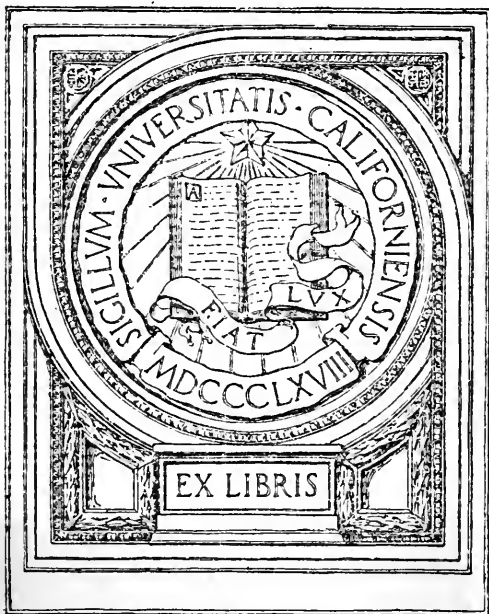




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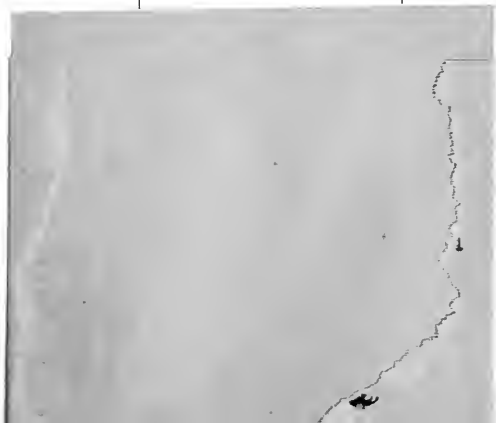
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THOMAS WHITTAKER, PUBLISHER

2 & 3 BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK

# ESSAYS

## Practical and Speculative

BY

S. D. McCONNELL, D.D., D.C.L.

NEW YORK  
THOMAS WHITTAKER  
2 AND 3 BIBLE HOUSE  
1900

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TO MY GOOD OLD FRIEND  
ROBERT W. GRANGE, D. D.,  
THIS LITTLE BOOK

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NOTE.—I hereby make my sincere acknowledgment to the *New World*, the *Churchman* and the *Outlook* for their courteous permission to reprint portions of this little volume which have already appeared in their pages.

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THE MORALS OF SEX



# I

## THE MORALS OF SEX

OF all the Commandments in the Decalogue, the most difficult to enforce and expound is the Seventh. For the present purpose it is its exposition with which I am concerned, and it is the clergy chiefly that I have in mind in what I say. There are at least three reasons which make a discussion of the Law of Sexual Morality pertinent to us professionally. *First*, as official teachers of righteousness and ministers of discipline we are continually called upon to apply and interpret the law. *Second*, we are confronted with a new social and economic order which has introduced into this region of morals quite new and very profound difficulties. *Third*, in common with Protestantism generally, our Church is engaged in the attempt to formulate the law of the case in a Canon of Marriage and Divorce. These three reasons may also serve as the headings for the divisions of what is rather a memorandum for an argument than a symmetrical thesis.

I. What, then, *is* God's law as to sex relationships? Upon what sanction, human or divine, does the law rest? Is the same law binding upon men and women?

To these questions the Social Purity League would

give one answer. The average practicing physician would give another. The law of the state is based upon ideas differing from both replies. The Church gives an answer differing somewhat from all of them. What is the actual will of God and the will of Nature on the subject? We may be certain that the two wills will coincide. Usually if we can find out precisely in any case what Nature wishes we may be quite sure that we have found out what is the will of God in that case. For Nature is God's way of expressing Himself.

But in the case of sex relationships it may as well be confessed that Nature does not seem to know her own mind. This is the origin of the whole moral confusion upon the subject. In regard to other appetites and desires Nature is a trustworthy guide. Their existence is *prima facie* proof of their innocence. They are warnings of needs. They protect themselves against abuse by the sense of satiety. For other moral prohibitions the reason is so evident in the nature of things that the understanding is ready to uphold the conscience in its mandates. But in the case before us we cannot "follow the guidance of Nature." The instant that proposal is baldly made, all men see that it will not work. As a social rule, it is condemned by the practically unanimous vote of society. And it is not civilized and Christian society alone which condemns it. Unregulated intercourse at will is not permitted even by the lowest savages.

Among the lower animals it is not possible. In men it is physically possible, but it is limited and regulated by social conventions. These limitations have the force of law, and are maintained by an appeal to religion. What then are they, and ought they to be?

The first prohibition is of *Adultery*. What is adultery? The legal definition is slightly different, but the practical definition is: sexual connection with another man's wife. In what does the wrong of the action consist? The first answer is, it is a wrong to the woman's husband. This is the view which the law takes of the matter. This was the view of the Old Testament Scriptures. The adulterer was punished as a thief. He had trespassed upon another man's property. This is the Common Law doctrine to this day in Europe and America. The remedy for the "injured husband,"—the phrase is significant,—is sought by an action to recover damages. Underlying it is the feeling surviving from ancient times that a wife is property. In quite modern practice has been introduced a legal fiction to put the wife on the same legal standing as the husband, and she has been allowed also to sue for damages for "the alienation of the husband's affections." Courts and juries have always found it difficult, however, to assess the value of the thing sought to be recovered.

But the punishment of the adulteress has always been reached on other grounds. Her offence has been estimated not by the damage inflicted upon the

wronged husband, but by the damage she has done to society. She has "defiled the blood." Where society was organized, as in Israel, about the tribal principle, it is easy to see why she was so sternly dealt with for having "wrought confusion" in Israel. But the same quality must always distinguish the adulteress from the adulterer. The husband may wander among harlots, and in the view of law, the wrong which he does and which he incurs is personal to himself. But for the wife to admit an intruder is to confuse the inheritance. Her offence is against her father, her husband's father, her children, against the State. It vitiates, or at any rate renders uncertain, the testaments of all who have preceded her and her husband. In the sin of adultery the same judgment has never been meted to the man and the woman, and never can be. The implications of this we will meet again when we come to consider the moral basis of marriage and divorce. Practically, it is sufficient to say at this point that the offence is one which has always been so sternly condemned by all men that we need not dwell longer upon it. Any man guilty of it flies in the face of Nature, society and God, and among the three he will find his punishment.

But what about commerce of the sexes which does not involve the element of trespass and does not defile the blood? What is the absolute and ideal right? Is the law the same for all? Should all be alike punished for its breach? Let us take this last question

first. Should the man and the woman be held to the same accountability and be dealt with the same way? The answer is, they cannot be. The cry "the same law of purity for both sexes," is both silly and mischievous. The champions of this crusade do not seem to perceive that in the leveling process attempted the woman is quite as likely to be dragged down as the man is to be led up. Set the ideal of manly purity as high as you will—as high as Christ does—but remember that even then woman's purity must transcend it. Nothing is gained by ignoring facts. Society judges the woman's fault far more severely than it does the man's, simply because it believes the fault to be far more heinous in her than in him. One element in gauging the gravity of an offence against a rule is the consideration of the consequences of such offence. In this offence the woman is defiled in the body, in her emotional nature, in her affections, in her soul, to an extent and in a way which is not true of the man. In her case the consequences are conserved, retained, transmitted. In his they come to an end. His offence may have a moral aggravation far beyond hers, or it may not. But the *same* offence it is not, nor can, nor ought society to deal with her as with him. His penalty cannot be of the same kind as the one meted out to her. If he be threatened with that alone by well-meaning reformers and preachers, he can well afford to smile in their faces. Nothing is idler than the rhetoric about the injustice of the fact

that she is cast out to shame and cold while he is received to club and drawing-room. This has always been society's method, and always will be. The fault has demonstrated her to be incapable to discharge her social duty, while it has not conclusively shown his unfitness.

From this the law of sexual purity for women, and the reasonableness of that law begins to appear. For them the law is absolute chastity. No excuse or palliation will be admitted in the judgment of human society. God's judgments, we may well believe, will be in many instances different. He can heed the plea, "she sinned much because she loved much." But society cannot. There is too much at stake. In her person society itself is defiled by the offence, and is compelled in self-defence to visit upon her a penalty which does not fall upon her partner. This may be called hard, unjust, unfair, atrocious, but that does not change the fact. Beside that, a closer examination of all the data would probably show that it is not open to these charges. At any rate, it is the way in which woman herself deals with her offending sister.

It is clear, therefore, that human society, presumably giving voice to the will of God, demands absolute continence (1) of all married men, under the penalty which attaches to a broken oath; (2) of all women, under the penalty which attaches to any act which brings confusion into the social structure; (3)



of all married women, under an additional penalty for debauching posterity.

This leaves for consideration the case of those men who have contracted no obligations, whose incontinence does not seem to them to carry with it any evil consequence, whom society does not severely punish, who find across their path only what seems to be an arbitrary prohibition. What will keep them continent? What ought to keep them continent? What has Nature, what has God, what has the preacher to say to the young man here? There is no department of morals where it is so difficult to speak honestly. There is no place where conventional morality, both in its teaching and result, or lack of result of its teaching, is so unsatisfactory. When the young man is bidden, "thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery," he heeds. In all these cases he sees both the reason for the prohibition and the peril of the offence. But when he is bidden, "thou shalt not commit fornication," he heeds little. He knows that fornication is not adultery. The reasons for its condemnation are not so evident. They lie so deep down in the complex nature of things that he doubts their existence. The torment of an appetite which he knows to be "natural" drives him across a prohibiting line which he suspects to be "artificial."

What shall the moralist, the physician, the priest say to these? It would surely be a great gain if they, all three, can say the same thing. To the unmarried

American woman, little needs to be said. She is chaste by habit, by tradition, by pride, by instinct, by temperament, by physical nature. She needs little exhortation. But what of the man? How many are continent between the ages of twenty and thirty-five? No one can say. Some are; probably far more than is often supposed. But more are not. They say, when they speak at all on the subject, that it is "a counsel of perfection" to which they are not equal. They find no fault with the high demand which conventional morality exacts, but they regard it as impossible of attainment. What considerations can we urge to give vigor to the young man's will by which he can bid his turbulent appetite come to heel? Christianity provides the supreme truth. It tells him that his body is the temple of a Holy Spirit. It warns him against defiling the temple of the Holy Ghost. It asks him if he will dare to "make the body of Christ the member of a harlot." There are thousands for whom this is sufficient. Their souls are inwardly reverent, and they compel their reluctant bodies to be at least outwardly respectful.

