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Turning points in my life

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

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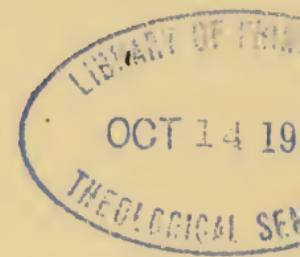
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BY

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

AUTHOR OF "THE SOTERIOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT," "THE GOSPEL IN THE GOSPELS," "THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL," "HIGH PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE," "THE REASON OF LIFE," ETC., ETC.



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Turning Points in My Life

INTRODUCTION

DURING the first week of August, 1911, there was held at Sewanee, Tennessee, a reunion of those who had been my students during the thirty-six years of my active connection with the University of the South. This event had been for some time contemplated, and came at a most propitious moment. Conditions could not well have conspired to make it more thoroughly successful and enjoyable.

The exercises consisted of papers read by me in the morning; services, with brief addresses by others, in the afternoon; and public general conferences in the evenings — with private and social functions between.

And now I am requested, in publishing the several papers which were my contribution to the reunion, to accompany it with some explanatory account of the occasion itself — with three objects in view. In the first place, the volume is desired as an interpretation and a memorial of the reunion for the use of those

who took part in it, and who wish to preserve and perpetuate the memory and the benefits of it. In the second place, it is wanted as a record and report of the week for the many more, equally interested and concerned in it, who were prevented by many and various reasons from being with us at Sewanee. And in the third place, there are friends, of my own, known and unknown, of Sewanee, of the Church, of the ideals and verities for which we all stand, who are of neither of the above classes, and who may take an interest in the more familiar and informal treatment of the matters with which our conferences were concerned. For these several purposes I am desired to preserve the personal, autobiographical and historical, features of the report and to retain as much of a concrete coloring as possible. I am willing to do this chiefly because in the reunion there has been so much of a one-sided expression of obligation to myself, that it is necessary to avail myself of the opportunity to say something of my own obligations in return. Let me speak then, first, a little of the reunionists, both in will and deed, of my past relations with them, and of what I owe to them.

Passing at the age of sixteen from school to

college (the Military College of South Carolina), at twenty to university (of Virginia), at twenty-three into seminary life for only a year and a half, and out of this into active service in war, after which came a half dozen years of reconstruction life and ministry—I came finally to Sewanee with very little of either technical or practical training and preparation for my duties as: (1) Chaplain, (2) Professor of Ethics, and (3) Developer, as opportunity and material might be furnished, of a projected Theological Department. For several years I discharged, as I could, all these functions, as much making and shaping myself, or being shaped and made, through them, as performing these tasks upon others. Many of those under me were older young men whose education had been delayed by the disorganized conditions of the war and after. Moreover, the times had bred among them a spirit of individualism and independence, with more or less of fearlessness and lawlessness. Finally, the institution was new, the material unshaped, the whole principle and system of the place undeveloped. Through my several offices I had much to do, in a personal way, with the discipline and life of those days; I was chiefly

entrusted with the evolution of an order of Gownsmen, through whom the desired spirit and tone and character were to be impressed by degrees upon the whole body of students. Much of this work was done along with and through my classes, which thus became my main medium of influence in the University. Over us all we were fortunate at the beginning in having the clear head, the wise spirit and temper, and the strong hand of our then Vice Chancellor, General Gorgas, who had been considered the best organizing member of the Confederate Department of War.

I mention these details, chiefly to account for the peculiarly close and personal relations which from the beginning grew up between myself and my immediate students, those of my own classes. I was in fact more one of them than one merely over them. I was finding and making myself in and with and through and by, as well as upon, them. I claimed nothing, exacted nothing, imposed nothing of or for myself, and they both took more from me and gave me more than I ever asked or deserved. In addition to all this, the isolated location of Sewanee, the high quality of its limited community, the social unity, warmth, and charm

of the place and the life, conducted in a singular way to the cultivation of personal relations and ties, as well between students and professors as among all others. So from those early days I became in many instances the intimate personal friend of many of my students, their confidant in love, their counsellor in difficulty or trouble, their companion, so far as presence and sympathy could go, in amusement or play. Of course, with age and with engrossing care and occupations, the outward exercise and expression of all these ties grew less, but I am grateful to feel that to the last I am trusted and treated as one whose heart is the same.

It was some years before my ethical teaching began to take a shape and develop a system of its own. My method of study and of teaching has been so peculiar that I hesitate to confess it. I can never use a former note or an old manuscript. In fact I have never accumulated or possessed any of these; I have always begun every day and every year anew, without any help from the past through any records of my own. I remember of any book only what has passed into and become part of myself. I have made great use of a very few books, and what of these I retain I can use or teach only as my own

and myself. I began quite early, for example, to read with an advanced class Aristotle's Ethics — for both the Greek and the philosophy. Unconsciously Aristotle became the basis and starting point of all my thinking. I seemed to find in him the true root and starting point of all thought or knowledge of myself: Socrates' "Know thyself" found in him, in the third generation, its scientific response, or at least the beginning of it. I began to apply his principles and follow his lines, and found that instruction built up on that foundation was not only more satisfactory to myself, but more intelligible and self-evident to the classes than upon any other system. But while I never myself ceased to live in my source, my teaching only started from that beginning and more and more became my own.

My effort to develop a theological department proved premature, although my association with those first classes, then and since, has been one of the happiest experiences of my life, and a representation from those years was an indispensable feature of the reunion. In 1876 a threat of failing health caused a temporary break in my courses, and theological instruction ceased until about 1880, when, with the

completion of St. Luke's Hall and the organizing of a theological faculty, it was resumed upon something of an adequate scale and basis. From that time began my constructive interpretation and teaching of the New Testament. All the members of my theological class had taken, or were required to take, my ethical course in the University, and the unity and continuity of the Ethics and the Exegesis was thoroughly recognized and accepted. From Aristotle to Christ was a well-travelled course; the survey and record of that course I propose to make my next contribution to the science of thought and life.

As my system and method of Exegesis grew and took shape in the thought and life of the class, questions naturally arose, and the newness of the presentation was often an irritant as well as a stimulant. I held that my place and part was in the mine, not in the mint, of the truth of Christianity, that free enquiry and investigation, not dogma (which would have its proper place after), was in order with us. Everything was to be tested and verified, according to our Lord's prescription, in the light and in the terms of human nature, human life, and human destiny. All that was true

for us ought to be true to us, and would be if we were in a state and attitude of correspondence with the truth. To establish this correspondence was our task. Questions that arose within the class began to spread without the class, and the time came when it became necessary to make known my teaching to a larger audience. I had no call or inclination to speak to the Church or the world save through my pupils, and it was they, not I, who in loving compulsion forced the publication of my first book, and have been behind as well as in all the rest.

This will explain in part my relation to and the relation to me of those who, in the flesh, or only in the spirit, have made and taken part in our reunion. It accounts for the fact that the gathering is made up, not of those of one way, but of those of all the ways of thinking and believing in the Church. No one thinks of asking which way is most or least in evidence among us, because, with whatever of differences, we have learned here to think and live together without sense or recognition of parties or partisanship. All honest and reasonable difficulties or convictions have been met and treated with equal interest, sympathy, and mutual respect and understanding. There are men now

at home and happy in the Church who could not have entered or remained in it outside of such a welcoming atmosphere of large-mindedness and large-heartedness.

Of the causes and the conditions which rendered possible such an absolutely united, harmonious, and enthusiastic reunion and conference as that at Sewanee, I can speak thus freely and impersonally, because while I was not unnaturally honored with having it called by my name — seeing that my life and service covered the whole period and the whole field included in the commemoration — I see in myself only one element and one factor in that sum total and result. The life and glory of Sewanee are in its fruits. Its Alumni are in equal measure its products and its real causes. When I looked into the face of that body of men, representing all of the forty years of my service, I felt all that I could only imperfectly say: that if they felt that in their four years with me I had been something to them, I felt that in my forty years with them they had been everything to me: if, so far as human agency can go, I had in a little measure been the making of them, they had in far fuller measure been the making of me. And this acknowledgment

I wish now and thus to make to Sewanee and to all my long connections, relations, and associations with it.

It was not only the reunionists proper who entered into and constituted that reunion, but they were, of course, the main agents and actors in it. Their part and contributions, in the form of sermons, addresses, and, not least, informal and spontaneous impressions and testimonies, were very essential features and values of the occasion which it is not given to me to record, except in my heart. There are acknowledgments that can never be expressed; they must be felt and understood. The greater part of what is here published was addressed only to my old students and a very few others on equivalent terms of intimacy. What was said to these was aptly denominated, not by myself, "Intimate Talks." Being of this character, and spoken in confidence to those who neither could nor would misconstrue or misunderstand, there are doubtless things said which are not only more private and personal, but may be more careless and unguarded, than would otherwise be the case.

There were others than the reunionists who contributed to the unique occasion, and first

among these I must mention the community of Sewanee. One of the first necessities of a university located as ours was, was the creation for itself and around itself of a university town. Projected with large endowments, and the certain prospect of much larger, it was expected that the University of the South would grow as Oxford had grown — town and gown *pari passu* and together. Destruction and poverty has been its actual lot, and the University has lived chiefly upon its reason to be, its undying vitality, and its determination to live through deserving to live. Its growth has necessarily been slow, and the university town proper is still a small community. But there has been compensation: only the fittest have survived—and the fitness has been mainly, faith, hope, love, and devotion; the survival has been in service and sacrifice. The lovers of Sewanee have had to show their faith by their works, and they are naturally those who are in thorough, intelligent, and assured sympathy with the spirit, the ideals, and the aims of the University. The community has been thus compacted together and unified into one great family, the spirit and interest of which entered fully into all the proceedings. What response

or acknowledgment can be made, not to such demonstrations, but to all that lies behind them!

Not least is the acknowledgment I have reserved for the last: the letters from the many who would have been natural participants, but who could be so only in spirit, not in person; still more the numerous communications from this country and from others, of interest and sympathy on the part of those whose approval and friendship would in itself be an exceeding great comfort and reward for much suffered and much done.

This volume is made up of the following material: First, the papers read by me on the successive days. These have been somewhat added to by including matter which there was not time to deliver, and by enlarging upon war experiences by special request. Second, an address upon The Theology of the Child, read the day after the reunion by request of a Sunday School Conference which succeeded it. Third, the sermon preached on the Sunday of the reunion, which happened to be the Feast of the Transfiguration. Finally there is reprinted a paper, *Liberty and Authority in Christian Truth*, by request, as being in the general line of thought of the volume.

I

EARLY SPIRITUAL LIFE

I AM here today, in my old home and in my so long accustomed seat, not as a host but as a guest. I come at the instance and by the invitation of those who were my sometime pupils and followers — some of whom have become in the most real sense my leaders and teachers. I have most carefully pondered all the terms in which the request to me to be here has been variously expressed, with this desire: that what I may have to supply or contribute to the purpose of our reunion may be as nearly as possible conformed to the demand. I have been asked, first, to sit here, in this old seat, for several consecutive days, and talk just as I used to talk to you just as you used to be. That is, perhaps, in many ways the most impossible form in which the request has come to me. But in the one way in which it was felt and meant, I am going to try my best to comply with it.

It has been said again, or hoped, that I should, at this our last session together, sum up and put as it were into a nutshell the special truth, the definite lesson of life, which I was for thirty-six years endeavoring, with your help, to learn and to teach. Yet again, it was suggested, not at all inappropriately considering my three-score years and fifteen, that I was to give my last counsels for the time, and the times to come.

You may imagine that a call such as this has awakened long, long thoughts in me, both of the past and of the future. It has made me live my life over and ask: What has it been for me and for others? I have nothing to give you but what I myself have got. We can never really give to others anything but what is ours and ourselves. And now as we meet in this relation for the last time, I ask myself: What has life given me — what has it given me that I have taken and that I have — that I may give you, if you will take it? Reflections such as these have led me to take as the subject of the three lectures this week: The Lesson of my Life — or, perhaps better, Lessons from my Life. What I mean is: the lesson or lessons that life has taught me, and that may perchance be of help and use to you. I am very

far from thinking that my life is the properest life, or the properest thing, to present to you; but it is the only life and the only thing that is mine to give: such as I have, give I unto you.

I have another motive in the selection of this subject. This is a personal reunion, a fellowship of souls, and not a comparison of views or clash of opinions. As to these latter we are of all sorts, but we come together to illustrate the unity of life that lies down underneath the infinite diversities of thought or view or human expression. This is a social gathering, and let nothing be lacking to it of the light or the graceful or the playful that properly adorns the surface of all pure human social intercourse. But first of all let us secure that unity of the spirit which will make our fellowship together a fellowship too with the Father and with the Son. The Life was manifested, and we have seen it and know it, and all our fellowship is with it and in it.

I have always spoken from myself, but I have never spoken of myself. It is not easy for me to do so now, and I do it only in the privacy of this old class, always changing yet always here with me through all the years that

I was here. I speak then in the intimacy and the confidence of those whom I know and trust, and who know me. In the course of nearly sixty years of actual and conscious spiritual experience and observation, I have touched and felt Christianity on pretty much all the sides which during that time it has presented to us. I could not recall or portray myself except in all those several aspects or phases, and in such a composite, or I should say unity, of them all as I am now conscious of in myself. In describing my life then, I shall do it in three lectures: (1) as Evangelical, (2) as Churchly, and (3) as Catholic (*in the widest sense*), these being distinctly phases, and not stages.

It has been said that life is really lived, and is itself, only in its supreme moments: only the gods can sustain it continuously at its height. I don't know that any of us can claim to have attained to supreme moments. At any rate we have had superior, or relatively supreme ones; and of some such I will speak, but only of such as were not only what they were at the time, but have been with me since, and are in me still. I think that you will agree, when I have described its moments, that my conscious, voluntary religious life,

beginning say at eighteen, was distinctively of the type that we have called evangelical.

I was born and bred in the Church, and brought up religiously in what St. Paul calls the nurture and admonition of the Lord. No life, natural or spiritual, is of ourselves, and it is impossible to tell just when and how it begins. Its causes, influences, and processes are in operation before our consciousness of it awakens. I cannot say when religion in me began; but I am now concerned only with the rise and progress in myself of conscious and voluntary religion. Whatever be my own theory of Christian nurture, and of the imperceptible and continuous genesis and growth of spiritual life under it, as a matter of fact my own, at least conscious, life began with a crisis — with what had all the appearance of a sudden and instantaneous conversion. It has been with me a life-long matter of scientific as well as religious interest to analyze and understand that experience. More and more, as I grow older, I live over again through every minutest detail of it and apply anew to myself what I know to be the eternal and essential truth and meaning of it. In this day of the attempted scientific verification of spiritual as

well as other phenomena, I should not hesitate among just ourselves to submit to you all the facts in this case, as they are still indelibly fixed in my memory — if only we had time. As it is, I will narrate only the essential points. Three cadets, returning from a long march and series of encampments, and a brief stoppage at their common home, spent on their way back to their garrison a night in a certain city, and returned at midnight hilarious and weary from what was called a “roaring farce” at the little theatre, to occupy one bed at the crowded hotel. In a moment the others were in bed and asleep. There was no apparent reason why I should not have been so too, or why it should just then have occurred to me that I had not of late been saying my prayers. Perfectly unconscious and unsuspicuous of anything unusual, I knelt to go through the form, when of a sudden there swept over me a feeling of the emptiness and unmeaningness of the act and of my whole life and self. I leapt to my feet trembling, and then that happened which I can only describe by saying that a light shone about me and a Presence filled the room. At the same time an ineffable joy and peace took possession of me which it is impos-

sible either to express or explain. I continued I know not how long, perfectly conscious of, simply but intensely feeling, the Presence, and fearful, by any movement, of breaking the spell. I went to sleep at last praying that it was no passing illusion, but that I should awake to find it an abiding reality. It proved so, and now let me say what of verification my life has given to the objective reality of that appearance or manifestation.

