlled by a clear understanding of the relation of cause and effect, and that is based upon the conviction of the unvarying course of nature.

Of a similar character is the censure in the Epistle of James, directed against those who purpose to go into the city and "trade" and "get gain," as well as the writer's undiscriminating condemnation of the rich, who should "weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon them."[1] Such words have an appearance of congruity only from the point of view of the impending end of the world, like those of Paul, to whom the time was "shortened," so that "henceforth those that have wives may be as though they had none; and those that weep, as though they wept not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy, as though they possessed not; and those that use the world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away."[2] In view of the hastening doom of the old world, there could be

[1] Jas. iv. 13, 14; v. 1-6. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 28, 29.

only folly in engaging in trade, in marrying, and in accumulating riches. In the brief period before the great catastrophe there was no time to attain the legitimate end of marriage. Besides, he that was married could not duly "care for the things of the Lord." As to wealth, it occupied with worldly interests, with "the cares of this age," the mind that ought to be filled with thoughts of "the last things," and it must, moreover, be destroyed when in the impending judgment "the fashion of this age" should perish.

On the other hand, principles of permanent validity and worth appear in the condemnation of "avarice" and in the warnings against the "temptations," the "snares," and the "foolish and hurtful lusts" to which they are exposed who "desire to be rich," although there is a manifest exaggeration in the declaration that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." [1] Of worth for all times, too, for such as need the like admonitions, are the words of the writer just quoted to the effect that the rich should not be highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy, but that they should be ready to distribute and abounding in

[1] Eph. v. 3, 5 ; 1 Tim. vi. 6, 9.

sympathy. Here is an admirable combination of the ethical and the religious, which also appears in the passage quoted from the first Epistle of John in the next preceding chapter, to the effect that the man of wealth who, seeing his brother in need, shuts up his compassion from him, is without the love of God in his heart.

In Jesus' direction to the rich young man to sell his goods and give to the poor, and in the commentary upon it addressed to his disciples, to the effect that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,[1] there is conveyed a truth of permanent value and importance, if we assume the qualification that a particular kind of rich man was intended. It is true that there is no qualification in the passage, and all rich men appear to be included and to be declared incapable of salvation without a special divine intervention. It would, however, hardly be unjust to the thought of Jesus to suppose that he had in mind the rich as he perhaps knew them, such men as are condemned in the Epistle of James for defrauding their labourers, men entirely selfish and unscrupulous in their dealings and altogether absorbed in the pursuit of gain, and that

[1] Mark x. 21-28.

he would not apply such words to the honest and benevolent men of wealth of whom we happily know many in our times. The truth here taught and applicable to all ages is that a man may be so pre-occupied with riches and worldly affairs, so engrossed in the pursuit of gain, and so fascinated with the pleasures that a great fortune places within his reach as almost to lose the capacity for the spiritual life, or in the terminology of the first Christian century, for the concerns of the kingdom of God.

A similar teaching is contained in the parable of the rich grain-grower, in whose case it is evidently implied that his wealth was a peril and a hindrance to the spiritual life because of his entire preoccupation with the interests and cares pertaining to worldly possessions. Moreover, he is not only intent on enlarging his storehouses, but also his mind is occupied only with thoughts of the pleasures and selfish enjoyments that his abundance will afford him. He says to himself that he will henceforth take his ease, and eat, drink, and be merry, since he has "much goods laid up for many years." He is accordingly called a "fool," for it is not wisdom but superlative folly to put one's trust in worldly possessions, as if they could preserve one's life,

instead of thinking of God and preparing for the life to come. The lesson of the parable is evidently, then, a warning against an engrossing occupation of the mind with the accumulation of wealth, since a man thereby becomes corrupted with worldliness, enervated by the indulgence of his appetites, and degraded by merrymaking sensuality. He becomes indifferent to the goods of the spirit and is not "rich toward God."