But there are tens of thousands to whom this is not sufficient. For various reasons the spiritual dynamic of Christianity does not touch them. Has the law of purity any other hold upon them?

There would seem to be at least two facts which we can fairly urge to bid them pause. The one is the peril to the body; the other is the peril to the soul.

Let us not be misunderstood. We do not well to flourish threats of death to the body or of damnation to the soul. But there are a thousand ills which stop far short of either dissolution or damnation, which are nevertheless so grave that none but a fool will take chances with them. Fear may be a low motive, but the appeal to it is not unworthy. Indeed it probably is in point of fact the most common of sanctions. The man who buys sexual indulgence habitually, takes risks of bodily damage which none but a fool would incur. He imperils his subsequent life; the health of his wife who is to be; the life and self-respect of his unborn children. Does he smile and say, "I'll take the chances"? Would it not be well if we could persuade the experienced physician to say to him: "I have heard men say that; and I have seen them afterward, when they wished that they had at least died before they were damned!"

There is another penalty, however, about which Nature is inexorable. It is none the less natural because it happens to be a law of human nature. Why is pure lust not immoral in a beast? And why is it immoral in a man? Because in the beast it is not correlated with the affections, and in the man it is. "Making a beast of one's self" is not a metaphor. It is a scientific statement of a possibility. It is accomplished by eliminating the humane element from any human act and thus reducing it to the deed of an animal. But this can only be done at the expense of the human

part of Nature. If it be done repeatedly, the humane element is injured. If it be done habitually, the humane element is destroyed. Nature is leisurely but unerring in her revenges. If one should then be counselled by the complaisant physician, who knows only the body, to "seek health by the temperate gratification of an appetite," the religious adviser may be allowed to intervene and say, "the doctor's advice would, no doubt, be good if it concerned an appetite which had in it no quality but physical. Your prescription would be well for a beast; for a man it is not well." Incontinence of the body means deterioration of the soul. This would be just as true though the Bible had never been written, and though there were not a preacher of morality in the world. "The house of the strange woman opens unto death, and her paths unto the dead." The soul which goes there sickens, and dies if it abides there. This is the price which Nature fixes. Any cost of self-repression is cheaper. In this, Solomon, Robert Burns, St. Paul, and the Great Physician agree.

I have not mentioned the crime of seduction in any of its forms. The man who is capable of taking advantage of youth, ignorance, inexperience, or of woman's love for the gratification of his lust, or the rare, but still existent, wanton woman who plays and preys upon "the imperious instinct of man," are both alike beyond argument. They are condemned already.

“Who cast the devils from the Gaddarene,  
Could hardly do so much for these I ween.”

II. I said that we are confronted by a new social and economic order which has greatly aggravated the difficulties in this region of morals. In a simple social structure each man and each woman is mated and mated early. Physical appetite is transfigured by affection, and held in check by the responsibility of parentage. But each generation the average age of marriage is being pushed farther onward, and the percentage of unmarried men and women increases. Within the last fifty years the average age of marriage in New York State has been pushed upward, for men from about twenty-two to about twenty-seven, and for women from nineteen to twenty-four, as near as can be deduced from the very incomplete statistics. Speaking generally two causes are at work to bring about this result. First, the increasing exigency of life, and second, the increasing personal independence of women. Suppose the man is a professional man. He leaves the preparatory school at nineteen, leaves the university at twenty-two, leaves the technical school at twenty-six. Assume for him at the outset even more than average professional success. He cannot and does not marry until he has passed thirty. Suppose he goes at once from the public high school at nineteen to learn a skilled trade or to go into business, he cannot get to the point when he can marry and live in this city much earlier. Only the unskilled

laborer can marry shortly after maturity, because his ability to support a family is at its best from twenty-four to thirty-four, and rapidly declines thereafter.

The case of women is the same, with aggravating circumstances. The butcher's daughter and the baker's now remain in the public school until nineteen or twenty. I was present lately at the opening exercises of a high school containing two thousand four hundred young women, the majority of whom were older than their grandmothers had been when their mothers were born. Do not understand me to be making an argument for "early marriages." I am not making an argument at all. I am trying to make a diagnosis. We are set to preach purity. To do so effectively we must know to whom we are preaching. We are surrounded by thousands and thousands of unmarried men and women who remain unmarried for a length of time, far longer than has ever been known in any other time and place. The men are journeymen mechanics, clerks, commercial travellers, salesmen, lawyers, engineers, doctors. The women are college graduates, shop girls, factory girls, saleswomen, stenographers, and myriads of young women living aimless lives in dull homes, waiting while their bloom fades for the man to speak, who cannot speak because he cannot make a home to which to invite her.

But what of the "imperious instinct" meanwhile? Love of life and the instinct of generation are the two elemental forces. Society has safeguarded life, made

it comfortable, lengthened it. Never was human life so secure, so pleasant, so easy. American society has certainly succeeded in its aim at "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." But does any one suppose that the companion "instinct of propagation" can be ignored, or forgotten or suppressed without it having its revenges? Does society do well to make individual life easy and homes difficult? After a young man has lived for five years at a Mills' hotel, and a young woman in a Young Women's Christian Association boarding-house, will they be more or less likely to combine their lives in the narrowness of a home? One is tempted to ponder upon the proverb that "the wise ones of the world are kept busy undoing the deeds of the good ones." The hard fact confronts us that the sex instincts of nature are more and more obstructed by the exigencies of human society. Continence is subjected to a longer and ever more severe strain. Is it surprising that it breaks down? What reinforcement can the minister of religion bring to the continent will which finds itself called upon to arbitrate between the law of the mind and the law of the members, after the contest has been artificially prolonged beyond the time which Nature has decreed? It may be well to say at this point that I assume the appetite of sex to be just as legitimate and as noble as any appetite whatsoever. Indeed one might say much more. Whosoever shall penetrate the ultimate mystery of sex will have gone far to know the es-

sential nature of God. Creation and procreation are more nearly allied than are any other motions of the Creator and the creature. The religion of Christ ought by now to have recovered from the sickly taint of asceticism with which the mumified corpse of dualism infected it in the Thebaid centuries ago. The monk and cloistered nun have never been altogether sane. Their confessions, their hymns and prayers, their theology and casuistry proclaim them less than Christian because less than human. I believe that we will never be able to urge and interpret God's law of chastity except as we honestly and reverently recognize the truth that "in God's image created He them, male and female created He them." It may well be that just now the most efficient way in which we can preach personal purity shall be by addressing ourselves to the correction of some of those things in the social and economic order which make impossible that condition of things which God contemplated when He promulgated His law.

III. We are concerned with the application of the Christian law of sex relationships to divorce and remarriage. This discussion usually commences with an array of statistics to show the rapidly increasing number of divorces. I will assume the figures. Let us admit the extreme. In one state there is one divorce for every six marriages. In other states they range from this downward to South Carolina where there are none. The fact of consequence is that there



has been and is a rapidly increasing disposition to break the bonds of matrimony when they begin to chafe,—and in a less marked degree a disposition for those thus made free to contract new alliances. There is so little question of the facts that it would be time wasted even to exhibit them.

But the second step in the discussion is usually to argue that all this indicates a prevailing laxity of sexual morality, and a perilous lowering of the ideal relations of man and woman. This I believe to be an error. A careful examination of the facts will show that, taking the country as a whole, a slow but steady advance in chastity has occurred much in the same way as has occurred the advance in temperance. The multiplication of divorces is not to be accounted for by the division of the sum total of popular morality. If this were the situation the Church's task would be a very simple, even though not an easy one. But the reasons are far more complicated. Speaking broadly, it may truly be said that Christianity itself has caused the present multiplication of divorces. Every intelligent student of Christianity has noted the way in which it began almost at once to change the status of woman in society. It began by crediting her with an independent personality. But the accumulated traditions of countless generations stood between her and the conscious realization of her personality. In all human society she stood in a position of less dignity than that of a slave or even of a chattel. A bonds-

man or an ox had at least an individuality of its own. The woman had not. She was an appendage of some man—of a father, a husband, a brother, or even a son. All law, all custom, all social order, all domestic life was built upon this conception of woman. Even St. Paul asserts it and bases his dicta upon it. But what is of more significance, this was woman's conception of herself. And woman is, as Amiel says, "the very genius of conservatism."

The glory of Christianity is that it has at long last succeeded in bringing woman to conceive of her own personality as Christ conceived of it. The process has been a marvellously slow one. Indeed it is only within our own time that the result has begun to show in any large way. The phenomenon is not fitly termed the "emancipation of woman." It is not "emancipation." It is not "independence." It is a *coming to consciousness of self*. The free woman in Christ is not thereby set in opposition to men, or transformed into a man in all save bodily function. It has nothing to do with the "suffrage" or with the "right to earn her own living." But this new-found consciousness of absolute and underived personality has given to her a new-found, and sometimes bewildering sense of her personal dignity and personal sanctity. This is what we wish, what Christ intended, what we would not have turned backward. But when this stage has been reached why should we be amazed if she turn to society and ask, sometimes

tearfully and sometimes defiantly, "Am I a person? Am I not the owner of my own body? Can Christian law under any conceivable circumstances lay an obligation upon me, or so construe any promise which I have made, as to command me to give my body to the embrace of any man against my will?" Thus Christianity itself has led not a few women to the point where their religion prompts them to take an action the precise opposite to that which devout women of an earlier stage would have taken. At that earlier stage a devoted woman endured to her life's end the approaches of a brutal or drunken or distasteful husband because her religious sense bade her do so. To-day her equally pious granddaughter utterly refuses such outrage of her personality because her religious sense bids her so! Divorce is just as likely to be the result of a higher moral ideal as of a lower one. We may as well face the fact that marriage is coming more and more to be thought of as a mutual contract between two self-contained persons than as the absorption of the wife's personality by the husband's. And Christianity has done this by transforming the woman from a possession into a person. Do we wish that undone? If not, then all the exhortation of the "conservative"—who is the man with his eyes in the back of his head—all his exhortations to bring back what he calls the "primitive basis of the marriage bond," is idle. The sacred marriage estate lies before us, not behind. I am willing to say that

for one I believe that in most cases where divorces are actually granted it is better upon the whole for the state to loose the bans which have become fetters than to hold them fast,—better for the men and women concerned, better for society, better for public morals. In point of fact they never were those “whom God had joined together.” As to the re-marriage of the severed individuals, that is quite a different question, and a far more difficult one, both for the state and the Church. But this is the stage at which the Church comes face to face with the problem.