God has His ways of coming to us, of entering into our world and into our life and making them new: heaven is with us when our eyes are open to see it. There is only one earthly and very far-off analogy which God Himself uses and we may therefore venture modestly to use. There comes to a man the love of a woman, which is different in kind from any other human love. It comes for a reason and with a meaning, for the endless ends of a relation which is the highest and holiest that can exist between mortals, and that is the earthly source and spring of all other human relations and of all human life. What we call "falling in love" comes to us just as naturally and just as mysteriously and inexplicably as that other only more spiritual experience of which the

Lord says: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The human love comes simply because of the fact that the man is made for the woman and the woman for the man, and neither is complete or satisfied without the other. The divine love in which God makes Himself one with us comes simply for the reason, and because of the fact, so perfectly expressed in the ever new old words: "My God Thou hast made me for Thyself, and my soul will find no rest, until it rest in Thee."

My proof, I may say my verification, of the fact of God's coming to me, apart from all mystery of the way, may be expressed in this simple truth of experience, that in finding Him I found myself: a man's own self, when he has once truly come to himself, is his best and only experimental proof of God. The act of the Prodigal's "coming to himself" was also that of his arising and returning to his Father.

As this was the beginning of my awakened and actualized spiritual life, and must be supposed to have contained in it the potencies and

promise of all that was to be, I have sought to recall just what, at the time, there was in it. And the first thing that strikes me was its lack of explicitness: so little was there in it of the definite and defined features of Christianity, that it would scarcely seem to have been as yet distinctively Christian. Of course I knew my catechism and was familiar and in sympathy with the letter of Christianity, but I am tracing my religion now solely as it became the living and operative fact and factor of my actual spiritual being. There was then no conscious sense of sin, nor repentance, nor realization of the meaning of the Cross, or of the Resurrection, or of the Church or the Sacraments, nor indeed of the Incarnation or of Christ Himself. What then was there? — There was simply a New World without me, and a New Self in me — in both which for the first time, visibly, sensibly, really, God was. In just that, was there already implicitly and potentially included the principle and truth of Regeneration, Resurrection, and Eternal Life, of the putting and passing away of old things and the coming to pass of new, of the as yet hidden meaning of the Cross, of the heavy cost to both God and man of the only possible or real human redemp-

tion? To instance in a single item: I for a long time thought it strange that in my conversion, if that was it, there was with me so little conscious thought or conviction of sin. But then, also, I recalled that there had been a previous state of self-dissatisfaction, which however had been all swallowed up and lost in the consciousness of being lifted out of it into a new life of love and life and holiness. Had there not been implicit repentance and faith, although I did not yet know in them all the death upon the Cross of the one, or all the life from out the grave of the other? I recalled also that when, after the spiritual crisis, I returned to my natural habits and duties, the form which the intervening change in me assumed was mainly that of a sensitized and transfigured — not only consciousness, but — conscience. I had a sense of walking in the light, and of at least desiring and intending to have no darkness in me at all. I can perfectly recall the ways and even the little instances in which this disposition manifested itself. The task of materializing or actualizing that as yet only ideal, of embodying the sentiment of it into habit and character and life, I was indeed far enough from realizing. But were not the principle and

the potency of the whole already present and operative in me?

The moral so far I would draw in passing is this: the spiritual irrationality and impossibility of extorting from converts or beginners, or indeed of Christians all, any true or real confession of the sum total or detailed contents of Christianity. The articles of the Creed may properly be required to be repeated for entrance into the Church, but only so as they are outwardly confessed and accepted as being the historic, organic, and developed faith of the Church, and assuredly not as all digested, assimilated, and converted into the actual life of the incipient member. In other words, there is a great deal which we may outwardly confess as *the faith*, which we rightly hold on the reasonable external authority of corporate and historical Christianity, which nevertheless to be compelled to profess, as in its totality our personal subjective actual and attained faith, would simply involve us in either self-deception or hypocrisy. On the other hand, I shall endeavor by my own example to justify the humble acceptance of the Church's faith in the beginning, and then the life-time process, as one can, of gradually digesting, assimilating,

and converting that faith into one's own, and finding in it the full food and content of one's life. But to exact of every Christian at every moment full conversion to every item or every particular of even the essentials of a complete Christianity is no more a Christian procedure than it was that of Jesus Christ Himself.

I do not wish to lose sight of the fact that, in even so inchoate a conversion and faith as that I am describing, there was, however implicit, the reality of a distinctly Christian life. The God into living relation with Whom it brought the soul was none other than just the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has been always in the world, and there has always been in the world a less or more true conception and knowledge of God, but the only full and real God of the soul is the God of Christianity. The soul of man is our only ultimate judge of what is true of or in God, and that for the reason that the human soul and God are correspondent and correlative entities and energies. That is God, in correspondence with Whom the soul is its complete and perfect self; and that is the soul, in which God most truly and completely realizes and reproduces Himself. At the very beginning and ever since, my one all-

sufficient evidence of God and of religion has been this: that in Him and in it, and nowhere else, am I my own truest and best self; the better and more closely I know Him, the truer, better, and higher I am, and the reverse: when I least believe is always when I am at my lowest and my worst. If we are to judge truth by the principle of "values," then that which puts the most reason and meaning, the most fulness and blessedness, the most worth and consistence and permanence into human life, is in itself the truest. My conversion made me a worthier and higher self, and my life a more valuable and a happier life: and the more that is the case, the more I know it to be true.

Not only is there the distinctively Christian's God in such an experience, but the most developed Christian doctrine of the status and relation between the soul and God is likewise implicitly presupposed and involved in it: we are reconciled, justified, at-one-d, and made one with God — not by any act or work or merit of our mere selves, but only by placing ourselves within and identifying ourselves with the love, the grace, the fellowship with us, of God Himself. The little child, no matter how weak, how bad, whatever it be, finds not only

love and peace and rest, but hope and fresh strength and new beginnings of life in the bosom of its mother. And to come to God "just as we are," not waiting to be good, and find in Him, in His eternal love, His infinite grace, His perfect fellowship, all we want for holiness, for righteousness, and for eternal life, is only a simple way of putting all the vexed doctrine or dogma of justification by faith.

Once more, this may seem, so far, that merely personal religion which is in terms the opposite of what religion means: "God and the soul, the soul and its God!" And I must confess that for long that was all that was in it for me. I wanted to keep it all to myself, to hide it as much as possible from all others. Yet at the very time I was to all others, as well as to myself, better and more than I had ever been before. In fact I was, so far as I can measure, never after so communicative to others of the good I was receiving and estimating for myself as in that time in which I was least presuming —nor, I fear, caring—to help or save others. In every one of three acknowledgments from fellow-students, which I can never forget, of what I had been to them in their college lives,—when I had to plead guiltless of any intention

or even conscious will to help them, the answer was that it was just that, that if I had ever interfered even in thought to do them good, I should have failed to do it. There is this of truth in that, that we help or hinder others most in and by what we are, and not by what we say or do. Know God and yourself, be true to God and yourself, and you will be to others all that you are to God and yourself. For when you truly come to look for God and yourself, you will never find them in yourself for long, but only in others.

I am telling the story of my evangelical, not yet of my high-church or my broad-church self. During my university life I did little more than hold fast that whereunto I had attained. I was busy, under physical difficulties and discouragements, with my mental work; spiritually I was, as it were, marking time, — that is, keeping up the motions without much forward movement. And it is not my desire to record anything else than actual steps forward, permanent and integral additions to my spiritual self and life. When I passed from university to seminary and took up directly the study of religion and of Christianity, I did so not without what I am a little disposed to call pietism, —

but will not, because I think it was not altogether unworthy of the better term piety. But still my religion was very much in myself, and there very much in idea and sentiment. I think that with me naturally idea is more than sentiment, I am rather disposed to be ideal than sentimental. But at that time certain things, most of all music, moved me very deeply and always religiously. Under the spell of such coöperant emotion my mind was very active with its ideals and speculations.

I remember just at that period a singularly trifling incident which nevertheless in its effect has been present with me as an actual force for fifty years. What a very little spark may kindle the most destructive conflagration, or sometimes the most illuminating and beneficent flame! In this case so ridiculous a suggestion could not have awakened so lasting a train of thought and consequence if the occasion and material had not been ripe and ready for it. In an idle moment I chanced to pick up an old magazine in which were narrated the military experiences and exploits of a certain Lieutenant Poop. His Christian name was Ninkum — Mr. Ninkum Poop. First, in most descriptive and expressive terms, were elaborated and

described the heroically high and noble ideals and sentiments with which the newly fledged lieutenant devoted himself to the sacred service of his country, the great British Empire,—what aspirations, what hopes and expectations and high-wrought purposes, what dreams and visions of self-sacrifice, and then of honor and greatness and glory! Lieutenant Ninkum Poop arrives at the seat of war, where all his ideas are to be put into action and all his sentiments to be converted into conduct and character and achievement. He goes through it all, his thoughts and expressions to the end swelling with the magnanimity of the great-souled, his actions on the contrary evincing only the pusillanimity of the little-souled, the coward and the poltroon.

I would not tell this simply as the undignified illustration of a principle; I give it as an historical life-moment and life-movement in my spiritual history. That arrow went home and still rankles in my breast. I cannot tell how often I have found and called myself a Ninkum Poop; how often, in very other terms, I have preached the fact it illustrates to myself and others:—that life is not life as long as it is only in the mind, or even in the heart; that it

is only life when it has been converted into life. Christianity has only begun when it begins to live what it believes and what it feels: "If ye know these things, blessed are you if ye do them." Have we the Christianity that does what it says, that practises what it preaches? What we want is not to have a new Christianity, but to have a new way of having Christianity: a new way which is the old one, the way of Him who was, and still is, the Way. He is not alone in Himself the truth and the life, but no less the way to us of really knowing the truth and living the life.

There was nothing to me for some time in seminary life beyond pleasant association and useful routine work. The first thing that touched and really set going the forward movement of life and thought in me came in the form of provocation from a fellow-student. There was in our diocese at that time a centre and school of Calvinistic low-churchmanship, over against another party of moderate anti-Calvinistic high-churchmanship. An intelligent and aggressive theological student of the former school had gone to Princeton to find there under the Hodges and Alexanders of that day meat strong enough for his spiritual pabulum, and

had then been brought home by the Bishop to spend his senior year at our seminary, where we were entering as juniors. Being fresh from the university and more immediately at home in Greek than the rest of us, I was drawn by our senior friend into the question whether the language and argument of St. Paul did not necessitate all the essential principles, the five points, of Calvinism. It is impossible to overstate the difficulties and perplexities into which I was thus led for several years to come, and the results in all my future thinking and teaching. It soon passed with me beyond the mere issue or question of Calvinism, to which, as you know, I have never reverted; although, as a living question in that day, it did sorely try me until, having absorbed what of truth and of discipline I found in it, I had passed beyond into higher unities and reconciliations. But at the time I encountered and had to overcome this temptation: We are often enough tempted to believe what antecedent prejudice or inclination makes us wish to believe. Sometimes a strained honesty compels us to accept what we do not wish to believe, as a heroic sacrifice of inclination or prejudice. I asked myself, Am I prepared to make the necessary sacrifice in order

to follow the truth wherever it may lead me? And I came near identifying that query with this one, Am I strong enough and selfless enough to accept Calvinism? Whereas it should have been this, Am I open and prepared to accept Calvinism if it is indeed, and I fairly find it to be, the truth?

But the permanent profit of that experience was that it made me such a life-long student and companion of St. Paul's faith and life, as has really determined my whole subsequent character and career. How that disposition and bent was intensified and fixed in me by the long interruption and peculiar circumstance of the war, which followed immediately upon this phase of my spiritual experience, I must reserve for another chapter.

II

WAR EXPERIENCES

FOUR years of my educational life — from sixteen to twenty — had been spent in military training. In the Military College I had held the highest offices in my class, and had had some experience in discipline and drill. Soon after the breaking out of the war in 1861 the Governor of South Carolina called for the organization, for State defence, the protection of our coast line and railroad connections, of a command to which he gave the name of the Holcombe Legion. It was to consist of a regiment of infantry and a battalion each of cavalry and artillery; the superintendent of the State Military College was to organize and command it, and I was appointed his adjutant. The appointment found me in the middle year of my seminary course; I accepted it and spent the following fall and winter in hard drill and discipline, in skirmishing with gunboats, and in the occasional more romantic experiences of

camp life. We were soon mustered out of State into Confederate service, and the battles around Richmond necessitating a general concentration in Virginia, the legion as such was dismembered, and the infantry regiment, still under the same name, was incorporated into the Army of Northern Virginia, under General Lee. General McClellan's advance upon Richmond having been effectually disposed of, we began moving, about the middle of August, to meet the new army advancing from Washington under General Pope. After several preliminary engagements, in one of which I was painfully hurt, though not disabled, by a fragment from a shrapnel shell, the terrible battle of Second Manassas, or Second Bull Run, was fought on August 30. It was a great victory, but a bloody one, and our own brigade was wellnigh destroyed. My horse was shot, I was twice wounded, and I was the only field officer of the legion who was left or able to fight through the battle. It devolved upon me to reorganize the shattered regiment and to command it in the first Maryland invasion, which immediately ensued.