The peril of absorbing occupation with the accumulation of earthly possessions is indicated in the injunction not to lay up treasures upon the earth, where they are exposed to moth and rust and to the depredations of thieves, but in heaven, where they are in perpetual security. The danger lies in the engrossment of the "heart" in worldly interests to the neglect of the imperishable goods of the eternal life, for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.[1] Only so far as one occupies one's thoughts and affections with the interests of the higher life does one lay up treasures the fruition of which is reserved for the future. In this matter the heart cannot be divided. There is no two-fold service. The worship of Mammon is incompatible with the requisite allegiance to God.[2]

[1] Matt. vi. 19-21. [2] Matt. vi. 24.

The truth and permanent worth of this teaching needs no other exemplification than it has had in all ages of the world. He alone can pursue an activity in the realm of Mammon that is compatible with a due submission to the will of God who consecrates his wealth to the service of God through the service of man.

On the whole, then, the attitude of Jesus and the other New Testament teachers toward wealth was unfriendly, because with their spiritual insight they saw its perils for the life of the spirit. Their message to their own age appears to have been sometimes harsh and one-sided. What they would say to this age we must infer from their spirit as it is manifested in those teachings of theirs that are of universal application. Their teaching regarding the social question that is of eternal truth and validity, their message to all the ages, is that as the children of God all men are alike before Him, and that all who would be His spiritual sons must show toward their brethren lovingkindness, helpfulness, sympathy, and compassion. In the Christianity of the New Testament there are recognised no distinctions of rank, wealth, or station. This is the revolutionary principle that it brought into a society in which the

poor and lowly were only instruments of the rich and great.[1]

The primitive-Christian ideal appears in the association together, in the earliest communities of the faith, of high and low, rich and poor, in the "all things common" of the Jerusalem Church, and in Paul's rebuke of the wealthy regarding the abuse of the Lord's Supper. To the great apostle the slave was Christ's freeman, and in Jesus there was no Greek or Jew, bond or free, but all were one "in Christ." Well might "the brother of low degree glory in his high estate," for as a brother in Christ he was inferior to none. Thus Christianity was originally, and is essentially "good news for the poor." It introduced into the world an interest in and a solicitude for the unfortunate that was before unknown, and so far as its primal spirit and purpose

[1] "By means of the conception of man's sonship to God did Jesus in the most powerful manner awaken in mankind the consciousness of brotherliness, the mutual responsibility of all for one another, and the feeling of solidarity. At the same time he declared that love in the form of serving and suffering is the highest and the only power, the power that abides for ever. The Son of Man, he declares, is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister. Therefore, he who will be greatest, let him be a servant of all. The requirement of this serving love, this self-denial and renunciation of the world without fleeing from it, combined with full devotion to the world, is in truth a new commandment, and more than this a new world-conquering power that proceeds from Jesus."—Kambli, *Das Eigenthum*, etc., p. 63.

have been realised—too incompletely, alas! there has been a marked improvement of their condition. This gospel for the poor proves itself good tidings also for the rich, so far as under its influence the hearts of the latter are softened toward their less fortunate brethren, and vast material resources are made to promote the welfare of all. The great New Testament doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, which has as a corollary the dignity of man as man, will accomplish its mission as the gospel of Jesus, the gospel of humanity and love, goes on its conquering course, by turning the hearts of men more and more toward one another and making universal the fellowship of Jesus, in which, according to the primitive-Christian ideal, there shall practically disappear the distinctions of high and low, rich and poor.

CHAPTER X

THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE SOCIAL QUESTION OF TO-DAY

THE consideration of the relation of the New Testament to the solution of the social problem presented by riches and poverty that confronts us to-day does not belong to the scientific treatment of the theme of this monograph, but the subject is so closely related to the matters that have had attention in the foregoing chapters, and is, moreover, of so great practical interest that a discussion of it seems to be a fitting conclusion to the book. All who believe that the New Testament is an authority for the faith and practice of Christians in their social as well as in their private relations will certainly think that such an addition to the treatise proper is not only quite congruous but also necessary to a complete discussion of the subject in its wider relations.