Concerning a first marriage it would seem that the Church could do no more than she has already done. That is to warn the young man and maiden who ask her benediction upon their vows that “if any persons be joined together otherwise than as God’s word doth allow, their marriage is not lawful.” Shall she attempt to pass judgment upon the facts in each instance? If so, what is to be her measure or standard of legality? If by “God’s word” here she mean the written scriptures she simply cannot derive from them a working statute. They were not written for such a purpose. If she mean the ideal prerequisites and conditions of Christian marriage, as is the practical construction of the phrase, then she can do no more than adjure them by the sober warning of judgment to come, that “if there be any impediment they do now confess it.” The practical outcome of the common

admonitions of our more or less reverend fathers in God that we should look with more care to the original marriages, seems to me to amount to this and nothing more.

But what of the remarriage of those who have been divorced? Shall the Church forbid it absolutely? Shall she forbid it, with exceptions? Shall she permit it absolutely? Whichever she decides upon, what shall be the ground upon which she shall rest her decision?

The real difficulty is with the last question. What *is* the law which governs the Christian Church in this cause? And where is it written? Many, possibly most, will reply, the law is in the New Testament. I think they are mistaken. Christ enunciated no law of marriage and divorce. He did that which was ultimately to make marriage a sacrificial symbol and separation an impossibility, but not by dictating statutes. He did for the Seventh Commandment what He did for the Sixth and the Eighth, and waited for time to show the result. "Thou shalt not kill," says the law: Christ gives it the dynamic, "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." "Thou shalt not steal" becomes dynamical through His, "love thy neighbor as thyself." "Thou shalt not commit adultery." "Whoso looketh with lust is an adulterer." The attempt to extract a canon from the words of Christ is the mediæval philosopher's task to distill bottles full of elixir of life out of the morning

dew. "My words are spirit, and they are life." When the exegete sets about with purblind eye to examine the words through the opaque lens of learning for the purpose of turning his rendering over to the canonist to be written in the black letter of ecclesiastical law, the Christian can only go about his business,—and wait with what patience he can.

The history of the Christian society is the gradual unfolding of the work of Christ in this cause as in all others. The early Christians did not conceive polygamy to be inconsistent with their profession. As a matter of expediency it was agreed that the clergy must be monogamists. But there would have been no meaning in the mandate, "let a bishop be the husband of one wife," if the same rule had antecedently been regarded as binding upon clergy and laity alike. And how could the early Christians take that attitude having only the Old Testament in their hands, and the New not yet written? It may be a surprise to be reminded that the Catholic Church has not to this day officially pronounced that the possession of a plurality of wives is *per se* a bar to membership. It is still an open question whether a missionary in pagan land may withhold baptism from a sincere convert until he put away all his wives but one. As a matter of fact Christ has eradicated polygamy as He has done slavery by slowly producing individuals whose nature is such that they *cannot* be either polygamists or slaves. Can the same method be trusted to eradi-

cate the ancient custom of divorce? Surely we must think so.

But what can the Church do meanwhile? I reply, she may make such, and only such canonical regulations as are not for her *ultra vires*. Let me say here, in passing, what has been often said by wise Churchmen, that our Church is exposed to peculiar danger from the lack of any judicial tribunal to determine the limit of her right to legislate upon any cause. If a secular legislature pass a law which it has really no power to do, a supreme court so adjudges, and the law at once becomes nul and void. In our Church the people are only fairly well saved from such legislation by the fact that what we call the common law of the Church is so generally respected, and by the further fact that violation of canonical law is so uncommonly easy and free from danger.

From the beginning it has been admitted that the Church may make such regulations for the conduct of the clergy as she deems expedient, provided the common rights of Christian people are not encroached upon. Thus she has forbidden the clergy to bear arms, to submit to the trial by combat, to marry, to engage in unseemly avocations, and such like. All these regulations rest upon expediency, and are of their nature transitory, local, may be modified, or revoked when conditions change. On this ground I think the clergy may well be instructed not to officiate at the remarriage of any divorced person. If such a canonical

prohibition were passed I would cheerfully obey it. I should vote for such a canon. Practically, I see no other course open to the Church at the present stage. The clergy must either be left free to marry any and all divorced persons or must be forbidden to marry any. Discrimination is not possible for the obvious reason that the Church possesses no machinery of her own by which to ascertain the facts concerning any case of divorce, and she cannot commit her action to the formal decisions of secular court without by that act committing ecclesiastical suicide. Let the Church forbid the clergy to remarry divorced persons ;—*and let her stop right there.*

I say, stop right there, because the Church cannot see her way any farther at present. No agreement can now be reached as to what marriages God's word doth allow, and what ones it doth disallow. Some maintain that marriage is indissoluble for any cause ; some that adultery by either party vacates it absolutely ; some that such breach of vow only releases the other party to the extent of separation *a mensa et thoro* ; some that the secular law fixes the status of every individual in this regard so that the Church is free to bless any marriage when the state pronounces the parties marriageable. All appeal to the dicta of Christ as recorded and interpreted in the New Testament.

Now, while this situation continues the Church dare not go any farther in exercising discipline upon the



laity than she has already done in her rubrics. By fundamental Catholic law and custom there are only two offences for which a citizen in Christ's visible Kingdom may be expelled. They are, *first*, notorious uncharitableness: *i. e.*, the demonstrated absence of the Christian spirit; and *second*, notorious evil living, *i. e.*, the demonstrated absence of the Christian conduct. Under this later rubric the priest ex-communicates for a breach of the Seventh Commandment when the offence has come to be common knowledge. He needs no canonical permission to deal with an offence whose definition has been already determined. What then of the case of communicants who have been legally divorced, let us say for desertion, and have been remarried, let us say by a magistrate, who believe that they have violated no law of God, and who are living a sober life, and are regarded by the community as upright men or women? Shall the Church ex-communicate them? If so, on what ground? Are they adulterers? Not unless the Church shall have by her *obiter dicta* added to the definition of adultery. But if the Church may arbitrarily label an action adultery, and punish it under the Seventh Commandment, she may with equal right label stock-broking theft, and punish it under the Eighth Commandment, or pronounce a manager of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit System a murderer, and ex-communicate him under the Sixth. But are they "notorious evil livers"? Clearly not, for the Christian community in which they live

does not so regard them. What, then, shall the Church do with them? I answer, do what the Church is commissioned to do; exhort, teach, illuminate,—and wait. But the kingdom of heaven is not to be taken by violence, nor is the citizen to be expelled by violence. The sons of thunder are not the apostles whose proposed legislation the Master approves.

There are two quite distinct questions before the Church now, and much depends upon this distinction coming to be seen and acknowledged. The regulation of the action of the clergy is one thing: that can be fixed arbitrarily, can be changed as conditions change, need not rest upon any final declaration by the Church of the intrinsic nature of the thing allowed or forbidden. But the discipline of the laity is quite a different thing. They have rights which cannot be taken away by arbitrary statutes. “Let a man so examine *himself* before he presume to eat of that bread or drink of that cup,” is the formula of the original charter. Possibly he may eat and drink damnation. That is his affair.

A great bishop said wisely that he had rather see England free than sober. Better that the ecclesiastical state should be free than that it should be beyond reproach.

CHURCH AND CLERGY



## II

### CHURCH AND CLERGY

No doubt the experience of every clergyman who has a large acquaintance among his brethren is the same as my own in one particular, that is, that we are kept continually heart-sore by the stories which are confided to us by men who are either out of work or who are doing their work under conditions which they feel to be hopeless.

For instance, here is a priest under forty, who was for eight years the rector of a prosperous parish in a southwestern state. His salary was satisfactory and his work in every way to his liking; he was recognized to be an able man in the Church and in the community. His wife contracted malaria. Year by year he saw himself being gradually closed in to an awful dilemma. Either he must resign and go away, facing the chances of starvation, or he must stay and see his wife die. He resigned, as any honorable man would have done. The question now is, What is there for him to do? I know that at this point there are not a few who would make the suggestion, privately, if not publicly, that he had no business ever to have had a wife at all. This suggestion I will consider later on.

Here is another instance: A man who has been for ten years, and still is, rector of a church in a portion of a city from which the people are moving away. When he began his work everything was hopeful, and he did his duty with confidence in the future. As the years passed on, however, confidence gave place to doubtfulness, doubt was succeeded by fear, and fear gave place to despair. His brethren of the clergy, to whom he has quietly talked of the situation, have done their best again and again to secure some more hopeful field for him, but so far in vain. There he is, a strong man, a good man, eating out his heart in a task which is absolutely hopeless. What can he do?

Take still another case: Here is a man who came into the Church four years ago from the Presbyterians. He is a scholar and a gentleman, and is a distinct addition to the strength of the ministry as a whole. He resigned the pastorate of a substantial and prosperous church and came to us. He was able to maintain himself and his family with some degree of comfort during the dreadful year of quarantine which our canons demand. Now he is ready and capable of doing as good work as is to be found in the Church. Is there any place for him?

After being disturbed in mind for a long time by these and similar concrete instances, I determined to settle once and for all, to my own satisfaction, the elementary question, *i. e.*, Is there any place in the

ministry for the men I have described? In order to do so, I sent to every bishop of a diocese or missionary jurisdiction in this country the following letter:

*“My dear Bishop:*

“I beg that you will not think that I trespass when I ask you to do me the great favor to tell whether or not there may be in your diocese an opening at present, or in the near future, for a priest who seeks work? The man I have in mind is about thirty-five years old, a gentleman, a Prayer Book Churchman, a good preacher, and has been successful in his two previous charges. He has a wife and two children. I do not see how he could live upon less than \$1,000 a year, with a house.