Two weeks after the great battle we made a forced march back from Hagerstown to Boones-

boro Gap, to delay the passage across South Mountain of the third great Federal Army of that year, 1862, now again under General McClellan. General Lee needed the time to unite his two army corps for the approaching great battle of Sharpsburg or Antietam. On the fourteenth of September we barely succeeded in preventing the crossing that day. Our own command had had a fatiguing march of sixteen miles, had climbed the mountain on the north side, had fought and been forced back into the gap, and at about 9 p.m. had sunk dead with sleep in their tracks upon the turnpike. Out of this condition I was aroused by the command to take my most available men and to connect with and extend the picket line on the side of the mountain on which we had fought. This was no easy task on a dark night in the primeval forest, and it must have been toward midnight before it was accomplished. I had just spread my oil-cloth at the centre of the line and was wondering how I, or any of us, could manage to keep awake, when another order came: it was thought that the mountain above us was abandoned and the enemy withdrawn, and it was necessary to ascertain his movements. I was to ascend to the spot of

the afternoon's engagement, discover, and report. It was a heavy and, unavoidably, a noisy as well as dangerous climb; and at the steepest point near the summit I left the men in position to obey any summons and proceeded alone. Upon the plateau on top I lightly and swiftly pushed my reconnoissance to the farthest limit, and seeing and hearing nothing, was in the act of returning satisfied that there was no one there, when it came to me that, to be perfectly certain, I ought to make a detour around the plateau. In this way it came about that I quite encircled a division of troops and walked straight into their lines. Walking back, in half security but very quietly and cautiously, with pistol in hand, I was suddenly brought up with a "Halt!" I could not be sure that it was not some of my own men come to meet me, nor they that I was not one of theirs,—and so it was that we were actually upon each other before we mutually recognized each other as enemies: I had come upon a sentry of two men in the midst of a bivouac, and the woods were as sunk in sleep and stillness as if there were no life in them. A man stood before me with the butt of his gun upon the ground. As he jerked up his gun I stepped quite up to him

and drew the pistol which I had held cocked under a light cloak. In the act of both doing this and protecting myself from him, my pistol was discharged prematurely, and he, thinking himself shot, cried aloud and precipitated himself upon me. In an instant the mountain top was awake and alive, and I was upon the ground in the midst, in a desperate struggle for escape. The odds were against me, and I landed not many days later a prisoner in Fort Delaware.

Many years later a reference to that night's adventure and excitement appeared in the history of some Northern troops. The friends of a faithful and deserving old soldier from Pennsylvania made my capture the ground for an application for pension, and I was requested to further his claim. After getting from him his side of the story of our momentous encounter, I gave him my testimony and he got his pension. From that time on I occasionally received letters from Cronin expressing the desire to meet me again, and saying that he could not die happy without doing so. To my utter surprise, thirty-five years at least after our first meeting, our second took place at Sewanee. He suddenly appeared there, ill and travel-worn, having made the journey across

several States to see me again before he died. He said I had come near killing him, and he had come nearer killing me; for when I had twice almost got away, he had at last, being of twice my strength, got me down, and then, with my own pistol, was in the act of shooting, when some mysterious force had held his hand and prevented him. He made me sit down and write for him an account of our two encounters in war and in peace, and then as mysteriously made his disappearance.

After two or three months of imprisonment and parole I rejoined my command, then doing service in North Carolina, and just in good time to be dangerously and painfully wounded in an engagement near the town of Kinston. This was late in December. Within those four months death had three times touched me as closely as was consistent with escape; two of my wounds missed most vital parts by the merest hair's breadth. On my return to Richmond from prison I was personally informed that I was dead and, on questioning it, was taken to a reading-room and shown my obituary in corroboration.

In 1863 my service was mainly along the coasts, from Virginia as far as Vicksburg,

Mississippi. During that year influential friends in Church and State, probably to preserve what remained of me for service of another kind, entirely without my knowledge or consent, procured for me a commission as chaplain, with orders to report at the headquarters of Kershaw's brigade. In the beginning of 1864 I joined my new command in winter-quarters about the town of Greeneville, Tennessee. In the little church in that place, as recently ordained deacon, I began my ministry, with the most brilliant congregations, from major-generals down to privates, that I have ever had to address. Late in the spring the campaign opened with Grant's advance upon Richmond, and after the Wilderness my duties were mainly in the hospitals, and in private ministrations. In April, 1865, the final surrender took place, and I returned home to find it a picture of the most utter desolation, having lain in the centre of Sherman's famous march.

This brief sketch of war experience will give some impression of the four years' chasm in the midst of my preparation for my life's work. It may be supposed that there was little opportunity in it for study, or for systematic or progressive thought upon religious matters. Yet

the war did have its contribution to make, not only in its necessary effect upon my general as well as spiritual character, but more definitely in determining and strengthening my special bent. Having as adjutant always to carry along with me something of an office, with papers and books, and having also with me always a very faithful and devoted servant who took good care of myself and my belongings, I managed to carry a very few books all through the war. In time I secured an airtight and very strong little ammunition box, which just held my books, and which, becoming well known, was always tossed into the headquarters wagon. In this box were five books, in English, Greek, Latin, and French — books that, in their contents as well as language, would not be exhausted or grow stale with constant use. Of these, those which are still with me are the Greek New Testament, Tennyson's "Poems," Pascal's "Thoughts," and Xenophon's "Memorabilia."

The only vein of living thought, investigation, or speculation I had struck in my too short seminary course was the question of the true mind and meaning of the not merely theological and doctrinal, but intensely human

and real St. Paul. I had begun already to feel that St. Paul was to be approached, known, and interpreted, not on his rabbinical or doctrinal sides — these were mere accidents of tradition and training — but on his profoundly, genuinely, and universally personal and spiritual side. I have never been able to see how the modern technical and dogmatic conception of the great apostle could be reconciled with the acknowledged fact that St. Paul was, in his own day as well as after, the great humanist and universalist, the humanizer and universalizer of Christianity. How little is his Christ the unhuman, merely celestial being, his conception of the Cross the merely forensic act or transaction, his justification by faith the substitutionary, unethical, and unpsychological process they have in these modern times been described! St. Paul is the exact and inspired applier of Christianity to the universal facts and conditions of human life and destiny. Confessedly it was he alone who burst its bands, released its spirit, and gave it to the world. What, as against all this, was either his rabbinism, or his dogmatism or formalism!

In the four years of war, such as I have described them, it may be imagined that my

moments of real thought and study were rare, but they were sometimes more intense and precious, and probably more fruitful, for being so difficult and so in contrast with immediate avocation and environment. And it was probably not wholly a disadvantage that my thought and life, so far as they were my own, should have been so concentrated upon a single line of interest and exercise. I acquired the habit of combining thought with life and experience: it is almost too much the case with me still that I am satisfactorily religious only in the act of thinking and studying, and successfully studious or thoughtful only as an act of religion. For four years my religious reading was absolutely limited to my New Testament and my Prayer-Book. As a matter of fact, so far as original, productive, or progressive thought or study went, it was at least focussed upon the theology, philosophy, psychology — but most of all, upon the practical religious life — of the Epistles. I learned to know Christ through the minds and lives of St. John and St. Paul, before I ever really studied Himself in the Gospels. The Epistle to the Romans was really my constant *pièce de résistance*. Without present or previous help of dictionary,

commentary, or any other source, I set myself over and over to think and live out the thought-and-life-process of that wonderful argument. I can distinctly remember lying on my back, while my men were constructing earthworks, and with closed eyes constructing for myself the vital spiritual sequence, unity, and completeness of the first eight chapters. For a long time I simply overlooked, or looked through, the mere form or technicality of St. Paul's teaching, and saw only the man and the meaning of his inner life and thought. I afterward learned to include too his peculiar form or technique, to value it at its proper worth, and to find in it, if only in the matter of definition and illustration, in the thought and language of the time, a wonderful illumination and help. St. Paul was always intent upon inward life-relations and processes: what he taught was not Christianity but Christ, not doctrine but life, not form but content and matter. He did have a remarkable technical skill of form or expression, and it was naturally sometimes rabbinical, but he made use of it only as instrument effective for the time, and to have erected his figures and phraseology into an intellectual system and form of letter

and dogma, has been a wholesale perversion of his life and spirit. The modern dogmatic system that goes under the name of Paulinism is our own dogmatism read into the letter of his language. I think I may say that whatever of inspiration or illumination ever came to you through my life or teaching, came through the fact that I presented Christ and Christianity at first hand, not in the letter but in the spirit, not in traditional or conventional forms of technical language, but in living terms of actual human relation and experience. Now all that I ever had to impart in that way came to me through a peculiarly exclusive study and knowledge of St. Paul: I brought to Sewanee no other theology than his.

But if St. Paul was my only theology, fortunately theology was not my only interest or thought in my army life. I must mention another teacher of a very other sort who shared with him the domination at that stage of my life, not only of my interest, but of my distinctly spiritual and religious interest. What I might call, in its broadest sense, the romantic side of life was always more or less present with me. Up to the time that I was fully of age and very near my university graduation, I knew

little of literature. I knew a good deal about the authors that made and the books that constitute literature, but it was mostly from without. I had read classics, ancient and modern, but I had read them for technical training, as language rather than as literature. It was only in my last year at the University of Virginia that there was a separate professor of literature; prior to that the professor of each language taught something of a history of its literature, but it was a very secondary matter. Just before leaving the University the spell of Tennyson first came upon me, through "The Princess": the songs were my poetic inspiration and awakening. Like music, poetry became at once with me associated with religion, and gave a side and aspect to it which made it beautiful as well as sacred and holy. This, however, came so late in life that, but for the opportunity of the war, I should probably never have had the leisure or the abstraction necessary for the really deep love of any poetry. Perhaps strict historical truth at once requires and excuses the confession that my own devotion to Tennyson, which was now to grow to a flame, was somewhat intensified by the fact that the little blue and gold copy which went

with me into and came with me out of the war, and is now treasured up somewhere, was the gift in camp of one who, after the worst of the perils narrated above, became my wife. That little volume, toward the close, became a treasure to others at headquarters beside myself, from the general down to the courier. Many a day, with a leg crossed over the pommel of my saddle, as we wound our slow and romantic way through the mountains of Virginia, I drank in the music and sentiment of the "Songs," or pondered over the mysteries and questionings of "In Memoriam." Some of the earlier students of Sewanee will remember that I knew in those days how to enter as well into the romance as into the severer, if not more serious, business of their life, and that they got through me inspiration and help from Tennyson as well as from more prescribed masters.

To come down to the more directly spiritual part which Tennyson played in my permanent history: an author, as any one else, is to us very much what we ourselves make him, or how we take him. To me Tennyson became, what I may call, the poet of the spiritual, in contrast with the prophet. The prophet speaks as from God to us, and therefore with certainty

and authority; he utters God's Word or voices His Spirit to usward. The poet interprets and expresses us to Godward; he voices not divine revelation or inspiration, but human aspiration. His tone is often that of perplexed questioning or even honest doubt, but — if he is a true interpreter of the human spirit, a genuine voice crying in the wilderness of human need — always that of open and reverent quest. The muse of the poet of the spirit is Melpomene, that of the prophet is Urania. Urania speaks seldom through Tennyson, Melpomene much and with a clear, true accent — as the spirit in me attests. His voice, I repeat, is much more that of pure human aspiration than of assured divine inspiration, — but we just as much need to cultivate and refine in us the human condition as the divine power and cause of eternal life. The human soul would not so cry to God if there were no God to hear or answer; and God speaks in reply, but speaks only to the soul that wants and calls upon Him. The true poet and the true prophet, the poet who personates the true aspiration of man, and the prophet who mediates the true reply of God, are equally of essential service to us. In the rarest and highest instances, in

those whom we pronounce inspired, the two offices are combined in a single person. I hold that St. Paul, at his highest, was such a one. If he had not been the poet he was, he could not have been the prophet he was: the thirteenth and fifteenth chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians are poetry as well as prophecy, aspiration exalted and fused into inspiration and revelation. Tennyson's is, as he himself says, "but an earthly muse"; but it neither professes nor presumes to go farther than it does, and so far as it goes it is pure and clear. For the time being he was my Bible of humanity, as my New Testament was of divinity.

It is said that life is lived only in our supreme moments. What of final impress or character I was to receive from the stern and unsparing discipline of war, was to be focussed and fixed in one such supreme experience. The brigade to which I was attached toward the close of the war was one which had been in every battle of the Army of Northern Virginia, and whose boast it was that it had never slept behind a field of battle. A time came at last when, through no fault of its own, a glorious victory of the morning was converted into a disgrace-

ful rout in the afternoon, and that night the brigade slept some ten or fifteen miles behind its field of battle. When we finally rested about midnight, I could not sleep; the end of the world was upon me as completely as upon the Romans when the barbarians had overrun them. Never once before had dawned upon me the possibility of final defeat for the Confederate cause. That night it came over me like a shock of death that the Confederacy was beginning to break: the strain even of unbroken victory had been too long and too heavy: it would be impossible much longer to resist the force of the ever-renewed and ever-increasing pressure of new armies and inexhaustible resources. To represent the true spirit of our ranks I must add that there was quick reaction from that depression, and that when the real end did come some months later, I was almost as much surprised and shocked as I had been in that presentiment or prevision of it. But not really as much,—the actual issue was all upon me that fateful night in which, under the stars, alone upon the planet, without home or country or any earthly interest or object before me, my very world at an end, I rededicated myself wholly and only to God, and to the work and life of

His Kingdom, whatever and wherever that might be.¹

Of course all was not so lost as that night it seemed to me to be. I came back to earth again and lived more in it, and less in that otherworldliness to which I had thought so wholly to give myself, than I then expected. But such an experience can never be altogether lost, and I go back to it at times for such a sense of the utter extinction of the world, and presence of only the Eternal and the Abiding, as is seldom vouchsafed to one.

The solitary habit of thinking out such thoughts and living out such life as came to or grew up in me in the four years of active military service, interspersed with trying adventures, wounds, imprisonment, and deeper experiences even than these, away from all help of teachers or books, cannot of course but have modified my character and fixed my mental habits and bent. I would not have it supposed that on my return to the wide world of outside life and thought, from which we had been so long shut out, I did not put myself at school to

¹ The reverse of the above picture of disaster and defeat may be read in the poetic version of the same incident, from the victorious side, known as "Sheridan's Ride."

it, and have not desired to keep myself in touch with the learning and the movements of my time. I had learned to live too much, no doubt, in my own thinking, and have made great use of, perhaps, too few helps. But there are compensating benefits: one is, I think, that I can never use a commentary, or seek a help of any kind, unless or until I thoroughly need and want it — that is, until I have done all that I possibly can with the matter myself. I even try too much to be my own dictionary and grammar.

When at the close of the war I returned to my home and as soon as possible entered upon my permanent ministry, conditions with us were for some years no better than in war. My family had been a wealthy one before the war, but was now utterly impoverished; the country was stript of the barest means of subsistence; our social and political condition was unendurable and hopeless. There was little means or opportunity for a life of study or anything more than the most practical kind of thinking. Nevertheless my appetite was none the less for long abstinence, or rather lack of nutriment, and I was not loath to get back to books again. In the six years of parish work, before coming

to Sewanee, my life interest and task, without consciousness or intention on my part, was being determined and fixed for me. Although by every prejudice and intention an Anglican, and unable to use the German language, most of my reading and study at this period was of German authors — evangelical, of course. And it terminated in my selecting for life study Dorner's great work "The Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ." In all my consequent, though later, interest in Christology I was not aware, until after I began to publish, of any contemporaneous or recent scientific English thought upon the subject.