On whatever *a priori* grounds we may believe in the authority of the New Testament, we have practical demonstration of it in the experience that in the matter of religious faith it furnishes principles adapted to promote the highest perfection of the spiritual nature, and in the matter of life such impulses and ideals as tend to the best possible individual and social achievement. Our experience thus reproduces that of the great teachers of the New Testament, so far as their objects of faith and their ideals and impulses become our own. We see that they became what they were, and taught as they did, because they had a true insight into the laws of the spirit and the principles of the social order. It is characteristic, then, of the modern estimate and use of the New Testament that men are searching its pages rather for ideals and inspirations than for systems of belief and outlines of social polities. Thus it is becoming in the hands of teachers and learners more a Book of Life and less an arsenal of the weapons of dogmatic warfare.

Under this limitation must the New Testament be regarded and treated as an authority in the social question of to-day, so far as it is at all appealed to in this relation. To Jesus and Paul and the writer

of the Epistle of James[1] the social question did not present itself, in the complexity in which it confronts us in this age, as a problem that they felt called upon to solve. They looked upon the rich, selfish, grasping, and hard-hearted, and upon the poor, labouring, weary, and heavy-laden, primarily with reference to their susceptibility to repentance and their capacity for the righteousness required for the impending kingdom of God. In view of the catastrophe of an age that was hastening to its end and in the dazzling splendour of the new era of the divine rule, the light of which to the intense prophetic vision was already on the horizon, there could hardly be a clear perspective of a social order struggling from generation to generation with the solution of its mighty problems.

With reference to the great Teacher in this relation I will quote the words of a scholar well known to students of current German theology for his caution and candour: "How different are the general relations with which we have to deal from those to which Jesus referred his message I do not need to point out in detail. Jesus reckoned on an impending end of the existing course of the world,

[1] See the writer's article, "James, Epistle of," in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, ii.

therefore he did not take into consideration the task of a dutiful care for the remote future and also the task of a gradual reform of human relations—tasks that press themselves upon the moral consciousness when that presupposition is absent."[1]

If, accordingly, one will seek in the New Testament an authority for the social life of men in this age, for the construction of a new or for the reform of the existing social order, one must first have a clear idea as to the kind of authority that is sought. The kind of authority that is to be looked for is of course precisely and only the kind of authority that is there to be found by a right interpretation of the New Testament. The indispensable first step for the inquirer who seeks such instruction is that he put himself in the place of the teachers to whom he would appeal, and endeavour to understand the environment, the dominant ideas, and the purposes that determined or at least influenced their social teachings. He must decide whether they are to be judged and interpreted primarily as social philosophers or as preachers of righteousness, as scientific political economists or as heralds of the kingdom of God; whether their environment simply appealed to

[1] Wendt, "Das Eigenthum nach christlicher Beurtheilung," in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1898, 2tes Heft, p. 114.

their sympathies, or suggested a radical reconstruction of the social order; and whether they purposed such a reconstruction, or merely endeavoured to inspire men to live in the existing society more in the spirit of kindness, charity, and fraternity.

Such an inquirer, if he would make his search fruitful, would be led to ask himself whether he is to regard most of the teachings relating to earthly possessions, to riches and poverty, and to the relations of rich and poor, as sayings of the occasion, adapted to existing relations and necessities, or as the expression of principles having perpetual validity and applicable to human society in all ages and regions. He would have to determine whether such directions as "Be content with your wages"; "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none"; "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor"; "Sell that ye have, and give alms," and others of like import, are to be regarded as binding everywhere and upon all—whether, in a word, they are at all to be taken as principles that can be made controlling in human society.[1] He would raise the question whether the mode of life adopted by Jesus and required of his disciples in their ministry is to be regarded as binding upon his followers in the

[1] Luke iii. 11, 14; xii. 33; xviii. 22.