“Is there a place in your diocese for such a man? Or have you a place where such a man might have an assured, even if meagre, support for a couple of years while he should make a position for himself!

“I am sorry to trouble you, but I would esteem it a great favor if you will let me know, in a word, whether or not such a place might be looked for with you.

Very sincerely yours,

“S. D. McCONNELL.”

This letter was sent to about seventy bishops. I have received replies from fifty-nine of them. These included the Bishops of Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Albany, Long Island, Central New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Central Pennsylvania, Pittsburg, Delaware, Maryland, Washington, Kentucky, Virginia, Illinois, Springfield, Southern Ohio, Missouri, Kansas, Tennessee, Georgia, Michigan, Milwaukee, Duluth, Minnesota, Colorado and Nebraska and many others.

They all reply that there is not now, or likely to be, in the near future, any opening for such a man as I described. The two exceptions are, one in a north-western diocese, where the bishop mentioned a vacant parish which paid a salary of \$1,200 a year. He said, farther, that to his knowledge the vestry had more than thirty candidates under consideration, and that he himself had named three, none of which were satisfactory to the vestry. The other vacancy was in the diocese of Albany. If there is any better way in which to secure an accurate statement of the exact situation concerning supply and demand in the Church, I don't know it. I have asked every bishop in the Church if he knows of any place where a first-rate man with a wife and two children, a man who has been successful, who is a good preacher, a good parish worker, a good citizen, and who resigned his last parish for reasons which were perfectly satisfactory, can have a bare living for himself and his family. The reply is that there are just two such places in the American Church, and that there are forty men who want each of them.

The bishops in their replies have a uniform tone of despondency which is most striking. One, the bishop of one of the dioceses in Pennsylvania, says: "I have nothing to offer suitable for a man with a family. Indeed the 'family' part is becoming more and more a serious drawback." The Bishop of Massachusetts writes: "One of the burdens of my life is writing just



such letters as this. In to-day's mail, for instance, I received this and another letter of similar purport. I have been at my office two hours and have had two clergymen in with the same request. I am sometimes tempted to write an article and head it, 'What is the matter with the Church!'" The Bishop of New Jersey says: "There is not a vacant parish or mission at this time in this diocese." The Bishop of Connecticut says: "Facts like these make one of the heaviest burdens of this office." One of the oldest and most distinguished bishops in the Church, whose name I do not feel at liberty to mention, says: "It seems to me that before a long time it will be found that we have more men than places, more clergy, such as they are, than supporting parishes. I say this partially because some years ago I gave much time, effort and exhortation to the increase of the ministry. This is the season of confession." The Bishop of Washington writes: "The majority of the salaries in this diocese are less than \$700 a year. We have a splendid corps of clergy doing most valuable work; it is a constant surprise to me that we could secure them on such terms."

In a majority of cases the bishops volunteered to say that the average salaries of their clergy were from \$500 to \$800 per year.

Now let us see precisely what the situation is. I am not speaking at all of that more or less numerous body of impracticable, incapable, restless clergy, who either

have nothing to give to a parish which is worth paying for or who will not remain long enough in any one parish to let the people discover it. Nor do I have in mind that practically exhaustless number of clergymen of other churches who would gladly enter our ministry if they were able to see any probability of a livelihood therein. I speak of the support which may be fairly counted upon by strong, earnest and capable men. I asked for one such \$1,000 and a house for the support of himself and his family. There are only two such places vacant at this moment in the American Church, the bishops being the witnesses. Is the demand which I make for this man unreasonable? It is the wages of a carpenter, of a salesman in a department store, less than that of a bricklayer. To qualify him to discharge the duties of his office the Church required him to spend at least five years, and more probably seven, in special preparation.

Nor, again, do I bring any accusation against the laity for failure to do their duty; I have no faith in such accusations. I believe that the laity will pay for the support of just so many and just such kind of clergy as are needed to discharge the priest's office in the Church of God. If for any reason the Church sees fit by its methods to distribute the aggregate amount contributed by the laity for this purpose among more priests than are needed, there will be just so much less for each one. If the Church retains in her ministry men who do not actually give the goods

which the laity have a right to expect, the laity will decline to pay. Mere scolding or exhortation will have no effect in the premises.

But if the facts are as I have stated, there are several classes of people who ought to know it. First of all are the candidates for orders. If it be true, as I believe it is, that the time has arrived when, generally speaking, every young man entering the ministry must expect to *make his own parish*, and not to find one ready to hand, it is clearly desirable that he should have this fact drawn to his attention early.

The situation is new. Twenty years ago the average young man ready to be ordained might fairly take for granted that there was waiting for him somewhere in the American Church a place either as an assistant in a large parish or as rector in a small one, or as missionary at some post where the Church was ready to send him. At that date the bishops were seeking for men. They were writing hither and thither to inquire if one might perchance know of a suitable man to fill such and such a vacancy. At that date the missionary bishops used to visit the theological schools in order to secure, if possible, a promise from members of the junior class that they would go to their jurisdictions three years later. Now the whole situation is changed. What has caused the change? What will cure it?

These are large and very difficult questions. If I venture to state some things which seem to me to be

the causes, I trust that it will not be regarded as an impertinence. It is only an expression of opinion, after all, and one man's opinion is as free as another's. If any one can point out causes which will appear more real than those I suggest, I shall be only too glad to withdraw my own and to accept his.

Probably the chief cause of the condition of things now existing is one which is not confined to us. It is operating with bewildering rapidity in the whole United States. It is that sweeping change which is going on in the religious habits of the people. For many centuries the Church has encircled a multitude of "nominal adherents," probably larger than the number of the disciples. From Constantine's time until within our own generation the Church has been supported in large part by the money of those who never were Christians. During many centuries, and throughout the Christian world, this money came in as the proceeds of a general tax levy. People paid for the Church, just as to-day they pay for the public schools, whether they cared or did not care to use it. When Church and State were separated, as in the United States, these same nominal Christians continued for a long time to do from use and wont what they had previously done by legal mandate. They attended church with more or less regularity, and they contributed toward its support. Public opinion compelled them. To have no "church connection" was a social stigma. So, too, to be an habitual non-church-

goer gave suspicion of moral obliquity. There was a feeling in the community that any man might reasonably be called upon to help build or support a church, whether he was a member of the church or not. The banker, the politician, the society man, even the gambler in a mining camp, responded to this social coercion. They do so yet, but in a lessening degree. We are within sight of the time when they will not do so at all. When the Church asked for a complete separation from the State she did not altogether realize how complete that separation would become. She thought only of separating from institutions with which she had no part. It ends by separating from multitudes of people who had no part with her. Our own Church will suffer more by this falling away than will any other. We have had a far larger proportion in the congregation who are not members of the Church than has any other. They have been contributors, workers, vestrymen. But the time is in sight when they will be so no longer. Their falling away is not an apostasy. Nor is it the result of any decadence in the morals of the people who once were in our churches and now are not. It is simply due to the fact that now society has taken the ground that some "church connection" is not necessary to social standing or to moral respectability. The Church is rapidly returning to the position in which it was in the primitive ages. Then, the most it hoped for was to be let alone. Then Constantine came and gave it rich

donations—but did not join it. Now he is about to withdraw, and we will no more have the contributions of him or his kind. That this change in the situation has come about so suddenly will surprise no one who studies the history of social movements. It is just the action which Protestantism has been preparing for during four centuries. It took a long time to get ready for the movement. Our own generation will probably be long enough for the action itself. This goes far to account for the present excess of clergy everywhere. The supply was adjusted to a condition of things which endured up to hardly more than twenty years ago, but which is well-nigh gone to-day.

It is with unfeigned reluctance and real trepidation that I go on to point out some causes of clerical indigence which, in my judgment, operate particularly within our own Church. I know that many will disagree with me, and that some may take umbrage. I can only plead that if what I say shall prove to be the truth, it ought to be said. If it be not true, it will hurt no one.

I would name, first, therefore, the enormous advance of the "*priestly*" conception of the ministry which has come in within the last quarter of a century. The "Oxford Movement" has something to its credit, but it has much also to its debit side. Wherever it has gained control in any area, in that area the clergy are poorly paid. And not only so, but in the same places the gifts of the laity for Church propa-

gation are most meagre. If any one will look over the list of the parishes which sustain the Board of Missions he will see the truth of this. There is only one conspicuous exception, and that a brilliant one, where in a great parish the priests are paid by the dead hand of men who while they lived, thought little of priests. Speaking generally, the parishes and dioceses wherein the "priestly" idea has been most completely exploited are those where the laity are least willing to give the priest a living salary. The bishop of the diocese in which that idea has been allowed its freest course says, in his last convention address: "We have been in the diocese twenty years, and in only a single instance has a missionary appropriation been voluntarily surrendered." Of course, it is open to the priest to retort: "So much the more shame to the laity for forgetting the apostolic injunction that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel." Maybe so. But suppose the laity should reply: "If you will try for a while to preach the gospel we will try to see that you do live!" A man is only paid for the thing which he does. If he be thoroughly equipped to perform sacerdotal functions, an equipment procured, maybe, at great cost of labor, of study and practice, and find that so small a percentage of the community want the things which he has to give sufficiently to pay for them, what is he to say? He may say: "They are precious things, men ought to want them; they ought to gladly wel-

come and honor the man who brings them." Maybe so, again. But it may be worth while to remind him that the men to whom he would thus speak are not within the sound of his voice. I am constrained to believe that the exploitation of the priestly at the expense of the prophetic side of the ministerial office, with the dogmatism, pettiness, hardness, and superciliousness which so often attend thereupon, will go far to explain why the laity are slow to pay living stipends. Surely there must be some explanation of the fact that so many priests of blameless life, of burning zeal, of tireless activity, are so insufficiently maintained while they do their offices.

The *second* cause in order, though possibly the first in influence, is the spread of the "Free Church Idea." It is a source of congratulation to the advocates of that idea that something like eighty-five per cent. of our churches are "free." The root principle of the free church propaganda is that the attendant at a Christian church cannot rightly have his attendance made conditional upon his agreeing to pay any fixed sum toward the support of the Church. This is the heart of the contention. I do not propose to controvert the claim farther than to say that it seems to me to rest upon an astonishing confusion of ideas. To argue that because the gospel is free, therefore churches should be free, is like arguing that because water is free, therefore men should not be required to pay taxes for the water they draw from the hydrant.