This brings me to my connection with Sewanee and the University of the South, but I must first go back and trace certain other currents in my life, running alongside and blending with that I have been describing.

III

CHURCHLY INFLUENCES

IT will be agreed, I think, that my life as so far described was evangelical in its general type and character. It turned upon a well-defined experience of conversion; it was fed and grew upon the Bible; it was essentially a life of subjective, reflective, personal religion. Whatever may be said of evangelicalism, it was in possession of our spiritual world of that time; and with whatever may be its limitations we owe much if not most of our good to it. But however evangelical I was, and am, and would ever more and more be, I was never, either by prejudice or in principle, in sympathy with evangelicalism — that is to say, with the *ism*, with the name or the thing, as badge or confession of a school or a party. I love its affirmation and emphasis of great truths, but not its dissents, denials, and contradictions of other truths, or sides of truth, contradictory perhaps of itself, but not of its

own truth, or of the wider, higher, greater All of truth.

Brought at the beginning under the influence of the most beautiful, refined, and attractive phase of the newer Oxford Movement, I entered upon life with all prepossession in its favor, with all the poetry, romance, and loyalty of my nature enlisted on its side. Before any knowledge, or with little realization, of what the Church is, I was with all my heart and soul a churchman and disposed in favor of everything that is churchly. Call this prejudice, if you please, but one is not improperly or injuriously prejudiced in favor of his home, his own, his native land, the truth or beauty or beneficence into which he has been born. How much of what we are have we received as an heritage and do we rightly and necessarily reverence and value as such! When I was awaked to the more actual assumption of my spiritual self-hood, the older evangelical type took possession, and I cannot say that there was much of the Church visible or sensible in the change that I was conscious of. Nevertheless, there was no discrepancy or contradiction, and my conversion carried with it only an access and heightening of at least the sentiment and in-

spiration of the new churchmanship: I was not any the less for it a high-churchman. And I am now to trace the help and contribution to my life of this high and loyal sentiment for the Church. Let it be remembered that if the Church was not to me at that time the broad and all-inclusive thing that it is, neither was it the narrow and exclusive thing that it might have seemed to be. In fact I knew little of either the inclusiveness or the exclusiveness: the Church was to me simply the divine institution that claimed and attracted all the fealty and devotion of my heart, mind, soul, and life. The more divine it could be made to appear, the more willing and satisfied was my loyalty.

We all find contradictions in ourselves hard to reconcile and unify. My heart is very disposed to faith, to recognition of truth, to trust, and consent, and agreement. But my mind is naturally analytic and sceptical. I have all my life been coming to what of truth I hold, and there is truth to which I have all my life been coming, to which I have not yet come. All the truth of the Church is not yet mine: there are points of it that I know to be true, because I have been all the time approximating to them; but I am still waiting, and shall

probably die waiting, for them to become true to me. Truth is not an individual thing; no one of us has all of it — even all of it that is known. Truth is a corporate possession, and the knowledge of it is a corporate process. It enters slowly and painfully into the common sense, the common experience, the common use and life of men. There is a corporate, catholic, Christianity, actually extant on this earth, which no one or no set of us holds all of, or perfectly even what we do hold. Christianity, even so far as actualized in the world, is more and greater than any one or any body of us, and the full actualization of Christianity will come only with the fruition of the world's destiny, in the end of the ages. When a man learns that, he will be modest either about his own truth or about impugning other people's truth.

Without at all defining its meaning or measuring its universality or its authority, I realized from the first that there is a Church, and that there is a faith of the Church, to which my loyalty never wavered, even when I was freely and deliberately setting myself, in the light of it, to determine and establish my own individual and personal faith. I have long since dis-

covered that the actual historical process by which the faith of the Church was originally formulated is the natural and logical process by which the eternal, divine and human, truth of Jesus Christ necessarily defines, defends, and verifies itself in our human experience. My own mind like that of the Church, and under the guidance of the Church, passed successively and in the same order through all the heresies. I was never historian enough to justify my undertaking, as I did twenty odd years ago, to tell the story of the Great Councils, the period of the settlement of the Catholic faith. I was tempted to do so by my interest and my studies in the "Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ." The history in my book was second-hand, but the description of the process of evolution of the doctrine was my own. Dorner's great work is an analysis of all living and serious thought on the subject from the beginning down to his own time. The mass of it was too great for my digestion, but I felt more and more the unity, continuity, and inevitable outcome of all truth in the theme, and was under the necessity of ordering my own thought and bringing out my own faith, so far as it had reached. I am convinced in my own mind,

beyond all question, that the evolution of interpretation and expression of the truth of Jesus Christ to the end of the Sixth General Council was in the straight line to the inevitable end. I am standing now for absolutely nothing in the Councils but the simple outcome of expression of faith in the one truth of the union and unity of the divine and the human in the one Person of Jesus Christ. After that Council thought ceased, and faith receded to its stage even before Chalcedon. Much of what had been gained for the completeness of the humanity of our Lord was lost, and Christianity became too much a one-sided worship of deity made visible for adoration under the eikon or semblance of humanity. To me the necessary deity of our Lord is there to a thousand-fold more purpose and effect in the actual, realized, and deified humanity in which we recognize all ourselves and accomplish all our destiny.

Truth is not truth when it ceases to be plastic, and faith is faith only in the making. We cannot simply receive it, for then it is not yet ours; and we can never finish making it, for it ends only in all truth and all knowledge of the truth.

I can accept the Church's, or the Catholic,

Creed; and could with good conscience accept it, even though it were not yet all my own creed, or though I could not see my way to ever making all the incidents or details of it my own. Shall Christ not be mine, and I His, because I cannot see all the steps of my way to Him? — or all the steps of His way to me? On the other hand, to exact of a man, at any stage, an *ex animo* acceptance of every point of the Creed, the incidental as the essential, is to demand that which is for any man an impossibility. A complete personal possession of faith, like a perfect personal conversion of life, is an impossibility at any time and certainly at the beginning of the spiritual life. We may confess the faith as the Church's faith and profess the life as the Church's life, but to start out with saying that either of them is all personally ours is either ignorance or hypocrisy. On the one hand, therefore, I would say that for one to suppose that, because the general or catholic creed of the Church is not in every point and particular, in every interpretation or understanding of it, his own personal and actual creed, he has therefore at once to teach or preach against it, or else so to avow and proclaim his dissent as to read himself or be read

out of the Church, is illogical and unreasonable. And on the other hand, I should say that for the Church to require and demand that, *ipso facto* and *instanter*, her fully developed and complete creed should be *ex animo* and in every jot and tittle the personal and actual creed of every member, or of any member, is equally irrational and impossible. There ought to be, at the least, as much of divine patience and tenderness on the part of the Church toward the incomplete and even the wilful believer, as there ought to be of modest deference and obedience on the part of the individual believer to the reasonable and rightful authority of the Church.

For my part I have never balked at the raw beginning nor on the uncertain way of faith; I have both pressed on and waited until I could get something of a general view of the end and purport of it all. The creeds mean the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth — the truth of God and of man, and of the eternal, predestined, realized relation between them. Since I have seen that, nothing else has disturbed or bothered me. Either what is crooked in the Church's way of putting it shall be made straight in time — and I do not say that it is

not the business of any one of us that can to help make it straight; only let us go about it in the right spirit and way, and in the meantime be modest and patient about it, and take and make use of what we have got — or else, if the fault or defect is in us, the right use of the part we have got will be the best way to the fuller revelation to us of the whole of truth.

My own churchmanship, as it happened, did not come to me through Oxford or Anglican sources. I have mentioned how my mind got turned into German channels; there too I discovered and equally followed different bents or leadings. There was, on the one hand, the pure and high spirituality, the personal subjectivism of a Neander; and, on the other, the more objective and churchly, or corporate, but not less spiritual, tendency of an Olshausen. Both of these entered simultaneously into my life, and I felt no discrepancy between them. While the Oxford revival was in progress there was a corresponding "churchly" movement going on in Germany. It extended to this country within the German Reformed, or Calvinistic, Church, became more emphasized and defined under one or two famous leaders, and gave place and name to what was called the

Mercersberg Theology. This attracted me as dealing with the Church less as an external fact and authority, and more as a necessary principle and a true philosophy.

The churchly principle begins with Christianity, not as a human faith, but as a divine fact, an actual and present life of God upon earth and among men. Faith is indeed an actual necessity for us, but it is necessary only as our appropriation and experience of a prior fact; and the fact must be kept always prior to the faith, the divine conveyance to the human reception. If the extreme and danger of churchliness is a one-sided objectivism, that of evangelicalism is a one-sided subjectivism. Man has not created God in his own image; and as little is Jesus Christ a human creation or production, a human ideal or imagination of what God with us and in us would or should be. Incarnation is just as much a divine act and fact antecedent to our faith in it as creation is a divine act and fact anterior to our sensible experience of it.

Incarnation, again, is not the mere revelation or manifestation of a Life in Jesus Christ; it is the gift and communication of life in Jesus Christ. Its end and operation is not

realized and exhausted in the individual human person of Jesus Christ; it is in operation and to be realized in that Mystical Body which is Humanity realized and glorified in and through Him. Consequently the Church is in a true sense Jesus Christ Himself, and relation to it is relation to Him and to the divine Life which He is. The Church is the Life incorporate and corporate in Jesus Christ. The Sacraments of life, or of The Life, are acts not of man but of God, the acts of His incorporation of us into Christ. They are not expressions of our faith but of the divine acts of grace and adoption in Christ which are the objects of our faith and in which our faith stands. When Luther says that Christianity is the simple realization of our baptism, what he means is, not that we are magnifying a mere form or rite, but that we recognize in that rite of divine appointment a word and act of God to our souls. God's words are never mere signs: they are what they mean. To realize our baptism is to see in it, and appropriate to ourselves, and make real in our lives, the thing and the whole thing signified by it. The way not to be formalists is not to reject form — certainly not divinely ordained form — but to see in it only the spirit which

it expresses and conveys. The Sacraments, if they are anything, are divine means of grace; and the grace meant by them and wrought through them is the presence and spirit and life of Christ born in us and made ours in baptism and fed, strengthened, and refreshed in us in that sacred and stated feast in which we have communion and fellowship, actual participation of common life with God and with one another in Christ, through His Spirit which is given us. Is it formalism to see and receive all this in the Sacrament?—or is it not rather so to take the Sacrament because it is divinely commanded, but to see in it nothing but a form?

There is a catholic faith in Christianity; but prior to the faith, and the ground and object and content of the faith, there is a catholic life, and that life is the present, living, working Life of God of which the Church is the divine embodiment, the vital organ and organism, and the Sacraments the organic means and channels. When Dean Stanley said that we outgrow Sacraments, and that they are becoming obsolete, the one side of me recognizes in that a certain, perhaps, truth for spirits such as his; but I am glad that the other, the corporate or

churchly side of me, has kept me loyal and faithful long enough to know that in the Sacraments I am living at the very perennial springs and fountains themselves of the Life which is Christ.

Upon the revival of life and reality in the Church and the sacraments there followed necessarily a rehabilitation of divine worship. We must not confound the true revival of ritual with the excesses and follies of a shallow ritualism any more than any other truth or reality with its attendant *ism* — evangelical life with the narrowness of evangelicalism, or the regeneration of the Church with the extremes of Tractarianism. The lawlessnesses and abuses of ritualism are but the foam and scum upon the surface of a very real and true undercurrent and movement of genuine Church life. When I came to Sewanee, I came ignorant and inexperienced in all the fermentation that was then coming to its height in these matters. My one sympathy with the movement that I felt coming might be expressed in these words: The need of more reality in life and in religion, a more actual and real presence of God in His world, of Christ in His Church, of Spirit and power in what were too much become to us

mere obligatory forms. I remember writing to a friend on my way to Sewanee, in reply to some questioning about the "Real Presence," that I wanted all the Real Presence, all the "objective" Real Presence, I could get in every act of my religion.

Again, we must not confound the fact or reality of the Real Presence, in the Church, in the sacraments, or anywhere else, with the logomachies or the superstitions as to the modes or the effects of the presence. What I have wished, and wish, to see at Sewanee, as a religious and educational centre, is a high, dignified, and truly typical worship, fully expressive of the reality with which we are dealing and of what we are doing; neither manifesting by our carelessness and indifference our contempt of or superiority to forms, nor, on the other hand, supposing that we have to be oriental or Latin in our exhibitions of reverence. If there were a ritual exactly and distinctively expressive of the truest and most real reverence of our race, it would be a simple and severe one. We are least demonstrative when we think the most seriously and feel the most deeply, and least of all in matters the most sacred. At the same time, the highest good

manners in the world are those that show themselves in the presence of divine realities.

As there is a catholic faith and a catholic life and worship, in all which there is an underlying and pervading unity which is their essence and content and of which they are but the expression, so there must be in the Church, if it is one also in effective operation, a catholic order. That the order of the Church, as well as its faith and even its life, is so often and so much broken and divided, and so little at one with itself, proves nothing against this truth. Christianity, the Unity of humanity with and in God, is an ideal which is not *ipso facto* an actuality; but it is an ideal which it is our whole Christian business in this world, as much as we can and as fast as we can, to bring to actuality. What is an ideal but an end and a goal, and what is the Christian ideal of a Unity which will be in and of itself all of Holiness and Righteousness and Eternal Life, but an end and a goal which we have the divinest warrant and evidence for believing shall be our inheritance and destiny, just so fast and so soon as we, in faith and obedience, will enter into and possess it? The Church is an organism which must of necessity organize itself for

the ends of its proper function and business. Its commission is one and its mission is one, and it must itself be one in order to carry the one or discharge the other; the more so too since its commission and mission is to reconcile, at-one, or unify, the world with God, and with itself in God: "God was in Christ reconciling the world with Himself, and hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation."

If there is to be in the Church of Christ, as one, any unity, not alone of faith and life, but of order or organization or operation, of influence and effect upon the world, there must be in it some principle and law of order. What that is, or is to be, when the Church is in any organic sense or degree one again, although it must always have been a truth and duty of the past too, is just now the question of the future. The answer to it will have to be submitted to a longer and larger tribunal than is now extant. The several answers that may be already on hand, or even any new ones that are worthy of consideration, in the great solution that lies before us ought to be both urged and considered only in love and amity, not in competition and strife. The one end to be sought, and the one spirit in which it can be found, is unity

— whatever, or however great, may be the differences and the difficulties. The time has come — and something of the disposition and the will — for the exercise and the experiment of a universal and supreme act of reason, love, and self-sacrifice in behalf of Christ and of His work of human salvation.