ministry in all times and places,—that they who go forth "to preach the kingdom of God" are to "take nothing" for their journey, "neither staff nor wallet, nor bread nor money, neither have two coats,"[1]—and whether the social relations of all Christians should be governed by the direction not to invite to their houses at a feast their friends, kinsmen, and rich neighbours, but the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind.[2]

The consideration of these passages and others of a similar character leads the student to seek for a method of interpretation that shall be just to their original intention. If a principle of exegesis can be adopted that will assign them to their true relation in the New Testament as a whole, it should serve to show in what sense the New Testament may be taken as a guide in the social affairs of men. It is unwarrantable to have recourse to "figurative language," "hyperbole," or "Oriental style," since the passages contain nothing of the kind. The only legitimate exegesis of the passages is one that assigns to them their obvious literal meaning. Nothing else could have been intended. In no other sense could they have been understood by the original hearers or readers. But we have not done with them when we

[1] Luke ix. 3. [2] Luke xiv. 12 f.

have reached this conclusion. The one important matter remains to be considered—how are they related to us? Do they "find" us at all, and if so, how? Obviously it is impracticable for us to carry out these directions in their actual import. Equally obvious is it that they do not express principles of a permanent and universal social order. The question, then, that the inquirer is constrained to ask is, whether they are therefore to be disregarded as wholly worthless for us.

The matter of paramount importance is that such of these injunctions as concern riches and poverty express an *attitude* toward these two conditions in society. They denote a sympathy and a want of sympathy with the poor on the one hand and the rich on the other. More than this, there is an unmistakable implication of a *duty* of the rich toward the poor that includes interest, kindness, and helpfulness. This is in general terms the underlying truth in these passages and others of kindred import. This is the spirit of the texts, and it is life-giving everywhere and always. With the letter, the ministry of which is death, we may well have nothing to do. If, then, these precepts cannot, in the present social conditions, be carried out according to a strict interpretation, it happens with this part of the gospel of

Jesus as with all the rest of it, that though its outward form may perish, its inward, essential truth remains, and that in every age it is fruitful only as it is adapted to the changing needs of the times. If in the circle of the ages some things fail of application and fall away, those things that remain are found to be no less effective and potent on that account.

If the foregoing considerations furnish the right key to the interpretation of the somewhat "rough requirements of renunciation" made by Jesus of the rich men of his time, of the exaltation of poverty, and of the favourable disposition toward the poor, they may serve as a means of correcting many gross perversions of his teachings that show themselves to be erroneous because they run counter to the entire spirit and intention of his gospel. Such words as, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth"; "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father and mother and wife and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple"; and, "So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple,"[1] have been appealed to as sanctioning the ascetic principle and enjoining asceticism as

[1] Matt. vi. 19; Luke xiv. 26, 33.

a mode of life. In supposed compliance with them men have thought themselves commanded to withdraw their interest and activity from the world, to renounce the natural duties to their kindred, and to spend their lives in ascetic self-mortification and degrading poverty.

Yet Jesus was manifestly no ascetic, and did not require of his disciples an ascetic mode of life.[1] His gospel commands, moreover, that men love their neighbours instead of isolating themselves from them in monkish seclusion and indifference, and thus presupposes a life of helpful activity in their midst. Such sayings as those quoted above are not to be regarded as inflexible directions for the conduct of life or as principles of the social order in general. They can be brought into relation with the social question in every age only as they are adapted according to a right sense of their spirit to the existing situation and needs. If some of them do not admit of application and use, these may be disregarded as belonging to the transient elements of Jesus' teaching, the temporary character of which by no means impairs the value of those that are permanent and universal. One might doubtless find better uses of wealth than bestowing it in alms.

[1] Matt. xi. 19 ; Mark ii. 18 f.