But what I call attention to is the effect which has been produced upon the people by twenty-five years' preaching of this demoralizing error. I am quite aware that experience has taught the folly of it in many cases. In my own city two of the most conspicuous "free" churches have abandoned their theory, and a third and more conspicuous parish would gladly do so if it could. But the mischief has been done. For a quarter of a century the propaganda has been carried forward. By sermons, episcopal charges, addresses, tracts, periodicals, it has been dinned into the people's ears that the Church ought to be free, that to make any financial condition of attendance is wrong, selfish, anti-Christian. Is it any wonder that the people have come to believe what they have been so diligently taught? Is it surprising if they better their instruction? I would have it understood that I am not making an argument for pewed churches. The antithesis of the "free church" is not "the pew church," it is any church wherein the attendant has the amount which he shall pay for his place fixed for him by the Church, and not left to his own whim from day to day. It is probably true that there are few really free churches—that is, churches which actually depend upon the free-will offerings of the people at the services. But that is not the point. The point is that there are hundreds in which that is held before the people as the ideal of what ought of right to be. This is where the mischief is done. It is not that a

free church here and there gives its priest a meagre support and can rarely spare an offertory for any object outside itself. It is that the people have their sense of responsibility debauched by the display of a false ideal.

From the organization of the American Church up to about twenty-five years ago, the missions started almost invariably passed on, and passed on quickly to become self-supporting parishes. A group of Church people in a new town, or in a new portion of a city, drew together, grew larger, built a church for themselves, called a minister for themselves, and paid for all themselves. When I say built a church *for themselves*, I mean that. They were the owners, and being the owners they could exercise hospitality. But the visitor came within their gates as a visitor, and not as one who, they feared, might rebuke them for not waiving their own rights and declaring the house free alike to all. But the simple fact is, that while this way prevailed the Church did grow, it organized new parishes, they became self-sustaining, and they paid their clergy. Why is it that so many scores of missions and parishes, started within the last quarter century, remain a burden on the Church at large? In multitudes of towns and cities the conditions have been far more favorable than were the early conditions of the parishes which are now called upon to help them. I believe that one will go far to explain the evils of the present situation when he says that there has spread abroad a well-meant but mischievous spirit of

ecclesiastical communism which bids fair to convert the churches of this land into sturdy beggars. It is paralyzing the efforts of the bishops, it is starving the clergy and deteriorating the manly fibre of the laity.

And now, things being as they are, might it not be wisest to look for relief to a *celibate clergy*? That this idea is in the minds of many of the bishops is evident from their replies. They are practical men and are confronted with immediate necessities. It should not be surprising if they snatch at the relief which seems to lie nearest to hand. Certainly an unmarried man can live upon less than can a family. He can go where he is sent. He is more amenable to discipline. These two considerations, a clergy more easily maintained, and the bishop's desire to possess the "power of mission," lead not a few of our bishops (themselves having families) to look in this direction, and lead a few of them to advocate that way.

They had better first count the cost. A celibate clergy is an institution of quite incalculable potency. It is the one thing which gives the Roman Church its power. Change that, and the Roman Church would fall to pieces. There is an army of loose-footed janisseries who can never fix themselves by bonds of common life and affection at any point in human society. They are, therefore, always to be depended upon to carry out the will of their superiors. But the human soul cannot live without affection. The celibate priest among us (I do not mean the unmarried priest,)

gives his heart to his Order. It is true that he will obey his bishop, *provided* his bishop be one of his own kind, and provided farther that there be round about him a discipline vigorous enough to protect the celibate from himself and to protect the Church from complicity with him in his faults. If the Church should determine soberly that a celibate clergy is the practical answer to a practical problem, and should adopt the system together with the discipline necessary to safeguard it, the most that could be said would be that this Church would then be transformed into something quite unlike to what it is now and ever has been. A different kind of men would fill her ministry, and the kind of laymen we have known heretofore would disappear from her. Still, the new institution might remain respectable.

But if, on the other hand, celibacy shall, unnoticed and unregulated, come to prevail without that stern discipline which in Rome avails at least to maintain outward decency, then, and in that case, the clergy and the laity of the type which have borne the Church's fortunes thus far may quietly prepare for removal from an institution which should have so far transformed itself that they could no longer recognize it, or safely remain within it.

In any case, it may be well to be reminded that the "Power of Mission," of which some bishops are dreaming, is quite impossible. Beside the fact that it is not Catholic, nor primitive, nor American, and beside the

fact that neither clergy nor laity either would or ought to submit to it, and beside the fact that many bishops are utterly unfit to exercise it, this Church of ours is barred from adopting it by the law of honor and good faith. Among the list of "Fundamental Rights and Liberties," unanimously accepted as the basis upon which the Convention which framed the Constitution should act, is the provision that the appointment of clergy to curés should always rest with the laity. For this Church that matter is settled, until and unless she should be willing to break pledged faith.

But what, then? Here there are but two places in the United States at this moment open for a man who cannot live upon less than a thousand dollars a year and a rectory, while more than one-half of our clergy receive less than that. What shall we do?

I reply, first, realize the fact. Second, seek for the cause. Third, let candidates for Orders know the facts. This will be a fan to winnow them. Those who are conscious of possessing the strength and enthusiasm to go out and make a place, each man for himself, will go, and will bless and be blessed.

Nor need we pass over silently the petition, "Send forth laborers into Thy harvest." "Laborers" and "clergy" are not synonymous. There be laborers who are not clergymen; and there be clergymen, I trow, who are not laborers. Multitudes of laborers are needed in every nook and corner of the vineyard, but they need not be ordained.



ABOUT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES





### III

#### ABOUT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES

IF we were altogether without any system of theological education, it would probably not be difficult for wise men to put their heads together and arrange one which would be satisfactory. Unfortunately, however, we have one already occupying the ground, but one which is confessed on all hands not to be what we would be glad to have it. I do not think I have ever heard any clergyman speak with entire contentment of our system of theological training. Nor have I ever found one who has looked back upon his own course in the seminary with the same satisfaction with which he looks back upon his course in the university, or with which the lawyer or the doctor or the engineer looks back upon his years in his professional school. I therefore venture to criticise our present system, because while I recognize distinctly that it has in it many elements of good, and that there are connected with it scholars and devoted men at whose feet I am not worthy to sit, nevertheless, I think it is well that men should speak out frankly the things which they think, and so give an opportunity to other men who think differently to say their say with equal plainness.

The charges which I venture to bring against our present system of training men for the ministry are, *first*, that it does not tend to secure the right kind of men; *second*, that it does not train them efficiently for the purpose they have in view; *third*, that it costs far too much money.

In looking about for the explanation of these evils, which are, at least in part, acknowledged by every one, the root of the matter would seem to be in the fact of our general confusion as to precisely what the ministry is. The Church, in the nature of the case, can never prepare any man for the ministry unless she have in mind precisely what the nature of the office and work is for which she is trying to fit him. What, then, are we attempting to produce in our theological seminaries? Is it masters of ritual ceremonial? is it directors of men's consciences? is it forceful advocates? is it skillful executives? or is it a combination of all of these? It will be readily seen that the method of training which would secure one of these results is a method which cannot by any possibility produce the others.

Now, to clear the ground here, let us look back to the beginning and see what the idea of the ministry was which was practically accepted and acted upon in the earliest days of the Church. It is evident at a glance that all those purposes named above, if they were present at all in the minds of the earliest apostles, were present only as subsidiary to another pur-

pose which was to be reached in a different way. The earliest ministers of Christ regarded themselves as the bearers of a very plain and simple message : it was the declaration of the fact of the Cross of Christ as a *method* of living, and of the Resurrection as a new *motive* for right living. The men themselves were all men without special training as priests, deacons, pastors, or executives. It is a very significant fact that from the "multitudes of priests" (and we may add scribes also) "who were added to the Church" not a single one appears to have entered its ministry. Their previous training and qualification for official work in an ecclesiastical organization seem all to have gone for nothing; and a different kind of men were selected, with different qualifications. And we may say, in passing, that the success of the early preachers of the gospel and administrators of the Church was at least fairly good.

When we pass from the earliest days of the Church into its patristic period, we find that exactly the same ideas prevailed concerning the preparation for the ministry. Justin Martyr, for example, was an Oriental Greek philosopher, and he passed at once from his professional work to the work of the ministry. Of the early education of Irenæus nothing is known. Cyprian was an educated Latin gentleman, knowing no tongue but his own, and with no previous training in technical theology. Origen was a lecturer of theology at the age of eighteen; and when in later

years he did subject himself to a regular course of theological training, he unfortunately became a heretic. Athanasius had a common school education, and learned his theology himself. Gregory Nazianzen had established his reputation as a grammarian, mathematician, and rhetorician, and passed from that at once into the ministry. Jerome prepared himself by the study of the pagan Greek and Roman classics. Basil was a professional philosopher, Augustine a professional rhetorician. Ambrose was a lawyer, made a bishop eight days after he was baptized. The only one among them all who seems to have had a careful scientific theological training before beginning his ministry was Arius!

This general ideal of the preparation for the ministry passed on into the Middle Ages. Alcuin was a classicist. Anselm was a merchant; Bernard had the training of a knight and a noble. Thomas Aquinas' preparatory studies were in Aristotle and Dionysius the Areopagite. Calvin was a lawyer.

Among the masters of English theology the same idea of preparation prevailed. Bishop Barrow was a professor of Greek and mathematics, up to the time of his ordination. Bishop Andrews was master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. Jeremy Taylor won his fellowship in the classics. And so generally.

When one looks for the reason of the wonderful efficiency of the men whose names occur in this long roll of apostles, fathers, and theologians, two or three

explanations occur. The first and most evident one is that their "vocation" to the ministry came to them in every case when they were full-grown men, with the knowledge of life and men, and with the opportunity to accurately estimate their own powers. They left their nets, their counting houses their schools,—in which they had already attained success,—and became the ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

The second is that they proceeded at once to use the faculties and qualifications which they had already possessed and had tried and tested in the actual conduct of their lives.