Is it possible that there can be one body of Christians that shall remain deaf to the plea, indifferent to the ideal and the aspiration, that, in fact as in theory and profession, all Christians shall become one in Christ? There is no condition which, if it only remain actual long enough, we cannot become accustomed to and come, not only to acquiesce in, but to defend and maintain as normal and necessary. There is no question that the world around us has taken separation and alienation, even strife and schism, as the natural and inevitable state of things among Christians. There is a somewhat general softening of spirit and relaxing of acrimony now in process, but still even the theory of the one Church of Christ, and anything like a practical unity among Christians, is far from being recognized in our popular religion as a desideratum, much less as an essential principle and a practical necessity of

Christianity. Nevertheless, if they are so, however afar off we may see the promise, we must be turning our face toward it and moving our steps in the direction of it. It may be as yet a matter for only the thinkers and the leaders, above all for the seers, the Abrahams of faith and hope; but these are the movers of the world, and if they do not move in the matter the world will not be moved.

We have undertaken, in our measure, to be standard-bearers of mediation, reconciliation, and unity. It is only by example, as representing the spirit, and ourselves walking in the way of these, that we can exercise any such mission. The attitude which we should take for ourselves, if we would impress it upon others, I would state somewhat as follows: Our claim to be a catholic Church must mean only this, and nothing more, that we desire and intend and believe ourselves to be within all the essential and necessary principles of the catholic faith, life, and worship, and order of the one Church of Christ. We are churchmen as members of this, and not as Episcopalians, Anglicans, or whatever else, in particular, we may also be. As members of The Church, in this its only sense, we are members of all who

are members of It — that is to say, not only, visibly, of all baptized persons, but invisibly of all who by the grace of God are in Christ, by which I mean all who are in the saving operation of His Word and Spirit. We have, as churchmen, no right to claim, as in any sense exclusively our own or exclusively the property of any part of the Church, that which is catholic and therefore the right of all — whether or no all are in actual possession or practical use of it. On the other hand we cannot ourselves forego the possession or use of any part of what we believe to be essential to, or even a necessary means or condition of, actual or ultimate unity. On this account, for example, I may not feel myself at liberty under ordinary circumstances to avail myself of the Sacraments of other Christians and yet, still less, to exclude them from, or not welcome them to, participation in my own. What we need in order to know ourselves catholic, or within the Church of Christ, is to be able to answer on the right side such questions as these: Are we, so far as in us lies, in love and sympathy and unity with Christ and Christianity wherever these may be? If not in actual or outward communion with, are *we* responsible for and

guilty of alienation and separation from, any part of the living and loving and working Body of Jesus Christ in this world? How deeply and sincerely are we wishing and praying and laboring to be at one, and to be one, with God and Christ and all their living and saving presence and operation in our universal humanity?

The time is gone to be dwelling upon or debating past responsibilities, faults, or failures. All we can do now to any profit is to repent and regret them, and go straight on to see how we can best repair them. The present business of every fragment of Christianity is to set itself in preparation and readiness to be at one with every other. But we shall never prevail against any *ism* or replace it with anything better, until we learn to meet and overcome it with a true and a real catholicity.

All human life, individual or collective, begins under authority and ends in freedom. Human government began monocratic and ends, or is to end, democratic. There was a time when the king ruled, rightly because necessarily, by a divine right — the divine right of an external authority when there was as yet nothing internal on the part of the ruled to direct and control in its stead. But because monarchism,

even despotism, was at one stage necessary, it does not follow that individual, personal, popular responsibility and freedom will not be in order at another stage or in the end. It ought not to be doubted that Roman spiritual monarchy and absolutism was a necessity and a world-wide benefit in its time. But equally ought it to be remembered and realized that the law and authority and control of all human faith and life cannot remain in one human head or self. However the sacred oil or chrism was poured upon the head of Aaron, it was not to remain there only, but was to flow down to his beard and finally to the very lowest hem of his garment. The thought, experience, verification, determination of faith, as of all human life, is corporate. It works downward and outward, and there as everywhere else the goal, and the ultimate criterion, is not in the mind and will of one, but in the intelligent consent of all. This is no easy goal to reach, or even to foresee; all we can do is to be looking and moving slowly and wisely in the direction of it. All passage from monocracy to democracy is more or less through conflict and confusion; nevertheless there is nothing to do but to press onward toward it.

IV

CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES

WHEN I speak of my life as catholic, I use the adjective as expressive of freedom or liberty of thought and conviction in religious matters. My aim is to determine what is the true freedom or liberty in such matters. It is not freedom from any authority whatever, for if there be any real authority, freedom will consist in and be measured by the ability to recognize, regard, and obey it. Freedom is not freedom from law, but freedom to obey one's law; the law of a thing is only the expression of the normal being and activity of the thing, its completion and perfection. The law of a person is the mode of his true self-determination or liberty. Whatever expresses that for us possesses a real authority over us. To illustrate in anticipation, on to the very end: If Jesus Christ is indeed the revelation to us both of God and of ourselves — of the ultimate unity of God and ourselves, and so of

the Life which is our end and destiny — then Jesus Christ possesses a supreme and final authority over us as Lord of our life, obedience to which is upon penalty, not of any external or arbitrary sanction or consequence, but of our own sacrifice of life and liberty and true selfhood. So, too, the process and progress of our freedom is conditioned upon our determining the true sources and bases of authority and conforming ourselves to them.

We say, "All things change, and we change with or in them." It would be even more true, perhaps, to say, "We change, and all things change in or with us." Our world is very different from that of one or two or three thousand years ago; but the change has been primarily and mainly in us not in it. Men change, not nature; or nature changes, chiefly if not exclusively, through men's discovery, control, and use of it. Evolution now is that of the human, the personal, the spiritual. Nature is so wonderfully other and more than it used to be, because we are so other and more in our relations with it. In itself it does not really change; — and in ourselves we do not really and truly change, except to higher and more of ourselves. In the right sense our

creeds — our holds upon eternity and infinity, upon life and destiny — are our most intimate and permanent part, and are as unchangeable as ourselves. And yet, too, our creeds change with us, change in the respects in which we necessarily change if we are to go further and be more.

Our creeds then do change and are always changing — because we change and are always changing in our conception and comprehension of them, in our appreciation, appropriation, and realization of them. I hold that the Creed ought to be other chiefly in the sense of being more and truer to us than it was even to those who first framed it, and in this way: In humanity and in everything human, and so no less in our hold upon God and upon things divine, in our Creed, there is a natural and a spiritual element, there is something which changes with our change and is therefore subject to constant change; and again there is something which belongs to and ministers to the abiding and the unchangeable, the eternal, in us and never changes except to become more, and more true, to us. There is no use for the temporal in religion except to be the figure and symbol of the eternal, and the longer and fuller and firmer our grasp upon the eternal, the less

our dependence upon, the greater our independence of the merely natural or temporal. I look upon the creed from its spiritual and eternal End, from which there can be no possible question or doubt of it, because it simply is the truth, and the truth seen cannot be mistaken. I have ceased to look upon it in the merely natural setting of its temporal and sensible, because human, origin and process. There is a necessary mystery and veil over anything like a revelation, an inspiration, an incarnation, or any other form or degree of the union or uniting of the divine and the human — when looked at from only the human or the natural side. It can never be explained, investigated, verified, or even perceived from that side only: except one be born again, he cannot see it. It requires other eyes, other observation and experience, other tests and criteria than those of natural science or criticism. One who genuinely and really applies and thoroughly applies to the things of the spirit enumerated in the Creed the only possible and proper scepticism and criticism, investigation, evidence, and verification, will learn and be content to leave the mere natural fringes and joinings of such truth under the veil and in the

mystery that belongs to them. If the natural language applied to the fact of the Incarnation is an enigma to you, pass by the word and take the thing: test, prove, verify that, and the mystery will not trouble you.

I believe that I am naturally sensitive to mental movements and changes. I think that my mind has become a thoroughly modern mind; I feel and know that, for example, the speech and language of mediævalism, of the pre-scientific and pre-historic age, is already one "not understanded of the people." We still use older words and phrases, we still say "The sun rises" — but they stand for different conceptions of the thing, and the thing is what we are after and not the mere historic ways of seeing or saying it. It is useless to fight against actual movements and changes; our wisdom is to see in them the truth, the whole truth, and then, if possible, nothing but the truth, and let the rest pass by, as it surely will. The best way to dispose of the error is to establish the truth; emphasize, prove, demonstrate, and manifest that, and time and inanition will take care of the other. There was an incalculable wealth of truth and devotion, as of unqualified good, in the scientific revival of the last cen-

tury; as there was no little of perversion, pretension, and wide-spread harm upon the mere top. I believe that I always felt that scepticism and criticism were inevitable instruments of truth and righteousness and life, and that nothing in this world was proved, tested, or verified that had not passed through them to the uttermost end and limit. What is scepticism in principle but enquiry, investigation, examination? and what is criticism but separating, distinguishing, judging, determining between the true and the false, the good and the bad? We must not judge these divine instruments by their superficial perversions and abuses, but by their necessary and salutary uses. Our Lord says, "For *krisis* am I come into this world." He Himself was spared no question or test, and He is the supreme Critic and Judge of our lives: "The Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, and is critical of all thoughts and intents of the heart." "His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor." The truth or right that cannot stand all test is not genuine, and that which has not stood all test is not only unproven, but in us it is unpurified truth or righteousness.

I was myself, as doubtless many others were, subject to a very specious and dangerous temptation. There was no little insinuation and actual charge against Christianity that it was not willing to go with science all the way to the end of truth, wherever it might lead. There was the assumption here that scientific investigation or historical criticism could lead all the way to the very end of truth, and many, through fear of unveracity and dishonesty, of unwillingness to accept the truth to the very end, were misled by it. The mere natural cannot and is not intended to compass that which is beyond it, cannot pierce the mystery of even such palpable earthly facts as human freedom and personality, much less that of such heavenly things as divine revelations, inspirations, and incarnations. Yet, if there be any God at all, or God to any human purpose, there must be such things — whether they be palpable to the faculties of mere evolutional nature or not.

My own experience was this: many a time I was impressed and attracted by the honesty and thoroughness of natural truth, unequalled, as I feared, in my observation or experience, by our spiritual truth, which seemed ever

afraid to be brought to full or final proof. I might at any time have been led away by this; and then, under the stimulus and satisfaction of the sacrifice, drawn more and more into the noble pursuit and love of natural truth, and more and more out of that of spiritual things; I might have lived and died in the conviction that I had done the hard, the real, and the true thing; and doubtless God would have forgiven me the wrong, if indeed I was sincere in believing I was doing the right. I thank God He did not let me take that course. I reflected that there was another course which I was under obligation not to despise and dismiss without at least as full and fair trial as the other. Our Lord teaches us of a truth of God, a will of God, a work of God, which He says consists in believing in Him Whom God has sent. And He tells us that he who will do the will shall know the truth and work the work of God. The only and whole test and proving of the truth is in the doing. This is not unreasonable; it is a question of what life is, and there is no way of verifying and knowing life but by living it. He who will do the will of God, which our Lord says is to believe in the Son of God, will have the witness in himself. And

this is the witness, That God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son: he that hath the Son hath the life. If we will give to the testing and proving, the verifying, of that truth the thorough-going honesty and devotion that science gives to natural knowledge, there will be no doubt of it in us, and there will be no doubt of it in the world. For the world does not doubt what is actual and real; its doubt of Christianity is disbelief in us Christians. My experience was that if I suffered myself to be drawn away from spiritual things into only natural things, I found myself coming to think that truth and reality and honesty lay only there; but that if, on the other hand, without at all having to give up the natural, I was equally honest and in earnest in applying God's test to God's truth of faith and life in Jesus Christ, I soon became a thousand-fold more certain that all reality lay there — even the reality, the meaning and end, of natural science itself. That which makes you the most in yourself in making you most to all else, you cannot but accept as truth for you and the truth of you.

The contribution of modern thought or the modern mind to Christianity has been chiefly

the doing away the chasm which had been widening between the natural and the spiritual. We find God now not only in the non-natural, but wholly in the natural. This is not to deny the supernatural, but to see in it the essential, the higher and ultimate natural. "There is a natural, and there is a spiritual; howbeit, that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." It is more natural and rational that we should grow up spiritually from ourselves into Christ than that we should have developed naturally from the brute into the man. The more fully we know Christianity, the better we know not only the spiritual but the natural also — the natural as explicable and justifiable only as ground and setting of the spiritual.

It was through Bishop Butler that I came first to meditate deeply upon the relation of the natural and the spiritual — and to feel not merely the analogy between, but the identity within them. Later it was Aristotle's "Ethics" that trained me to see, along with the difference and distance between, no less the unity within the life and principles of nature and those of grace — as only stages of the same evolution.

I may illustrate certain respects in which the

modern mind, while it enables us to hold truths of religion even more clearly, compels us to see and understand them differently. Take, for example, the truth of the divine Providence: the old idea of "special providences" was distinctly that even in natural events God acted outside and independently of a course of nature, or of an invariable natural sequence. We can no longer, or shall not much longer be able to hold the truth of providence in that form. And yet I confess that I hold the truth of a universal and particular providence more firmly and I believe more really than I ever did before. I believe in a personal providence in nature, because I believe that nature is God, is how God is and acts in those things that we call natural because they are the operation of fixed and invariable laws. If those laws and operations were not fixed and invariable, we could not live and be rational and be free in this world. Therefore God in natural things acts naturally and never contradicts or is inconsistent with Himself. In so far then as His providence is in and through natural things, there is no deviation by any hair's breadth from the course or what we call the causation of nature. And yet, within the course of nature, if any

Christian man will, as St. Paul says, love God and enter into the meaning and operation of His eternal and divine purpose, I know that he will find that literally all things are working together, that God is working all things together, for his individual and particular good: "If God be for us, what can be against us?" "They have not known my ways," is God's charge against His people. God's ways are not easy, He did not spare His own Son, and He does not spare any that are His sons; but some of us live long enough to know that His ways are better than our ways, and that He never fails to help those whom He brings up in His steadfast fear and love. I cannot see where God ever promises to change natural things or natural sequences for us. I do see where He promises that in them all and through them all we shall be more than conquerors. To St. Paul's prayer to take away, the answer was, My grace shall be sufficient for you. Our Lord did not wait for that answer: He preferred for Himself God's will and way as eternally and essentially best. "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." I may not see how God in a uniform course of nature can provide what is best for each soul in each case any

more than I can understand that I myself am free in such a sequence of nature. But what actually is, is — whether it be possible or no. There are more things than we think that we accept simply upon that ground.

The question of Prayer is not separate from that of Providence, in so far as prayer is connected with natural or temporal benefits. The principle of prayer is rooted in the fact of need, want, poverty. Our Lord makes poverty the first condition of spiritual blessedness, because in it begins all that dependence upon God the end of which is oneness with Him. Out of that poverty come all godly sorrow, all noble meekness and humility, all hunger and thirst for rightness and fulness of life, all faith in God, all hope in self, all true self-realization and soul satisfaction. Nature is meant to be deficient and self to be insufficient: the natural is complete only in the spiritual, and every self only in God. Therefore prayer is the breath and life of the soul: we want God as we want the air we breathe and the food we eat. Prayer is properly for all we want, from the daily bread of the body to that which nourisheth to life eternal. We pray for natural and temporal things as well as spiritual and

eternal. But there ought to be a difference: when we pray for natural goods, we ought to pray for them "as God wills" — that is to say, as they are given, naturally; and when we pray for spiritual things, we ought to pray for them spiritually.