One could certainly render it more helpful to the poor than by making them pensioners upon one's bounty to the loss of their self-respect. Moreover, riches can be accumulated and employed to such beneficent ends that their possessor by his wise and helpful use of them lays up treasures in heaven. Who will say that the man who in such ways fulfils the spirit of these requirements, which is sympathy with the poor and opposition to selfishness and greed, is not as truly a follower of Jesus as if he were to attempt to observe them according to the letter of the texts?

Another sort of perversion of the social teachings of the New Testament, which arises from a narrow literalism, is that which finds in it the "programme" of anarchy or that of organised socialism. Renan, for example, thought Jesus to have been "in one view" an anarchist without an idea of civil government, which he regarded as an abuse, and that he dreamed of a social revolution that would result in the levelling of all rank and the overthrow of authority. Professor Herron finds "the science of society" in the Sermon on the Mount, which he regards as "a treatise on political economy," and a German socialist thinks that were Jesus on the earth to-day he would affiliate with the social democrats.

The elaborate work of the German pastor Todt undertook to prove by a detailed exegesis that the New Testament supports the creed of socialism. Even the so-called Social Democracy of Germany, apart from its irreligion, might, according to Todt, appeal to the New Testament, while the true socialism, which is designated "Christian," may be said to rest upon it as its book of principles. Brake's refutation of Todt, however, shows the futility of all attempts to find in the New Testament the "programme" of any social system.[1]

It may, then, be regarded as the conclusion of an unbiassed exegesis that the student of the New Testament who goes to it without a preconceived theory will find in it neither a social philosophy, nor the foundations, nor the outlines of a social system. Jesus confined his social teachings to expressing sympathy with the poor, to enjoining the duties of the brotherhood of man, to enforcing the practice of kindness, helpfulness, and charity, and to setting before men the supreme example of the divine benevolence. He also indicated in unmistakable terms his hostility to the selfish greed that accumulates riches to the injury of the weak, that "devours

[1] *Der christliche Socialismus des Pfarrer's Todt. Eine theologische Kritik*, von G. Brake, 1879.

widows' houses," and to wealth itself as one of the evil powers of a wicked age, "the Mammon of unrighteousness." He prophesied no time when poverty and its attendant distress would be done away, and there would no longer be any demands upon human sympathy and charity. Rather with touching pathos he said, "The poor ye have always with you." Paul went little farther than to condemn avarice, to promote a collection in his gentile churches for the poor Christians in Jerusalem, and to indite an immortal hymn to love. The writer of the Epistle of James deprecates discrimination against the poor, and pronounces a woe upon the rich and those who "trade and get gain."

If, then, the teachers whose words are recorded in the New Testament did not recognise a social problem as understood in the present age, were not anarchists hostile to every social regulation, did not occupy themselves with a philosophy of society, were indifferent to theories of political economy, and expressed no predilection for any social system, whether that of wages or that of socialism, what relation can their teachings have to the problems that have long vexed every civilised society, and that are from year to year becoming more complicated and urgent?

The New Testament teachers were not practical

reformers, and they appear never to have thought of organising a social polity. On the contrary, they were idealists with very definite conceptions of the ethical ends of the individual life. Their conspicuous ideals were humanity, brotherhood, righteousness, and charity, and they did not concern themselves with the most effective method of realising them in a social order. To them it was the chief thing that men should be humane, fraternal, just, and kind. It is not surprising, then, that Jesus favoured the doubtful policy of almsgiving, and that Paul was content with raising a contribution for the poor, and said nothing about establishing a Christian communism. Whatever, accordingly, the New Testament can furnish us that may be helpful in the solution of our social problems must be found in its suggestions and inspirations toward the great ethical achievements that it sets before men. Principles the seeker will find in it, not systems. There is the Golden Rule as an ideal and a life-giving principle, but no social order, no economical system in which it can best be realised is laid down, whether the wages-system, profit-sharing, or socialism. The great Idealist has given us the one, the other men must find out for themselves in the school of experience, in the stress of economic life.