The third is that they were chosen and called by the bishops and the congregations, and were not volunteers.

Now, it is but fair to say that the operation of that law which Mr. Spencer calls the "differentiation of function" has had its place in the Church as well as in society and in the physical world. To a certain point the legitimate operation of this law upon the preparation of men for the ministry of the Church must be allowed. But our contention is that it has been permitted to operate to an extent which has practically reversed or destroyed some of the fundamental principles upon which the choice of men for the ministry and their preparation therefor should proceed.

First of all, as things are with us, any man who expects to be ordained priest at twenty-four must settle his vocation not later than at the age of nineteen; in

other words, he must determine while he is yet a boy whether or not he intends as a man to devote his life to the ministry. This is the necessary condition of things, of course, in every other profession. The demands of each profession have become so exacting that the technical training therefor has been greatly lengthened out; so that any man who wishes to enter the profession must determine upon it a long while in advance. But the ministry will not stand upon the ground of a "profession." It is not a profession: it is a vocation. The whole theory of the Church is that this vocation comes to a man when he is a man, and comes to him with such imperious command that he dare not refuse it. With us ninety-nine per cent. of Christian men are practically forbidden to obey this vocation. Not long ago one of the most eloquent and devoted of our bishops made an address in my church upon Domestic Missions. He closed with an impressive appeal to the men present, by their love of God and of their country, to consider whether they might not,—some of them at any rate,—like St. Matthew, leave their counting houses and become ambassadors of Christ. Now, suppose one of these men had taken the bishop at his word. He is a lawyer, a merchant, an engineer, an architect, a man of affairs, or a man of leisure. His standing in the community is high. He has shown by his success in business his ability to deal with men and things. By his offer of himself he shows his devotion. He is thirty-five years old and has a

family which he rules well. The Church is praying: "Lord, send forth laborers into Thy harvest." Here is a laborer ready. He offers himself. What does the Church say to him? She says: My dear brother, it will take you four years, at least, to be able to pass the Standing Committee. It is enough for him. And it ought to be enough. He turns away; and the Church goes again upon her knees, and wails in solemn litany: "Lord, send forth laborers into Thy harvest."

Then you can, if you will, set over against this the fact that four hundred priests, who possess precisely the learning in which our friend who sadly turns away is wanting, are "unemployed" and can hardly get their bread.

The explanation of all this is that, while we rightly insist upon having "educated" men in the ministry, we insist upon an artificial kind of education. Even as late as fifty years ago the phrase "an educated man" was one which was perfectly well understood. It meant, with us, a man who had gone through college, studied Greek, Latin, mathematics, natural philosophy, and the humanities. But since that time the majority of educated men have not been trained along these, but upon different lines. We continue to insist, however, that for our purpose no man is an educated man unless his education has been of this kind arbitrarily decreed.

Side by side with this is the fact that the person whose natural and inalienable right it is to make choice

of fit men for the ministry has had his rights taken from him and usurped by another power. Nowhere else in the whole Church Catholic is the right of the bishop to choose out fit persons for the ministry and to pass upon their qualifications questioned. In our American Church this power has been practically taken from him and lodged in the hands of the Standing Committee. In the whole transaction neither the bishop, who should select, nor the congregation, who should choose out, has any power. It is a matter between the candidate for Orders and the Standing Committee.

Lest this assertion may be called in question, I venture to condense from Title I. of the Digest precisely what is the manner of procedure. When a man thinks of "studying for the ministry," he is first directed to consult his rector. If the rector thinks well of it, he can go to the bishop. If the rector does not think well of it, he can go to the bishop all the same. Upon his arrival, the bishop is instructed to ask him, *first*, whether he has ever applied elsewhere; *second*, whether he is ready to pass his examinations; *third*, when and where he was baptized, confirmed, and received his first communion. If he is able to answer all these inquiries satisfactorily, the bishop is canonically required—to make a note of it. That is all. At this stage the canons declare that in the absence of a bishop the Standing Committee can do it all just as well. But now the real business of the young man commences. The bishop may know him, and love



him, and be fain to ordain him, but that goes for nothing. He must now "apply to the Standing Committee for recommendation to the bishop for admission as a candidate." He must bring to the Standing Committee a "testimonial." If he does not bring this testimonial, however, the canon is careful to say that the Standing Committee can receive him all the same. With the recommendation of the Standing Committee in his hand the young man goes again to the bishop. The canon evidently assumes that the bishop will obey the godly admonition of the Standing Committee in the premises, for at this point it declares that the bishop shall require the young man to declare whether he intends to become a candidate for priest's Orders or for deacon's Orders only. If the latter, the bishop may now accept him. If the former, the bishop may not yet be trusted. He must now inquire for the young man's diploma. If there is any doubt as to its sufficiency, the bishop is advised to submit it to the Standing Committee for their consideration. If no diploma is forthcoming, the young man must be turned over to the examining chaplains. After all this the bishop may—not ordain him, but admit him to be a candidate for ordination at some future time.

The primitive and Catholic theory is that the bishop in his quality of chief pastor shall be able to know who are fit persons to enter the ministry; and that in the determination of this question, he shall coöperate

with the congregation who personally know the man. The organizing principle about which our Church revolves is the episcopate; and the one peculiar power of the episcopate is the power of ordination. For this we believe that office has a divine sanction. To insist, therefore, that the bishop shall be forbidden to exercise the one function which is peculiar to him, without the consent and recommendation of another power unknown both to the primitive and to the Catholic Church, is simply a solemn trifling, which the world will sooner or later find out. May we not hope that the bishops may some time pluck up the courage to resist that steady encroachment upon their inherent prerogatives which has marked the action of that house of clerical and lay deputies which now for some time has strangely fancied that it is the Church?

Another charge which may fairly be brought against our present method is that it is inefficient even within the arbitrary, artificial lines which it has set. There are very few young men to whom it is possible to secure a first-rate, or even a second-rate, university education in the department of the humanities, and still have the time and the money to spare for a three-years' theological course. It is true that a large number of our theological students write A. B. after their names. From an examination of the catalogues of a dozen of our seminaries I should think that about fifty per cent. have the right to do so. A little closer examination, however, will discover the fact that these

bachelors' degrees have been conferred in large number by small, ill-equipped, and unsatisfactory colleges, which have arisen for the express purpose of providing a short, cheap, and inadequate college training for candidates for the ministry. I have no fault to find with these colleges or with the spirit in which they conduct their work. As things are with us, they would seem to be a necessity. The time and expense necessary for education in a first-rate college or university are beyond the unaided means of most candidates for the ministry. If the Church, therefore, insists that they shall have in advance a particular kind of education, and will accept no other kind, it is but natural and proper that she should provide the machinery to give them this education. But the Church should not allow herself to be deceived any more than the world at large is actually deceived with regard to the matter. The educated world is not deceived at all; it knows exactly what this collegiate education is worth and what it is not. It may be alleged, without much fear of contradiction, that the work done within our theological seminaries themselves does not compare in earnestness or efficiency with the work done in the technical schools where men are being fitted for other professions. In preparing this paper I have had before me the rosters for the middle year of students in probably our best divinity school, an average medical school, and an average law school. In the medical school the lectures which the students of that year

are bound to attend take twenty-seven hours a week. These lectures are upon the most exact subjects, which require the utmost precision and accuracy of work. In addition to these twenty-seven hours required at least six more hours are bound to be spent in dissection and at clinics. The authorities of the school are bowless. The student must do his work and pass his examinations without any regard to his attractive or unattractive personal qualities, or he cannot receive his diploma. In the corresponding law school the roster shows a requirement of twenty-nine hours a week at lectures; and the dean of the school informs me that it is not possible for any student to pass his final examinations and receive his degree unless he adds to this at least ten hours a week. In both these schools,—as I have had the opportunity personally to observe,—the student is compelled to work, work, work; and his final passage depends upon whether he actually has or has not done the work. In the corresponding divinity school the second-year men are called upon to attend seventeen hours of lectures. The studies with which they are engaged are not studies of precision. It depends upon the student himself largely as to how much or how little work he shall perform. I am constrained to believe that he works not much more than half as many hours during his year as the student in either of these other schools, and that his work is done with less than half the accuracy and thoroughness.

The only consoling reflection at this stage is that when one looks over the course of study set before the student in some of our seminaries it is just as well that he does not spend too much time upon it. For example, in one of our most widely known schools the textbooks in dogmatic theology for two whole years are Pearson on the Creed, Percival's "Digest of Theology," and Butler's "Analogy"; and for collateral illumination the students are directed to the "Summa" of St. Thomas, St. Leo on the Incarnation, the "Catechetical Lectures" of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, McLaren's "Catholic Dogma the Antidote of Doubt"; and the only book upon evidences is Paley's! It is as though the students at West Point should be loosely trained in the use of crossbows and jingalls, and then commissioned as officers in the United States Army!

But with the requirements being even what they are, it is practically impossible for the great majority of our theological students to provide for themselves the expense which it entails. If, however, we accept the decision of a boy of nineteen that he shall prepare himself, or be prepared, for ordination to the ministry according to the requirements which the Church establishes, it is but fair and right, from his point of view, that the Church should provide for him those means which it forbids him the opportunity to earn for himself. No theological student, therefore, need feel shame or humiliation in being aided by the Church while he is pursuing his studies. But as to the

effect of this assistance upon those who receive it, the opinion of thoughtful and candid men is that, upon the whole, it is bad. That, however, is a subject too delicate to be entered upon here.

Another charge which may be brought against our system is that it is disgracefully expensive. Our "plant" for the education of the theological students as compared with that for the education of lawyers or doctors or even engineers is at least four times greater in money value in proportion to the number of men being trained by it. At a rough guess the property of our eighteen theological seminaries may be put at \$6,000,000. There are in those seminaries about three hundred students. At five per cent. upon the capital invested, therefore, the cost to the Church annually for the education of each student is \$1,000. To this is to be added the whole expense for the livelihood of the student while in the seminary and the support of the teachers who teach him. In those eighteen seminaries the faculties, not counting the bishops, include sixty-nine priests. Their support and salaries must be added. There are about three and one quarter students to each professor. At the lowest calculation upon this basis, it costs the Church \$2,000 a year for the education of each student. This is at least double the cost for the education of students for other professions.