What I mean by praying for natural things naturally is this: we ought to recognize that they come to us in the way and course and order of nature. But nature is not a dead thing, a senseless mechanism or blind fortuity: is not God in nature, and is not nature God? Let us pray to God for all we want in the way it comes, — but let us learn more and more just what we want, and just how it comes: let us learn His ways. There are two ways of God, or two modes of the one way: First, He will not change nature for us, but He will, if we love Him and enter into His purpose, make everything in nature, the good and the evil, good to us, work together for our good. I do not mean that He will do this merely by fitting or adjusting us to things as they are, but that He will make the things, whatever they are, actual instruments and ministers of our good — as He made Judas and Herod and Pontius Pilate, and Satan and death and hell all minister to the

human glorification, because spiritual perfection, of Jesus Christ. Sin is the deepest, the only essential evil, and He makes our sin itself the instrument of our good, as that which drives us out of nature and self into Him and holiness. And second, I do not say that God will not change nature, do away with natural evils and provide natural goods, but only that He will not do it for us, in the sense of instead of us: He will not do it magically or miraculously, or by what we mean by "special providences." There is absolutely no limit to what He will do through us and by us in these ways if only we will be workers with Him for good. God does not want to put away our sin by magic, He wants us to put it away by holiness; and so He does not work upon us by miracle, but works in us by grace: which means that He calls and moves and enables us to put away our sin by repentance and to put on holiness and life by faith. And so in natural as well as spiritual matters, God does not want merely a clean, healthy, wholesome earth; He wants us to make the earth clean, healthy, and wholesome by living so in it. He is not going to convert the wilderness into a garden for us; what He wants is not the work but the working and

the workers, the love that bears all, believes all, endures and survives all, accomplishes all, and so at last becomes and is all. And so what do we come at last to pray for, and how? By *at last* I mean when we have passed beyond praying for things as we think we want them and come to take them as God knows we want them. I am a thorough-going Trinitarian in prayer: I find God personally only in the person of Jesus Christ, and Christ only by His presence to me and with me and in me by the Holy Ghost. I pray to God only for God, to Christ only for Christ, to the Holy Ghost only for the Holy Ghost, and for everything else natural and spiritual only as through them and by them God will give me Himself. Have we not been assured that "All things are ours"? And I see nowhere or how otherwise they are so than by the love of the Father, through the grace of the Son, and in the unity and fellowship of the Spirit; let the distinction or the identity of these be defined or left undefined as they may, they both exist somehow for me.

As the modern mind in me has corrected and enlightened, without weakening my faith in providence and prayer, so has it acted in other ways. We have our Christianity through

the Scriptures and through the living witness and tradition of the Church. These are human records and evidence; they are part and parcel of human history and cannot escape the natural tests of historical scepticism and criticism. Nor can we escape, if (alas!) we would, the actual and real results of such inevitable handling — our Lord in the flesh was handled yet more roughly and survived it. There is no question that the case has been made out for the very humanness and fallibility of the Scriptures as of the Church. Is their divine origin and authority gone with it? I confess that the Scriptures are more divine to me now than they ever were before, that I was never more a believer in their inspiration. If there has ever been anything in all my life verified by actual experience, it has been the divinity of the New Testament, after all that criticism has done with it. Just as I have been brought to see and feel the utter humanity of our Lord down to its very depths, and have been only thus the more convinced of His deity: it is the utterness of His humanity that is the proof of His divinity. “The work that Thou gavest me to accomplish, that work which I have accomplished, beareth witness of me.”

So with the Church and its witness: surely, if anything has ever manifested itself in fact and in history, it is the humanness and the fallibility of the Church. Men may well exclaim, where is the Church? — and what is Christianity? Yet I take my stand upon the fact of the Church and upon the truth of Christianity. I believe that our Lord will be with us to the end of the world, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against Him. There is a Spirit of truth, of whom our Lord says, “The world cannot receive Him, for it seeth Him not neither knoweth Him: ye know Him; for He abideth with you and shall be in you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.” Is there no real experience expressed in these words, nor any real evidence given or verification reached through it? The wisdom of a merely natural scepticism or investigation is to recognize its natural limitation, to be satisfied with its own proper agnosticism as pertaining to the facts of the spirit. The “comparing, or combining, spiritual things with spiritual,” of which St. Paul speaks, is best

accomplished by meeting spiritual truths with spiritual minds, proving and verifying them by spiritual tests and experiences. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: he cannot know them, because they are spiritually examined and judged."

I have striven to keep a free and an open mind, and it seems to me that the freest mind is that which is open alike to the claims of the natural and of the spiritual in us, not to either as against the other. I should rather try to hold both, though in unsuccessful combination and adjustment, than to be, through a narrow and one-sided devotion, ever so expert in the one at the sacrifice of possible untried and unknown worth and value in the other. But again, I am not only as I was before the nineteenth century opened and liberated my mind. I see all that is divine and permanent in Christianity, in my Christian Creed, in a clearer light, in better perspective and truer proportions, than I ever did before. What if on the natural edges and joinings of it, as I have said, all is not perfectly even yet clear and smooth—I have learned to hold my mind in suspense upon matters which we have eternity in which to know, and to know which eternity will not be too long.

V

THE THEOLOGY OF THE CHILD

THE theology of the child, I shall try to show, is all contained in the reason, the meaning, and the truth of Baptism. I believe that if we could start at the divinely instituted beginning of the spiritual life and see in baptism not only all the reason for it and the meaning in it, but, above all, all the reality of it as an immediate and direct utterance of the Word, and presence and operation of the Spirit, of God,—if we could take in and live out the pregnant saying of Luther to the effect that the sum and substance of Christianity is to realize or actualize one's baptism—the conclusion of the whole matter would be in our hands. It is a great deal, but it is not enough to say that “Baptism doth represent unto us our profession” as Christians. It does truly and perfectly represent it, but the function of baptism—as St. Paul, for example, sees it—is not simply to represent, it is to effect,

to constitute, to *be* — as it is the function of our faith to take it as what God's grace makes it. Along with baptism we proceed too often to make all of Christianity a mere sign, representation, or expression, of something unreal and non-existent. I say non-existent, because baptism means something of and in us, and if we deny that, then we make it a mere form of something that is not.

Christians were to be constituted such by baptism into Christ; what they were thus, by divine grace — that is by the right, title, and power of God, — potentially constituted and made, they were to be, *actu*, by what Luther called *realizing* it. What that means may be illustrated in a popular and homely way by an expression recently in vogue among us, as when we say that the only way to do certain things is to do them — or, we may add, the only way to be certain things is to be them. In other words, there are certain matters which wait and depend simply and solely upon our being and doing. The man whom God regenerates in baptism is then not *actu* regenerate, only because he will not be. Suppose he takes God at His word, and himself in faith and sincerity says that he is and

knows himself to be what God says He is, is he not regenerate? What is it more to be regenerate than to know yourself where God places you, and what God makes you, in baptism? If you are regenerate by God's grace, and not so in your faith, where is the fault and the failure but in your own not being.

All this will become clear only by reflection upon what baptism is in Christianity. St. Paul says: "Thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered." Interpreting the apostle's mind from his entire argument (Rom. vi), which is based upon the truth of baptism, we may explain some of the above words as follows: "Ye were conformed to the mould into which ye were cast" — that is, in baptism. Baptism is, first, "into Christ." Christ is that perfected relation of God to man and of man to God, that accomplished unity of both in one, which has been effected and exists in His person. Into this reconciliation or at-one-ment God brings us by His act of grace in baptism and bids us realize or actualize it in ourselves by faith. The function of faith is simply to take God at His word, to make

good in ourselves, by our own being and doing, what He calls and makes us. "Whatsoever now ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." He is your relation to God, your status with God. You have only to be and to do in that name, and He will supply not only all the authority, all the right and title, but all the grace and power to realize the relation into which you are placed. Baptism is not an act of man which his faith goes before and accomplishes, it is an act of God which his faith comes after and accepts and appropriates and realizes or actualizes in himself. We do not tell our children that, if they will repent and believe, they will be or become children of God. That is just what *they* cannot do, or make themselves. We tell them that they are children of God, that God's grace has gone before and made them so, that not only all the right and title but all the grace and power of it are theirs in Christ, and that their part is only to be and do what God in Christ will be and do in them. It is only their faith and will to be and do that, that is needed to enable them to say out of a full experience of the heart, with St. Paul: "I can bear all things, I can do all things, I can be all things, through

Him that loved me.” In His name, His grace is sufficient for all my needs. “Because we are sons, God sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father.” We are not sons because we have the spirit of sons, we have the spirit of sons because we are sons. And nothing will give us or bring us the spirit and disposition and reality of sonship but the realizing that we are sons. Baptism is not magic, it is the simplest, plainest, most direct address and appeal to our intelligence, our affections, our will, our whole selves that is possible. It simply tells us immediately from God Himself that He is one with us and we are one with Him in Christ: that through simple faith in and realization of that fact we become the objects and subjects of His eternal love, infinite grace, and perfect fellowship of life. Just let us take that in, and it will work itself: a real or realizing faith is patently the sole condition of a real and self-realizing divine grace.

It is not necessary that children should realize or know all at once the entire rationale and operation of grace working through faith. Let them at first, as St. John says, simply “know the Father”; and they can know Him

really only as "the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The simplest knowledge of God will beget, and nourish with its own growth, the instinct of holiness, righteousness, and eternal life. The sense and full experience of sin will come of itself in due course and with it the need and experience of the redeeming power and operation of grace. Let us know, as we need it, that we have all these in Christ — and we have them. "Behold," says St. John, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God — and we are." But it is not enough that we should be called, — we must call ourselves, realize and know ourselves to be, if we would really and actually *be*.

But we do not know Jesus Christ, or what it is to be baptized into Him, until we know Him crucified, dead, and risen. It may not be necessary for us to understand or define the process by which the Word of God at-one-d Himself with humanity in the person of our Lord, but it is necessary for us to follow the way in which the humanity in Him at-one-d itself with God; for the way by which He brought us to God is the only way by which in Him we come to

God. According to St. Paul all humanity as one man sinned and was fallen: this simply expresses the indubitable universal fact that “in Adam” (that is, in themselves) all sin and all die. That is the actual condition of humanity, and our Lord in taking upon Himself our humanity took upon Him its condition, its sin; in assuming our nature assumed its curse. “He was made sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made, or become, the righteousness of God in Him.” And how did He bring our fallen nature, our sinful humanity, out of sin and death into the holiness and righteousness and life of God? Why, simply by dying in all that mere nature, that insufficient and impotent selfhood, in which humanity cannot but be sinful and dead, and living in that oneness with God which is in itself holiness and life.

I have said that for childhood simply to be in Christ, to know the Father, and to know ourselves His children, the objects of His love, His grace, His closest and most continuous fellowship and companionship, is enough to quicken and nourish the instinct and principle of holiness, righteousness, and life. But humanity is very much more than childhood:

life is a dream to which we have to awaken, an ideal which we have to make actual, a work which we have to accomplish, an end which we have to attain. And in all that there is just as much not to do, or even to undo, as there is to do. There is no such thing as spirit or personality which does not begin in one form of freedom and end in another. There is no such thing as freedom without the exercise of choice, or choice without the possibility of opposites and the necessity of a decision between them. We cannot get rid of the alternative of good or bad, right or wrong, glory or shame, life or death. The only life of one of these is in the death of the other, the only death of one is in the life of the other. The issue for us is between the flesh and the spirit: we can live in either only by dying in the other. The flesh means living in mere self as organized into the constitution and conditions of nature. The Spirit means living in eternal, infinite, and perfect relations of oneness with God. The Spirit is in enmity with the flesh, or with the self in us, only as these are in alienation from Itself and so subject to sin and death; It is in reality the fulfilment of both the flesh and the self as instruments

through It of holiness and life. The formal freedom with which we begin is the personal choice between the flesh and the spirit; the real freedom with which we truly end is the subjection of flesh and self, not by extinction but by fulfilment, by conversion from all false independence into instruments of the sole control and dominion of Spirit.

This whole experience of what the Christ meant in Himself, and what He means equally in us, as not only God with us and in us, but God with us and in us in the necessary and indispensable process of our redemption, in the act and accomplishment of our death to sin, which is the death of death itself in us, and our resurrection to holiness, which is the life of God Himself in us,— all this experience, I say, follows in organic and actual sequence upon every real and effectual attempt to live the life of the spirit, which is the life of God. We must die to each previous mode or relation of life in order to live in the higher which succeeds and must displace it: We know Christ, either in Himself or in ourselves, only as we know Him crucified. Every child can know at least the beginnings of repentance and faith, himself as he is in himself and as he is in Christ, and to

know so much is to enter upon an experience which ends properly and wholly in the death to sin and the life of holiness and God.

Not only all theology of the child, but all theology takes its rise, if not in baptism, yet in that relation of God to us and of us to God which is embodied in baptism as not only its expression but its instrument and mean. The question as to whether baptism was "into Christ," or into "the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," is, from the theological point of view, no question at all. There is nothing in the latter and fuller formula that is not, more than merely implicitly, contained in the former. Already "Christ" means "Us in God," and that relation of God to us and us to God can find no other expression, because it has no other existence, than "in the name of Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost" — or, "in the love of the Father, through the grace of the Son, by impartation and participation of the Holy Ghost." The Trinity is primarily not a dogma but a pragma. It is not a definition but an actuality and a manifestation of God as One in Three. I know God only as Christ: that is the only objective manifestation of Him, as

Himself, to us. I may know of Him, invisible things of Him, in other things, as Creation; but I know Himself only in Christ. And I know Christ only in and through the Holy Ghost in me. I may know of Him — objectively through the testimony and historically through the records of others; but I know Himself only in His presence in me by the Spirit in me, Who is both He and God. Moreover, what Christ manifests, as the essence of Himself and the substance of what He has to impart, is Sonship: baptism into Him is baptism into all the fulness of His accomplished human relation to God. It not only reveals but makes God Father, and us Sons. As, again, the essence of the Holy Ghost, and the substance of what He has to impart in us, is the Spirit, which is Life, which is Christ, which is God.

It was impossible for the primitive Church to think and speak of God but in terms of God's Self-manifestation and living incarnation and operation, that is to say, except in terms of Christ and the Holy Ghost; but what I wish to repeat and emphasize is that the whole impulse and motive and manner of thinking and speaking of God in Trinity was pragmatic and not dogmatic. They knew God in Trinity,

because God came to them in Trinity, manifested and gave Himself to them through Trinity. If there had been no Son of God Incarnate, no Christ, there would have been no God, in that culminating and completing act and relation in which alone we know God, through His actual entrance as personal and controlling agent and factor in our lives. If there had been no Holy Ghost, there would have been no Christ; for Christ comes by revelation not only without but within us; He came originally, for what He was, neither to nor in any save those to whom the Holy Ghost imparted the necessary illumination, in whom He wrought and communicated the incarnation that Christ was.