Among the ideals presented in the New Testament that lend themselves to an application to the social question may be mentioned the precedence given to ethical and spiritual aims and achievements over material interests and gains. The so-called goods of this world are by all its teachers subordinated to the things of the spirit. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth"; "The life is more than the food";[1] "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof"; "If ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."[2] No man who does not profess the creed of materialism can doubt the truth of these words of the great spiritual prophets. We are not concerned here with proving them to be true. Let the appeal be made to experience and history. The social lesson that they teach is that the true aim of human life is not possessions, gain, the means of luxury, but the practice of the moral virtues, the quickening of one's life through devoting it to the good of others, the subordination of one's activities to righteousness, honesty, kindness, and fraternity. Who can estimate the influence that these ideals would exert upon the

[1] Luke xii. 15, 23. [2] Rom. viii. 13; xiii. 14.

social order if they could be made supreme? How much less would there be of unscrupulous gain, of the hot chase after riches, of the fever of demoralising speculation, of the selfish greed that cares not whom it destroys, of the hard-hearted indifference to the poor, whose bodies and souls are converted into machines for producing wealth!

The paramount worth of the individual man in the higher relations and possibilities of his life is a New Testament principle that is applicable to our subject. It is plainly implied in the parable of the Lost Sheep, which the shepherd goes into the mountains to seek, and in Paul's injunction that no one put a stumbling-block in his brother's way or an occasion of falling.[1] Few more fruitful principles are contained in the gospel of Jesus than this, that the worth and welfare of the human soul are of such inestimable importance that the individual should not be made the slave of the institutions that men establish. They are made for him, not he for them.[2] This principle is violated in the social order when men let wealth become their master, and make themselves slaves to their possessions, while in the fierce rush for gain they forget the upward look, and shut their hearts against sympathy. It is more flagrantly

[1] Matt. xviii. 12; Rom. xiv. 13. [2] Mark ii. 27.

violated when whole classes of the poor are made subject to an iron system in which law rules without the alleviation that kindness and a fraternal feeling might afford, in which the weak go down in despair while the strong do not extend the helping hand, and in which masses of men are regarded and treated as if they were made for the service of Mammon, and not as if Mammon had no reason for being enthroned and accorded service unless in order to promote the higher ends of humanity.

The teaching that the gaining of the whole world is to be deprecated if in such an acquisition the paramount interests of a man are put in jeopardy, has a manifest and natural relation to the social question. An implied warning is here not far to seek. The hazard of seeking to grasp the whole world is that of losing in the attempt all that is worth living for. The inference with respect to acquiring and using earthly possessions is evident. They should serve the end of securing an existence that is worthy of a spiritual being. They are not an end in themselves, since as such they are a peril to the true welfare of their possessor. The imminent hazards of wealth as they saw it, doubtless determined the attitude toward it taken by the New Testament teachers. It requires no supernatural intervention

to bring a "woe" upon the rich who do not hold their wealth in the spirit of the New Testament. It comes as the swift and inevitable sequence of the selfishness that obscures the vision of the spirit.

If, then, wealth can be acquired and held without spiritual hazards only when it is made the means of securing an existence worthy of a spiritual being, its perils can be averted only by making it serve the welfare of the weak, dependent, and poor. Its possessor need not distribute it in alms according to the letter of Jesus' words. He may make it serve the most humane ends by keeping it in his possession as the foundation of beneficent industries. If he subordinate it to human welfare he may, according to the spirit of the Master's teaching, or at least according to a legitimate application of it, become "perfect." He can make it serve the highest ends in himself only when he regards it as a trust to be employed in such economic uses or for such social purposes as promote human improvement and progress.