Now, it ought to go without saying that there are in our seminaries teachers, not a few, the peers of any

teachers in any department of learning. There are students as diligent and efficient and as capable as the students in any other kind of institution of learning. Everybody knows that this is true. But everybody knows, or at least may know if he takes the trouble to inquire, that, speaking generally, the facts of the situation are as I have tried to set them forth.

What, then, has caused this unfortunate condition of affairs, and what can be done by the Church to reform it?

The first cause would seem to be that we insist upon an "educated" ministry without having clear notions as to what kind of education is really the kind which will produce the purpose we have in view. We have insisted as essential that the preliminary education shall include Latin and Greek and Hebrew. It is true that there are provisions for exemptions in certain cases from each of these; but the simple fact that a dispensation is required in any case is the proof that in general the requirement is fixed. Now, it has come about that the great majority of educated men do not know Latin or Greek, to say nothing of Hebrew. In any large university (the technical schools being included in the university) it will be found that the academic department is far smaller numerically than the other departments. Even within the academic department there are elective courses which do not include Latin or Greek and hardly ever include Hebrew. Are the men who pass through these uni-

versity courses educated men or are they not? They are clearly so for every purpose except the ministry. What is the explanation, then, of the fact that we insist upon a knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew as conditions precedent for the study of theology. The explanation is twofold. First, it is a survival from a previous condition of affairs where this particular kind of knowledge was the badge of an educated man. In the second place, it is the unconscious influence of a theory concerning the place of the Holy Scriptures in the Christian economy which this Church of ours does not hold. Within Protestantism generally it is assumed that the Bible is the sole rule of faith and practice. If this be true, then any man who proposes to be a public teacher of Christianity must be familiar most intimately with the authority. For such a man the authority in its English guise is not sufficient. He must be able himself to determine precisely what the Holy Scriptures say and do not say upon any question; and this knowledge he can only obtain for himself by being able to critically examine the original. This theory of the place of the Holy Scriptures the Catholic Church has never held and our Church does not hold. Nevertheless, its influence has obtained so widely that it has affected our practical methods even though we disavow the theory itself. I venture to say that the efficiency of the ordinary Christian minister at the end of the nineteenth century depends hardly at all upon his knowledge of



either Greek, Latin, or Hebrew ; and it is well that it does not, for in the vast majority of instances he does not possess this knowledge, and could not possess it to the necessary degree even if he tried. Where any question of Christian doctrine hinges upon a critical interpretation of the text, it is necessary to call in the services of an expert. Scholarship has become altogether too accurate and its demands too exigent to be met and satisfied by amateurs.

But do not misunderstand me. No Church can survive for any great length of time whose ministry does not contain within it the very highest and best scholarship. But it does not at all follow that that scholarship should be equally distributed throughout the whole ministry. The Roman priesthood,—whose efficiency no one will question, whatever he may think of the end toward which this efficiency is directed,—contains within it scholarship of the very highest order ; but the priests who serve the Church in the field of scholarship are not the same ones who serve it in the field of its practical work. Our mistake, as it seems to me, has been to insist that we should all alike possess the same qualifications of scholarship. The result has been that we leave our scholars no opportunity for the perfection of their work ; and the rest of us try to persuade ourselves that we are scholars, when in point of fact we are not.

Now, in the face of all this, I venture to deliberately express the opinion that for the ordinary Christian

minister but little special theological training is needful. If we shall be able to recover the lost fact that the ministry is intended to be recruited by *men* who enter it in response to a vocation, and not from *boys* who are artificially selected and especially trained, the reason of this will become evident. If a mature man who has been reared in a Christian community, within a Christian Church, in a Christian family, has obeyed his baptismal admonition to hear sermons all his life long, does not then know what Christianity is, we may fairly assume that he never will know. The prerequisite knowledge for the ministry is of quite a different kind. The gospel is not abstruse; it is perfectly simple. If it had been so complex and difficult of comprehension, and difficult of accurate statement, as is often now assumed, it never could have made itself intelligible to the world. What is needed is a knowledge not of the seed, but of the field. As a seed of course it shares in the mystery which belongs to all seeds and to all vital processes. But those mysteries are, in the nature of the case, as insoluble to a trained theologian as they are to your average Christian. But it is absolutely necessary that the sower who undertakes to plant the seed should be in possession of at least such knowledge of the actual condition of the soil, surroundings, climate, seasons, and temperature as it is possible for him to obtain.

Practically, therefore, the line of procedure would seem to be to shorten the time which is expended

upon technical theological training and greatly extend the period of study in secular knowledge. The man who enters the ministry should know something, at any rate, of at least some department of human life, whether it be business, letters, society, commerce, or what not. He will be able to exercise his gifts as a minister to advantage only in those surroundings which he himself understands. But this kind of knowledge is not obtainable in a theological seminary. If a boy settles his vocation at nineteen and passes through a Church college and immediately enters the theological seminary, emerging therefrom at twenty-three or twenty-four, this kind of knowledge he will be compelled to attain after he has entered the ministry. He will attain it then, if ever, under the greatest possible difficulties, because whole fields of life which under other conditions would be open to him for exploration he will find closed.

It is very seriously to be doubted whether the now practically universal custom of preparing all our candidates for the ministry in seminaries has not been, upon the whole, a serious detriment to the efficiency of the ministry. I am inclined to think that, upon the whole, it was more influential before there were any theological seminaries. It must be remembered that the seminary itself is quite a modern invention. In our own Church in America it only reaches back to 1825, and in the Church of England no further than to 1860. Previous to that time, and outside of that

custom, the bishop received or declined to receive the men who came to him as a postulant. The bishop's judgment hinged upon the man's general learning and capacity. If he were received at all, he was ordained to the diaconate almost at once. During his diaconate he learned the practical work of the ministry under the direction of some mature and judicious priest. If he became a specialist in any department of theological learning, he took up that specialty later on.

My own opinion is that our own ministry would be benefited in the future by closing the doors at once of fifteen from among our eighteen seminaries. If the endowment and equipment of those closed could be added to the three which might remain, and if from the teaching corps now busy in them all could be culled a sufficient number of men to teach those in the remaining three far beyond that which they are now taught, we would be likely to have within our ministry a learning which we do not now possess. We would then have a learned ministry to do those things within the Church which it is the scholar's function to do. We would also have a practical ministry to do those things in the Church for which high scholarship is not an equipment, but is really a hindrance. We would thus be following in the line of apostolic and Catholic custom, and we would have the right to expect that efficiency and success which God vouchsafes to His Church while the Church follows along the lines of God's methods.

BROAD CHURCHMEN, AND NARROW



## IV

### BROAD CHURCHMEN, AND NARROW

MR. BALFOUR in his late very remarkable book has, if not for the first time, at any rate with unprecedented clearness, pointed out the double function which creeds play in the religious economy. In the first place they are formulations of truth; and in the second place they serve as the platforms around which societies are organized. To be more specific: the propositions of the Council of Trent, the XXXIX. Articles and the Westminster Confession were each and all drawn up originally with the single purpose of expressing accurately and sufficiently the contents of the Christian Truth. In each case the organization which thus expressed its mind was already in existence and strong in its self-consciousness. In each case the organization honestly tried to state the truth as it saw the truth. But the instant such a formulary had been promulgated and had been accepted by the mind of the church, its intrinsic value as a statement of the Truth of Christ began to wane, and it began to be thought of as the symbol, the badge, the banner, the platform of a society. Before formulation its terms were things to be sought for diligently and humbly. After formulation the same terms became

things to be fought for to be maintained against all comers, to suffer martyrdom for, and to persecute for. Year by year and generation by generation there gathered about each venerable symbol a mass of sentiment, devotion, reverence and sense of "loyalty" which resents any suggestion of modification. Thus the symbols which were originally the product of an open-minded search for truth have come to be the jealously guarded possession of a conservatism which takes no account of truth.

Such is the situation to-day. The problem is: How to procure the restatement of those phases of the truth of Christ which it has been discovered that the formularies stated wrongly, and to do this in the face of that unreasoning and jealous "loyalty" to the formularies considered as banners of a society. The problem takes different forms in different churches, but it is substantially the same everywhere. In the church of Rome, for example, there is really but one article of faith, that is to say, the principle of the authority of the Church. Tens of thousands of liberal Catholics question its truth, but the great majority maintain it because of their devotion to the organization. Among the Congregationalists the controversy has raged about an abstract doctrine or hypothesis concerning the future life. One class of men, following moral analogy and logical necessity, have announced their belief in a probation which does not close when life ends, but is continued beyond the



grave. Another and probably larger class oppose this, not because it is unreasonable, but because it is contrary to the accepted doctrine. In the Presbyterian church the battle rages. One class asks concerning certain matters, "What is true?" Another and far larger number asks, "What do the standards of the church say?" And now the storm-centre seems about to shift itself to the Protestant Episcopal church. What form will it there assume?

Before proceeding to reply to that question it may be well to point out why it is that this sort of difficulty has arisen all around just now, rather than fifty or a hundred years ago? The explanation is very simple. From the time the fathers fell asleep all things continued as they were until about the middle of the present century. Since that time more and greater changes have occurred in the actual conditions of human life than in the two thousand years which preceded. We are literally living in a New World. It is precisely true to say that if an educated man who died in 1850 were to revisit the earth to-day great areas of its thought, its customs, its language, would be unintelligible to him. He would find whole libraries in the physical sciences written in English, but which would be to him but jargon. In philosophy he would discover that what he had regarded as postulates have been dismissed as illegitimate deductions. So the necessity has arisen to examine the formularies of religious doctrine in the light of the

truth which shines to-day. The proposal to do so is sternly forbidden for fear it may damage the organizations which have grouped themselves about these formularies.

In the Episcopal church the men who ask "What is true?" have been denominated "Broad Churchmen." Those who ask "What is proper for us to believe?" have been classed under various terms. But if the two classes have been isolated and described in the Episcopal church alone it is not because the distinction exists there alone. It underlies all denominational distinctions. The truth is there are only two kinds of churchmen possible, Broad and Narrow. These two divisions exhaust the subject. Those who dislike for any reason to be called "broad," and prefer to label themselves "high" or "low," simply hide their heads in the sand. The antithesis of Broad is Narrow, and so it will remain.