If we would, as we should, hold nature *in toto*, and God *in toto*, we must make up our minds to find relations and connections between God and us in matters of fact, and not in modes of statement or explanation. God, by His Word, through His Spirit, or God in His Son, and by His Spirit — is a fact of relation and community between Him and us, which exists and persists in itself, no matter what the inadequacies or contradictions of the terms — Person, and Persons, and Trinity — which we

use in expressing it. If the Church, in its spiritual philosophizing, has pushed back these distinctions and integrations, behind the Incarnation, into all the cosmic or creational activities, and even into the very nature and interrelations of God Himself — that is a matter of philosophy which need not disturb the mind of children; if they are taught it, it is as the mind of the Church, not their own — at least until they have grown into very much more than children.

It is in keeping with the above that, historically, the Creed, or Creeds, did grow up out of the baptismal formula; and that, while it did confine itself to facts of divine-human relation — the Unity and Community of God and man, a relation in itself possible and actual for the simplest and the youngest — yet its statement of that relation, as nearly as human language permitted, was in exact terms of the highest spiritual philosophy. I do not see how children can be taught aught else than the Church's Creed; but the practical and important thing is how it ought to be taught. There are some things about which we ought to be careful and some that we ought to avoid.

In the first place, neither the minds nor the

experiences of children, their spiritual knowledge nor their spiritual growth, ought to be prematurely pressed or matured. With any child or person thoughtful enough, and sincere enough, really to raise the question, the distinction ought to be made between his faith in what he professes and that profession as the Church's faith. Not too much of modesty and good sense can be inculcated in him as to the difference between his qualification and the Church's to judge and say what is the truth and faith of Christianity; but the child should be taught, as every one of us needs to have learned, how to use all the spiritual knowledge and life, all the actual faith and grace, he has got; and not to judge as yet what he has not got, but modestly to expect that what has received common consent he too in time will consent to. Such an attitude will reap the reward of discovering in due process that old and tried and accepted truth is larger and wiser than young doubt or dissent. But, at any rate, the time is past when even the child is to be trained to have no mind in the faith he believes, or will of his own in the life he lives, that the Christian layman is and is to be a perpetual minor under the direction of a priesthood and

the priest himself only a moulded mind and will under the authority of a higher and unquestionable system. There is no human being that is not under individual and personal responsibility to have a right reason and a free will. The catholicity of the future will have to rest, no matter how difficult or impossible it may seem, upon a common sense recognition of the rational and rightful authority of the Unity of Consent.

A premature and unreal faith is no more to be avoided than a premature and unreal experience and profession of life. There is enough in the simple being in Christ and growing up in him that is knowable and usable even from infancy, without forcing a child's experience, or any immature experience, into stages and reaches that are beyond it. We may, as I have said, be in Christ for holiness, for righteousness, and for actual life in God long before, by sufficient experience and knowledge of sin, we really feel the need or appreciate the truth and the blessedness of the death in Him to sin, and the life, through that death, to God. It is very true that nothing can be said too much of either the sinfulness or the wretchedness of sin, nor yet of the glory and the bliss of a redemp-

tion from it, which is nothing less than a re-generation and a resurrection, but much of all this is true and intelligible only to those who have long and honestly and truly essayed the life of God, and have discovered for themselves the deficiencies of nature and the insufficiencies of themselves, how hard it is for man to be perfect as God Himself is perfect. And there is no other way of perfection, nor end and goal of perfection. "By the law is the knowledge of sin"; and it is only as we have known the law, and measured for ourselves our degree of conformity to it and the extent of our transgression of it, that we can know all the meaning either of sin itself or of our redemption from it. Only the saint knows sin; only he who thus knows sin knows the Cross; only he who knows the Cross knows redemption and resurrection and eternal life. The Church teaches us all this and gives us all this, but it can neither give it all nor teach it all in a minute, because these are things to be learned and had only in and through the actual experiences of a full life. If we insist upon requiring the fruits and accumulations of a full faith as a prerequisite and condition of faith at all, or life at all, the consequence will only be what we

already see. This is an age in which everything must stand or fall by its own internal virtue of reality. Professions and pretensions must go down before the true and wholesome spirit of scepticism, criticism, and verification which will spare nothing as too sacred for it, and which is most needed just in the things that are the most sacred. The only thing on God's earth that is going to escape or survive the winnowing fan, the refiner's fire, that Christianity above all things ought to be and is, is the thing, whatever it is, that is genuine, that is real.

VI

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE UNIVERSITY CHAPEL,
SEWANEE, ON THE FEAST OF THE
TRANSFIGURATION, 1911

“I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” — 1 Cor. ii. 2.

ON this one occasion of my life, in this place, and upon this spot, I may presume to be somewhat personal. When the suggestion was made to me of this week, naturally the meaning and the possibly useful purpose of it came very powerfully over me, and long and very serious thought arose — of myself, of Sewanee and my forty years here, of the Church that placed us here, of the time, and the times, past and future. What have we done? What are we? What are we going to do and to be? In fact, the very first hint, some years ago, of such an occasion as this came to me coupled with some such question-

ing: What can we put, not only into shape, but into motion here at Sewanee, for Sewanee, for the Church, for our country and our time? No doubt such questions have come to many of us in the form: What new thing can we devise, what new interest arouse, what new movement inaugurate? I suggest in anticipation what is probably a better form of the query: How can we acquire the secret of making the old ever new, and keeping it so?

Some illustrations have recently come to us right here of how something like that might be accomplished. It is not so long since doubts and fears and forebodings were rife in many of our minds. Under the look of things as they were, it was impossible to come here or be here and not ask: Are we in the right place? How much longer can we live under these conditions? We came here this summer — and looked around — and rubbed our eyes — and asked ourselves: Where are we? What has happened? The old place, the very, dear, old spot, had been transfigured, had become new. With it the whole tone of things was altered: What a beautiful place was Sewanee! What a perfect, predestined spot for such a mind and heart and life centre! But that was not half

the transformation. We had heard that students, trustees, alumni, residents were all disheartened and despondent — and, lo! the transfiguration on our mountain top of the mere ground was as nothing to that which had come over the spirit of Sewanee; never was determination so determined, and, by sheer consequence, never were hopes more high or was life more active.

What is the moral already? We do not forever want new things; we want the art of keeping things forever new. The change we need is not in the things, it is in us and our hold upon the things — our life in them, our use of them, our labor for them. Let us remember that our Lord taught absolutely nothing new — the Gospel was older than the Law, God's love than man's obedience. He Himself, the incarnation of our faith, our hope, our life, was before Moses, before Abraham, before Adam, before the foundation of the earth, as old as God, because He was God's love-disposition, love-purpose, Self-realization in us and in His world. Our Lord spoke only of God and of man, and their mutual relations; on God's part, of love, grace, and fellowship or oneness with us (coming down) — and on our part

(going up) of faith, hope, and love that make us one with Him. Our Lord uttered no new word, gave no new commandment, even instituted no new sacrament — water and bread and wine were already in themselves not only symbols or signs, but instruments and agents of birth and life. He took all the old things as they were, and He made them all living and new. When He took His disciples up with Him into the very high mountain, it was not really in Himself, but only to them that He was transfigured. They saw Him as the sun and His raiment as the light; they heard words from heaven, claiming Him for God and declaring Him to man. But their so seeing and hearing was only through the exaltation of their own spiritual selves and faculties. Jesus was always so, if their senses could but have perceived it. We do indeed live only in our supreme moments. Things are monotonous, dull, dead enough, day after day, perhaps year after year, until somehow we are taken up — let me say, however, that we are never taken up, except as also, with all our spiritual co-operation, we take ourselves up — into the exceeding high mountain, and there all our world becomes transfigured before us. “Old

things are passed away: behold all things are become new." Mind, not all new things have become, or come to pass, but all things, the old things, have become new. God and heaven are everywhere and always here if we could but see them; but alas! almost nowhere, and so seldom here, because so few of us can see them, and we so seldom.

How is it that our Lord Himself could live so continuously and so high? I am speaking of Him humanly; and speaking so, we must remember, however, that He had His deep places as well as His high, His darkness as well as light, His desertions and emptiness as well as His exaltations and fulness, His descents into hell as well as His ascents into heaven. But still, how could our Lord walk as continuously as He did upon the mountain tops, with such deep waters and desert places, such Gethsemanes and Calvaries always beneath His feet? We must look for very old and simple and human answers if we would know our Lord as He came to be, and was, the Way, the Truth, and the Life for us. It is because, what time He could spare from the valleys, ministering to the multitudes, going about doing good, He was wont to spend upon the

mountains, drawing breath and strength and life from God.

Let me then state, or restate, my proposition and afterward draw from it one or more corollaries. The proposition is that we do not want any new outward truth or law or scheme in itself, but only a new, and ever new, inward relation, or relation of ourselves to the ever-old, ever-new truth. We want the spiritual art and science of a self-renewing and self-sustaining faith and hope and love. The Jesus who was transfigured upon the Mount is He who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. The subject of conference in the Transfiguration was the old story of the Cross. They spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. "I determined," says St. Paul, "to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." If we cannot get high enough, often enough, to get and keep these truths illuminated and glorified in our minds and hearts and lives, we must be content to remain in the dark. For what is Jesus Christ but God in us and we in God? And what is the Cross but the actual process by which all that is not God dies in us, and all that is lives and grows in us? And what other

end or content can there be to our faith, hope, and love?

The trouble to which we are ever coming back is that we cannot keep the flame burning more steadily in us, that individuals, communities, churches, the Church of Christ should so live, and so need to live, in mere occasional reawakenings and revivals. At least, it is a blessing and a comfort to us to know that it is only our own infirmity that it is so; it is something to have discovered, and to be able to hold fast to the discovery, that when we are at our best, and just in proportion as we are at our best, we know the truth and know it to be the truth; and equally, that when we are in the truth, and in proportion as we are so, it gives us all the promised power to be at our best. The power of the truth in that sense to "make us free" is its divine credential to us. We are very finite beings, entrusted with and handling infinite forces. The omnipotence of God is at our puny disposal; His eternal love, His infinite grace, His perfect fellowship and oneness with us are ours to command. "All things are ours" if we will but take them and use them. God does not give piecemeal or half-way; His very kingdom and throne are

theirs who will take it; He invites us, in Jesus Christ, to occupy it with Him, and offers as well as bids us to be perfect, even as He is perfect. We have no other end or goal than God Himself. We are very finite beings entrusted with infinite forces; let us not be too much disheartened that they do not work infinitely in us, that we handle them very crudely; we are trying and learning to drive the chariot of the sun. At the same time, let us never cease to aim at and labor for their perfect handling, the straight and true driving. If it be true that we do live, if only in our supreme moments, is not every moment in which we have so lived a new and sufficient proof to us of the eternal and infinite reality of the Life Indeed? — and a new and compelling incentive to us to live it, though it take us forever, and we have to pass through deaths and resurrections, to do so? How much longer and greater a thing is life than we know or think! In the meantime, the fact that even our Lord, in the needful and inevitable infirmity of our present humanity, had moments in which He needed to know anew that He was the Son of God, that He had to learn afresh upon the very cross that there is no such thing

as a divine forsaking, though so often there so seems to be, ought to teach us how to have faith in even our darkest hours, and hope when we are faintest and farthest off.

All the new things, all the modern *isms*, of Christianity that have life in them, as many of them have, are but broken fragments of the Truth that is One and is ever the Same. While our sects and our parties live by the truth that is in them and that is vital in them, they are but too apt to live also in a deadly competition with other truths as true as they, and so in fatal detriment to the whole and the wholeness of truth. The course of truth and of life, with beings such as we are, never can move centrally and evenly, wholly and altogether. It is always one side or some part of it that is in motion or in action, and that too often in a way to incur the misunderstanding and resistance of the other parts. There is always fault on both sides: the new, renewed, or revived side of the truth that is in action is so apt to narrow its outlook and vision to the restricted field of its immediate interest and attention, and then to become exclusive, intolerant, and arrogant toward all other views or conceptions. The side or sides that are not in action, or in

the movement, are not as appreciative of, or as hospitable to, the revived truth and life in the new movement as they ought to be — and then they proceed to lower their own life by becoming to the “party” in progress an equally mere party in opposition.

The principle of competition, of antagonistic, divisive, separative, of hateful, hating, and deadly competition, has been prevailing in Christianity just as much as in our earthly life and business. The times are changing, and the call, the appeal, comes to us from every source and direction — comes to us Christians, to show the way, the better way, among ourselves, in our own relations with one another, of love and mutual understanding and peaceful and fruitful coöperation.

We have been here now nearly the week — our week together. I think I have seen everything we have done and heard everything we have said. I have looked and listened with very sensitive and interested and anxious organs, with every sense alert. We who are gathered here are of every sort and of all sorts as to our natural and acquired attitudes toward truth and life; we represent all the sides and aspects of faith and opinion;

we have all the allowable differences among ourselves. In all this conference and in all our personal association I have not heard one note, I have not detected one tone that did not, or could not, carry me back behind all our differences to the one theme that has occupied all our thoughts, filled all our hearts, and been upon all our tongues to the exclusion of everything else — The Life — the Life that was lived, that lived, for us — that lives in us, and in which alone we live. In the truest sense we have gone back to Christ, back behind everything else, to Christ, Who is our Life.

We stand indeed today together upon an exceeding high mountain — upon this mountain, not only as itself transfigured, but as itself no less a Mount of Transfiguration. It is our Lord Himself Who has brought us up hither. And we have been talking with Him and with one another about Him. We have seen His face as the sun, and His vesture whiter than any fuller or fuller's soap on earth could whiten it. All our talk has been of Him, of the decease that He accomplished for us at Jerusalem, of the life that He lives with us and in us now and forever.

VII

LIBERTY AND AUTHORITY IN CHRISTIAN TRUTH

DISCIPLINE *versus* freedom; repression *versus* persuasion, education, and patience; exclusion *versus* the most generous and widest inclusion; these are all alternative ways and means to a common end in Christianity, the end of agreement in truth and unity in life. And they are contrasts that are in the air, that are finding reflection and expression in the highest places of the religious thought and life of the day. We have heard recently from a prominent English high-churchman such a declaration as the following on one side of the alternatives stated: "The principle of force or coercion is wrong. What we really care about in England is liberty. The glory of the Church of England is that she unites historic catholicity with liberty and progress. She has stretched the utmost limit of toleration in leaving her children to say what they would,

and to write what they would, and to do what they would. She has no Index and no Inquisition. One extreme after another has worked itself out in her midst, and lost its sting, and left its contribution."

There is everything in the situation of the Church today to set us thinking seriously along this line. If there is wisdom and reason in religious toleration in general, there is the same for that toleration within, as well as without, the Church. The Church should stretch her toleration to its utmost limit. The writer quoted above means that the Church of England ought to include within itself the extremes of Catholic and of Protestant Christianity. The Church of Jesus Christ ought to bear in her bosom all who call themselves Christians.