Opposed to the New Testament spirit, therefore, is the idea of wealth, according to which it is regarded as a means to sensuous enjoyment, to sumptuous living, and to distinction and power. The prevalence of this idea among many of those who are eminent in the financial world is to be regretted

since it generates in multitudes below a striving for riches to the same end. Over against this conception of earthly possessions stands, majestic and uncompromising, the New Testament ideal of the true goods of life as consisting of humanity, righteousness, justice, and brotherhood—an ideal that subordinates the manner of living to the quality of life, possessions to character. It is due to the former point of view that the agitations and conflicts in the social order turn almost entirely upon questions of economics. The social question is concerned rather with how much every one is to get than with what every one is to become. The gigantic materialism of the times overtops and hides from the view of men the idealism of the New Testament.

So far as men in their economic strivings and in their deification of Wealth contemn religion, and disregard the spiritual ideals of its great teachers, and so far as getting more is paramount with all classes to manhood and character, so far do they all contribute to the eclipse of faith and to the advent of a people without God in the world. "A social order that sets up the economic life as the highest goal of mankind, and as the ultimate purpose of this economic life the full product of the labour of the individual in the form of means of enjoyment, denotes the

organisation of human society from the point of view of the stomach-question. It has materialism as its presupposition and atheism as its necessary consequence."[1]

The most pathetic aspect of the social question is presented in poverty with its wretchedness, degradation, and suffering—poverty that quenches the light of life in the night of despair, poverty that results from incapacity, ignorance, improvidence, vice, and incurable "taints of blood." That there can be any quick, magic "cure," any sovereign remedy, for this through the overthrow of the existing social order and the establishment of another may be argued, but yet remains to be shown. This condition with all its woes appears to be incidental in the evolution of mankind. The race cannot be lifted out of it, but must grow out of it; and growth is slow. The effective remedy will be found to be not a new system, but a new spirit; and a spirit proceeds neither by magic nor by leaps and bounds. Alleviation of present distress is in many cases all that can be done, and to do this is to carry out the spirit of the teaching of him who "went about doing good." In the same spirit a wise charity will seek to remove

[1] Brake, *Der christliche Socialismus des Pfarrers Todt*, 1879, p. 30.

the causes of poverty; but here it encounters the difficulty that in most cases the task is beyond human skill. It accords with our present purpose to remark only that the vast achievements of charity in this age, the great institutions and the beneficent activities individual and organised that promote it, however far short they may come of realising the highest ideal of humanity, are attempts to embody and give practical effect to the ethical principles and humane sympathies and aspirations of the New Testament teachers.

The aim and scope of this monograph do not admit of entering upon a discussion of the complicated question of the relations of labour and capital. Whether or no the problem can be solved under the existing social order without a strain that will rupture it, few are competent to determine, and the present writer does not pretend to be one of these few. The solution that socialism offers is not likely for yet a long time to be applied. It has already been pointed out in these pages that the New Testament does not specifically recommend this system, although it would be hazardous to maintain that it is opposed to the spirit of that Book. So much as this may at least be said, that every one who has the spirit of the New Testament will

sympathise with the labouring classes in all the legitimate efforts that they may make toward an improvement of their condition. He will extend a hand to help them in attaining an existence worthy of men for themselves and their families. Equality is, indeed, not attainable in a world in which inequality of natural endowment inexorably fixes the limits of every man's achievement. But to rise to a plane of life that has an intellectual and spiritual horizon is a rational ideal for every man.

It is in accordance with the spirit of the great ethical and religious teachers whose words we have been considering that the strong, the prosperous, and the mighty in the industrial world should extend sympathy to the weak, the dependent, and the poor. Nothing short of a lively interest in their welfare, and so far as possible a personal interest, can meet the requirements of human brotherhood. The ideal is certainly not Utopian "that necessitates the 'human touch' in all social relationships, and rejects every tendency on the part of an employer to treat the men whom he employs as if they were machines or animals of another and lower species than himself." [1] No one who has given even a superficial

[1] N. P. Gilman, *A Dividend to Labour: A Study of Employers Welfare Institutions*, 1899, p. 15.

attention to the subject can be ignorant of the almost insuperable difficulties that confront the employer in his relations with the employed. The two are so far apart in their respective points of view and knowledge of the situation that hostility is more likely to arise than a mutual understanding to be reached. But humanity on the part of the employer and fair dealing on both sides will clear away many difficulties. The greed that disregards the welfare of the poor and dependent, and is opposed to the Christian spirit, is one of the first factors of the social problem to be removed. It should never have been necessary for the State, in order to protect women and children and the lives and health of its citizens, to legislate against the selfishness that respected neither the one nor the other.

The recognition of the man, the brother, in the labourer on the part of the employer is in accord with Jesus' estimate of the worth of the individual, and neither our present social system nor any other conceivable one can get on without this. The Bishop of London, speaking in 1898 of the modern industrial system, remarked that "the man was hastily converted into the 'hand,' and the conditions of his humanity, which had never been absent from consideration before, were suddenly left out of calcula-

tion. . . . The 'hand' must again be converted into the man on the broader basis that the development of common life demands."[1] The doctrine of human brotherhood leads to a conception of the solidarity of the race that should radically change the prevalent notion of business from that of an occupation in which is concerned the gain of an individual or a corporation to that of a matter vitally touching society and the welfare of the many. Really no one can have an interest in anything that opposes, one might even say that does not promote, the general welfare. Mr. Frederick Harrison remarks pertinently to this point that "The problem is: How can the devil of separate interests, the power that drives man apart from man, be banished from the human heart? Hope lies in the progressive realisation that despite all transient, contrary seemings we have all really one life, that we are members one of another, that the true order of the universe is such that the interests of all men and all nations are identical, that in universal mutual service alone are to be found true progress and true prosperity for all."

We must leave it to the students of social science to point out in detail the means of solving the intricate problems that wealth and poverty force

[1] Quoted by Professor Gilman in *A Dividend to Labour*, p. 18.

upon their attention. Our task has been accomplished if we have succeeded in showing how in a general way the ethical ideals presented in the New Testament may furnish guidance and inspiration in this great task. If we have not found any definite form of a system of society indicated in its pages, we have found, it is hoped, the basis of every true and permanent social order because the foundation of all true living for the individual man. Let not men reject the spirit of its great teachings because they stumble at the letter. Rather let them apply this spirit to the social problems of every age, and thus hasten the advent of the kingdom of brotherhood and peace.

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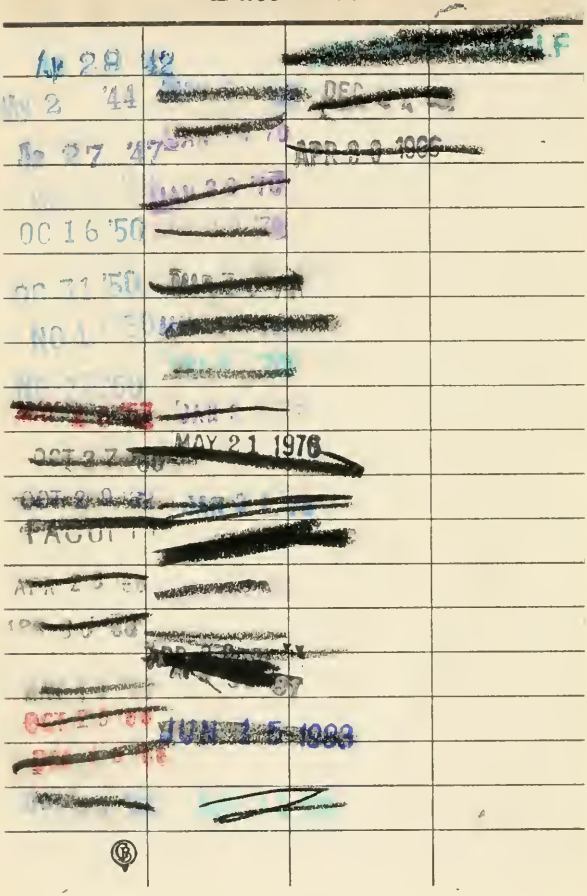

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