It is not that Christian truth and Christian life are not definite and determined things. It is not that unity is not an essential note in Christianity. It is that unity is so essential and so necessary a thing in Christianity that it must not be sacrificed to the demands of an impossible uniformity; that the limits of uniformity must be stretched to their utmost in the interest of even the lowest practicable unity. Why, so far as my own willingness goes, shall

I not be visibly as well as invisibly in the one body of Christ with every devout Catholic and every devout Protestant; and with not only every devout Christian, but every one who calls himself Christian? The point is that the unity and the devoutness so much to be desired will much more certainly be attained by inclusion in the Church as the divine way and means to them than by exclusion from the Church until they have been otherwise acquired. Extremes will reconcile themselves, or will work themselves out, lose their sting, and leave their contribution if recognized and recognizing their common right within the Church; while if driven out, or if each claims only its own exclusive right within the Church, the thing emphasized and developed will be only their difference and not their unity. It might be alleged that often differences are more bitter in union than in separation. That is only because, in the theory or kind of the union, only one side has the right of existence within it, and each thinks the other ought to be excluded. Change the theory or kind of union, and the two sides will not only be more at peace in their difference, but will lose their difference in a nearer approach to unity.

**THE ONLY SPIRITUAL UNITY IS THAT
OF FREE CONSENT**

Agreement in truth and unity in life, at-onement with God and with one another, are the end and the task of Christianity. The only question about them is, How are they best and soonest to be attained? As an historical fact, the day of coercion in all its forms is past. Civil coercion in matters of religion has ceased — except, perhaps, as where a national Church is still bound by law to established terms of a too narrow conformity. Ecclesiastical coercion exists only in the form of a too rigid or sectarian binding of faith, under penalty of exclusion; and this is giving way except under the most conservative and reactionary conditions. Whither are we tending, and what substitute for coercion has the future to offer us? In the paramount interest of religious unity, what have we to hope from freedom *versus* discipline, patience and persuasion *versus* repression, inclusion *versus* exclusion? Is it a true conclusion of experience that to the unity of the spirit, force or compulsion in any form is a false way? Have we made the discovery that only through

freedom, with all its doubts and dangers, can men be really or truly brought to that whose sole worth or value consists in its being voluntary and personal? What seems to confront us as a new guide to the unity of the future is this principle, at once theoretical and practical, that the only spiritual unity or agreement is that of free consent; and that in spiritual matters men will the sooner and the better agree just in proportion as they are not forced, as they are free to agree.

I attach the very first importance to the question and to the cause of Christian unity. I believe it to be of the essence of Christianity. And I believe not only in its necessity but in its practicability. It is folly to assume that in this highest sphere of the spirit, and here alone, there is no such thing possible as a real, practical agreement of truth and unity of life. The only question is the right way to it. We have it, or are more and more getting it, in all other spheres. With all our diversities, we are members of one community or social system, one state, one nation. We have together common sense, common science, common morality, common patriotism, common humanity. And we all have them, with an only comparative

more or less, better or worse. So far as we have them more and better, we are practically in agreement and at one in them. So it might be and should be in the matter of religion; in proportion as we have it more and better, there is no reason why we shall not approximate a deeper agreement and a truer unity in it if only we feel the necessity and eliminate the obstacles of unity.

The lines that beckon us in the future are new and confessedly more difficult than those we have followed in the past, just as the dangers and pains of manhood and self-direction are greater than those of childhood and the direction of others. The perils of freedom and the risks and insecurities of a unity or agreement by consent may well appall us, but they have to be faced and can be wisely reckoned with only as a necessary part of the hard, because high, problem of human life and progress. Let us draw the matter nearer home to ourselves and ponder some of the growing-pains of our own present spiritual life as individuals and as a Church.

**IF NO FREEDOM OF ERROR WITHIN THE CHURCH,
THEN NO FREEDOM OF TRUTH**

As individually and collectively we progress further and rise higher, it becomes more and more imperative and apparent that our agreement with the truth shall be our own agreement with the truth and our unity with life our own unity with life. The truth and the life come to us as not our own, but they must become our own. That which in the beginning, at our baptism, our confirmation, even our ordination, we accepted and bound ourselves to by solemn vows was never as yet wholly our own, but, in even greater part, only the Church's truth and life. We took with them, however, the obligation to make them ever more and more and wholly our own. A truth and life which are only the Church's and are not in actual and active process of becoming our own and wholly our own, are much worse than nothing to us; a salvation which does not save becomes our condemnation. How are we to go about making these things, the truth and the life of Christianity, our individual and personal own? How otherwise than by the very process by which the Church itself, as a

whole, formulated its truth and shaped its life in the beginning — namely, by such a breadth and freedom of Christian experience and experiment as, while it gave occasion and gave rise to every possible error or mistake, at the same time, as over against these, enabled Christianity to come to a knowledge and understanding of itself. If you say that one shall make no mistakes, shall fall into no errors, then you say that he shall not know the truth for himself nor live a life that is his own. If you say that he must go out of the Church to make his mistakes or exploit his errors, then you have legislated that within the Church one must live a life that is not his own; for we cannot make even the Church's life our own unless we are free in doing so. If there is no freedom of error within the Church, then there is no freedom of truth.

DOGMA MUST NOT ONLY HAVE WON CONSENT,
BUT IT MUST BE ABLE TO RETAIN CONSENT

Let us see what is meant on both sides when we say that it is the glory of the Church that she unites historic catholicity with liberty and progress. We mean, on the one hand, of course, that there has been from the beginning

a life of the Church as a whole which may be distinguished from that of any individual member of the Church. The collective or organic life of the Church is properly manifested in a continuity and catholicity of truth, of order, of worship, and of mission. It is absurd to say that Christian truth and Christian life as a whole are not sufficiently definite and determined things to constitute a basis of practical unity and concord if only our conception of unity be broad enough, like that of the family or the State or many other social institutions, to include as wide a diversity as is necessary to the healthy vitality of human life. If we say that the widest toleration and the most perfect freedom are necessary conditions of ultimate truth and complete life, can we possibly turn around and assert that these cannot exist within the Church which is the most catholic of institutions, the divine institution of universal truth and life? The Church must have its own definite body or system of catholic truth and its own clear principle and rule of catholic life, and it must believe that these are impossible of attainment only as it is attempting what ought not to be attained. There is a catholic truth and a

catholic life of Christianity. Nearly two thousand years of Christian experience have not passed without settling, determining, and establishing anything, without accumulating and consolidating a body of verified fact, of common sense and general consent, in the world of the spiritual any more than in the world of the natural. I make no more, and no less, claim for spiritual than for natural or scientific dogma, that which has passed into common consent and become a part of our common sense. The Church would stultify itself if down to the present it claimed nothing as essential, necessary, and determined in Christianity.

To the realization and preservation of the ideal of a practical unity of historic catholicity with real liberty and progress of truth and life let us see then what is necessary. We shall have, in one way, to make a wide and recognized distinction between the historic organic faith and life of the Church as a whole and the faith and life demanded of its individual members — and even more especially of those who do its original thinking and living. The Church represents an organic product, a universal resultant, the consent of the climes and the ages, the spiritual common sense of Chris-

tendom. You deny Christianity as a department of human life if you deny it a body of catholic dogma in faith and morals. The Church must stand for the accumulation and organization of that which is common, that which has passed into consent and agreement, has become *res adjudicata*, as over against the infinite diversities and vagaries of individual Christians.

On the other hand, we must remember that catholic truth or consent itself was, and could have been, the outcome or resultant of only the very utmost diversity, which means freedom of thought and experience at the first. It is a recognized fact that catholic truth was formulated only over against and in conflict with every possible kindred error. If its life consists still in its being the truth, its continued living depends upon its continuous power to affirm and maintain itself against every form of opposing error. The moment catholicity becomes only a victory of the past, no longer needing, and therefore by consequence losing its power, to defend and maintain itself in the present, in that moment it begins to become a mere fossil or fetich — a dead form, resting for acceptance upon an authority external to

itself and quite distinct from the exercise of its own vitality and activity. There is no real rest but in continuously accomplished labor; there is no peace but in ever newly won victory; there is no living truth but in the perpetually renewed conquest of opposing error. Dogma must not only have approved itself and won consent; it must continue to approve itself and be able to retain consent.

THE CHURCH'S FREEDOM AND PROGRESS

Therefore, while the Church must ever maintain and represent the unity and continuity of truth and life, must resist change until it can win her own catholic consent, and must stand for the highest tribunal and authority possible for us, it must for its own life do this alongside, and in a real tolerance of, the utmost liberty and diversity, the always possible and often actual mistakes and contradictions of her individual members — and most so, I repeat, of her most originally and energetically thinking and living members. Our baptism, our confirmation, our ordination successively and progressively bind us in a growing loyalty to the faith and life of the Church. They do not bind us to a mechanical and necessary making

these our own; for they can never in that way really be made our own; they can become so only in the free use and exercise of our own reason and will. As a matter of fact, there is nothing distinctively human in life, nothing rational, free, or personal, that we do not receive and accept as not our own but the general, long before we are capable of making it personally our own. The Church is no exception; we accept or receive it at first as the actually existent accredited mind and voice and authority of organized Christianity. We accept it as we accept the family, the State, as we accept the common sense, the common culture, the common life, of which we are products and parts. Not one individual in a thousand is competent to set up himself against the common — the common experience, the combined wisdom, which mostly shapes and determines us all.

But nothing in this world, not even the Church, is in an absolute sense infallible and irreformable. The Whole World, the *quod semper, quod ubique, et quod ab omnibus*, the Church, is only relatively or practically infallible, irreformable because there is nothing higher to reform it except its own higher self

convinced and consenting. It is not impossible, however, that the world or the Church shall out of itself produce one at some one point greater than itself and capable of correcting and amending it, or of raising it higher than itself. There is nothing theoretically or actually impossible in an Athanasius in the right, *contra mundum* or *contra ecclesiam*. Indeed it is just in this that consists the fact of the Church's life and the possibility of the Church's freedom and progress. The Church that does not hold itself and keep itself open to conviction and correction from within itself is not a living Church. And it can do so only by keeping up the freedom and persistence of thought and knowledge within itself. If one should arise who is in fact raised up and qualified to amend or correct the common sense, the common truth, or the common life of the Church or of the whole world, he ought to find a Church or a world ready to be convinced and to give consent. Alas! he never does. One who would change the common, the general, or universal, ought, we might say, to possess the transcendent qualification and call to do so. But the transcendent one will never arise in the Church in which the aspiration and the

effort to transcend is not permitted, in which the thousand failures that lay the foundation for a single success are not allowed to make themselves.

NO SURER WAY TO PROPAGATE ERROR
THAN TO PROSECUTE, SUPPRESS,
AND EXCLUDE LIBERTY

The principle which needs first of all to be established, as the condition of anything further, is this: That as the holiness of the Church is not compromised or contradicted by the weaknesses, the shortcomings, the sins of its members — any more than the efficiency of a hospital by the illness of its patients; so the truth and life of the Church itself is not compromised by the mistakes and errors and falsities of its individual teachers and doctors. To say that all these must believe and teach with the practical certitude and infallibility of the Church itself is to say that they must do so mechanically or by necessity. The power to be free cannot be separated from the right to err. Put the right of error outside the Church, and you put with it the possibility of real freedom or of real truth.

I am aware that fearless thought and fear-

less action along the line of freedom is no plain or easy solution of the problem before us. But let us remember that civil society before us has never lost anything in the way of social unity, harmony, or peace by extending the limits even to the utmost of freedom of individual thought, speech, and action. Extremes always work themselves off best by freedom to work themselves out. The best expulsion of error is through the freedom permitted to it of self-exposure. Our end in view is not the licensing of error, but the ultimate best, if not only, method of eliminating error by suffering it to meet and be overcome by truth. By all means let the Church guard and preserve her faith, order, and discipline, her creeds, her ministry, and her worship. But let her neither indulge the weak fear that these are really endangered or compromised by the fullest freedom conceded to and exercised by her members, nor imagine that danger or harm can be averted by the suppression or by the expulsion of that freedom. If our desire is to propagate error, there is no surer way than to prosecute, suppress, and exclude liberty. Let the Church not be afraid to keep herself in perpetual question by her own children. If their question-

ings be true, let her have all the benefit of them. If they be false, let her meet them, and be able to meet and answer them, with the truth.

Is there to be no limit to this toleration? Of course there must be, but the limit will very largely, and just in proportion as it is allowed to do so, fix itself. In the Church, at least as we have it, there is no uncertainty in the voice or in the expression of catholic Christianity. And that voice has to express itself with no uncertain sound through the lips of every accredited representative of the Church. If he utters it falsely or deceitfully, the harm or the danger is to him, not to the Church. All the world knows what the Church's truth is, which he has accepted the commission and made a solemn promise to teach. He has perfect freedom to resign that commission and to withdraw that promise at any time, and it is a libel to assume or assert that there is any body of men who will continue to exercise the Church's ministry with conscious falsity or deceit. If they do, their conviction and penalty will not need to be imposed by the Church. But if the truth of the Church is living and free truth, then there will of necessity arise men from time to time who, with all possible sincerity of

loyalty and devotion to the Church, will find themselves unable to make their own some one or other part of even catholic truth. This may stop short at the point of only personal inability to comprehend and appropriate the truth in question, or it may go further in all sincerity and love and devotion to the Church to wish and even to attempt its correction in the particular in question. To rule this impossible in the Church, to exact of every one of her members or thinkers or teachers her own complete standard and attainment of catholicity, is to impose a law of mechanical necessity fatal to either freedom or life. If the life of freedom is impossible without the liability of error, then I say that the liability to error is not only to be tolerated, but to be desiderated and expected within the Church.

THE FEARLESS PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM

The present practicability of acting upon so fearless a principle of freedom depends upon the present life of truth in the Church, or the present life of the Church to the truth. If we have the truth wrapped up in a napkin as a sacred deposit handed down from the past, if we hold it now as the decision of a council or

the letter of a creed and not by the continuous self-demonstration of its truth in itself and its meaning and necessity to us, then indeed may our dead or dormant catholicity be afraid of the much alive and wide-awake heresies that confront it as in the earliest ages. Then may we indeed not know what to do with them, but rule them out of existence in the Church by the letter of a law or a statute. But that will not do nowadays. Nothing but the life and the living thought that shaped the decisions and wrought the creeds can maintain the decisions or defend the creeds now. And for one, I think I begin to see that the impossibility of extinguishing error by legislation or banishing it by exclusion or of getting rid of it in any other way than by meeting and overcoming it with the truth, the necessity therefore of holding the truth always for its truth and not for its enactment — in a word, the principle of the freedom of truth, with a fair field and no favor — as it is the condition of the Church's own ever-present life, so is it the only hope of its ultimate unity and peace.

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