Is there likely to be a lining up on either side of this distinction? If so, just what form is the contest likely to take? and what is likely to be the effect upon the Episcopal church?

A thing which attracted much attention in this direction was the promulgation a few years ago by the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal church of a letter in which they defined the doctrines of the Incarnation and of Inspiration. They premised that they did so because they had reason to believe that these doctrines are widely questioned within the

church. They did not enter upon any attempt to show the intrinsic truth of the two doctrines, but only to point out that they have been received, and that this church has in no wise ceased to demand subscription thereto. Of course this deliverance of the bishops had no ecclesiastical authority, not having been put forth by the House of Bishops in their official capacity; nevertheless, any deliverance of the bishops carries with it great weight and influence. By not a few it was deemed an end to controversy upon the subject-matter with which it deals. But it is well to ask, how did it come to be issued? It is of the nature of an open secret that it was set forth at the urgent instance of two bishops above all other men. The significant thing is that one of them, the Bishop of Springfield, would probably be ranked as the "highest," and the other, the Bishop of Western Michigan, as the "lowest" on the bench. What drew these brethren into such unity upon this point? The answer is, in the one case it was apprehension about the integrity and symmetry of the ecclesiastical organization; in the other case it was apprehension about the integrity and symmetry of a system of theology. It has chanced that the shifting of time has brought two "schools" within the Episcopal church to occupy temporarily the same position and enter into a tacit league, offensive and defensive, against a third "school." The interest of the first is Church *qua* church; of the second is Doctrine *qua* doc-

trine; of the third is Truth *qua* truth. The league of the first two is ill-omened, whether one thinks of the future or of the past. As to the future *magna est veritas, et prevalebit*. If one recalls the past it is difficult to repress a smile when one beholds the "Catholics" posing as the champions of the XXXIX. Articles, and the "Evangelicals" standing up for the sanctity of the Traditions of the Elders!

Nevertheless, these two schools have joined in an appeal to the Church to speak authoritatively upon the question of the nature and obligation of creed-subscription. They have elicited a reply in a formula which will live to plague both them and the Episcopate for many a day: "Fixedness of interpretation is of the essence of the creeds, whether we view them as statements of fact, or as dogmatic truths founded upon and deduced from these facts and once for all determined by the operation of the Holy Ghost upon the mind of the church"! It would be difficult to frame a more blindly obscurantist phrase. The important question for the American Episcopal church, and for the public in so far as it is concerned with the church, is, Does the temper and sentiment of the phrase above quoted express the actual attitude of the clergy and people of the church? It is not easy to answer this question. A church does not always know its own mind, any more than an individual does. Twenty-five years ago, Bishop Colenso was deposed for teaching doctrines which are to-day accepted by every bishop

on the bench. Dr. Smith and Dr. Briggs were deposed for teaching doctrines which in twenty years more will be accepted without question by the General Assembly. This utterance of the bishops has received the unqualified indorsement of the denominational press of the Episcopal church. It is also accepted by very many without thought simply because it is supposed to be the formal deliverance of the House of Bishops. If its opposite had been set forth, these persons would have accepted that with equal loyalty. It is also accepted enthusiastically by the "Catholic" party because it appears to indorse their characteristic contention as to the "authority" of the church. This party, which twenty years ago fought a brave battle for toleration and standing ground within the church, which they then claimed to be catholic enough to embrace all who could say the Apostolic Creeds, have dreamed lately of taking possession of the house, and making it too strait for the class who were the champions of their own liberty at a time when they were not able to maintain it themselves.

One might raise at this point a question of honor and gratitude, but it will probably be more to the purpose to pass to the question, Is the Catholic party likely to succeed? On general principles one would say not. The Episcopal church has had rather a long history. More than once the attempt has been made to narrow it so as to exclude or eject a "school." The attempt has never succeeded. Not only has it never

succeeded, but in every case where it has been tried the outcome has been to bring forward and give dominance to the school which it had been proposed to crush. In the case before us there are several evident reasons why the attempt is foredoomed to failure, and this in spite of any temporary advantage which it may gain. First of all there is the glaring incongruity between the theoretic catholicity and the practical denominationalism of a party which adopts this policy. The people may be let alone to discern this inconsistency and to deal with it. In the second place, there is a reason to which one refers with hesitation. Possibly it may be enough to say that with half a dozen exceptions neither the men of learning, of influence, of reputation nor of ability are to be found in the so-called "Catholic" party. It possesses a strong *esprit du corps* and adroit managers, but not many scholars, preachers or men who in any way touch the public. There are some of the first rank who were at one time counted within it, but who have either outgrown it, or have been "read out" of it. A party which systematically ejects its strongest men would not seem to have much hold upon the future. But the third and chief reason is that it is part of a movement which has passed its period of highest strength. That revival of the principle of ecclesiastical authority, which set in, in the early years of this century, has moved from east to west in much the same manner as a freshet moves from north to south down the Mississippi. This

last phenomenon begins by the myriad little streams pouring their swollen currents into the head waters of the great river. When it is high water at St. Paul the river has not yet risen at St. Louis. By the time when it is high water at St. Louis the freshet has passed St. Paul, and the streams have ceased to feed it. In the stream of ecclesiasticism, it was high water at Oxford forty years ago. Twenty years ago, the flood was at its height at New York and Philadelphia. To-day, the height of the freshet is at the longitude of Milwaukee and Springfield. It is no longer being fed from the original streams. Even its stored-up waters have been sluiced off by Dr. Gore and his collaborators into other channels.

Judging from the despondent tones of the leaders of the Catholic party, it would appear that they do not look to the future with much hope. Says Dr. Dix: "The recent startling appearance of pantheistic teachers in our church in the person of liberal theologians, so called, the open denial of several of the facts stated in the creed, the contemptuous repudiation of the authority of our church, the substitution of ideas derived from the philosophy of evolution for the doctrine of the gospel as this church has received the same, and the avowed determination to throw the ordination vow to the winds, and freely to proclaim whatever views the individual minister may evolve from year to year and from day to day, out of his own consciousness,—these signs of the hour increase. It

looks as if society was preparing to rise up in general revolt against the gospel as we have learned it from the Apostles of Jesus Christ and the church which He has made the witness and keeper of His revelation. If it does, so much the worse for society." Stripped of rhetoric, this plaint means that there are men in the Episcopal church who categorically deny that "fixedness of interpretation is of the essence of the creeds;" and that there are so many of them that another class has become alarmed, not to say despondent. So there are. What, then, is the attitude of "Broad" Churchmen toward formulated doctrine? And what do they propose to do? In the first place, they subscribe *con amore* to the Catholic creeds. They recite them in public. They teach them in private. But having done so, they conceive that they have discharged their obligation. They proceed to interpret the articles of the creeds in the light of to-day. They do not believe that the Holy Spirit has been absent or inert since the date of the Council of Nice or Constantinople. They believe that Copernicus and Newton and Darwin have thrown light upon the complex equations of God and man as really as have Athanasius or Thomas Aquinas or St. Bernard. They hold it to be disloyalty to God to shut their eyes to the light which comes from any quarter. If accepting it thankfully means disloyalty to the Church, then so much the worse for the Church. They think they are most loyal to the Church when they are most loyal to its Master. When they are



pressed to say whether or not they believe that the Faith could endure in case it should appear that any particular article of the creed should be shown to be contrary to fact, they reply that that is an academic question which they do not care to discuss. If they are pressed to say whether or not they believe in some secondary article of doctrine, such, for example, as "Inspiration of Scripture," the propitiatory doctrine of the Atonement, or the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, they reply that they do not think it worth while to answer categorically until they first know more precisely what their interrogator means by the terms he uses. But they will resist with all their might any proposition to make the church more exclusive and select by the adoption of more refined and minute statements of doctrine. They sincerely believe that they are the friends and not the enemies of the church. Their apprehension for her is not that she may become too loose in her teaching, but that she may be beguiled or bullied into taking the dogmatic attitude of a sect.

One thing, however, Broad Churchmen will not do, they will not become an organized party. They will make no attempt to secure control of the "machine." They will do their duty as it is given them to see it, each in his own lot. If the machinery of the church should ever pass into hands hostile to them, they will regret it for their own sakes, but they will regret it a thousand times more for the sake of the church. As

to this contingency they are not alarmed. They do not think that the church is in peril of committing suicide. Suicide it would be, they are persuaded, for the church to permit herself to become the narrow, petty, unlovely, and impotent thing which ecclesiastics and dogmatists would make of her.

**THE NEXT STEP IN CHRISTIANITY**



## V

### THE NEXT STEP IN CHRISTIANITY

VERY different notions are entertained by thoughtful men about the nature and person of Jesus Christ. It is generally agreed, however, that no one will appear whose authority could be more trustworthy in the sphere of Religion. What He did not know, in that department, is generally conceded to be either not worth the knowing, or not possible to be known. It is generally conceded, also, that He Himself, and His deliverances, have never been more than partially comprehended. He declared more than once that His nearest and most sympathetic friends did not understand Him. It is clear that they did not; and that, in some particulars, they strangely misconceived Him. But, all the same, they were deeply impressed by Him. The same has been true of "Christendom" for now these nearly twenty centuries. He has been the most considerable influence which has shaped and colored the movement of humanity. He continues to be so, as is evident to any one who simply looks about him. His name is in point of fact "exalted above every name."

Judging simply from the facts which are equally accessible to every one, it seems pretty plain, *first*,

that men will not get on without a Religion; and *second*, that there is no other Religion available except Christianity.

A few people, it is true, are experimenting with Swedenborgianism, and Compteam, and Buddhism, and "Christian Science," but these may be dismissed as *une quantite negligible*.

From all that one can see, Christianity, in some form, is likely to remain the Religion of the enlightened world.

Christianity *in some form*; but in what form?

Viewed from the outside, no institution has undergone such startling transformations as has Christianity. One who looked at it casually in the first century, say at Antioch, and again in the fourth, at Constantinople, in the fourteenth in Rome, and in the nineteenth in New York, would find great difficulty in identifying it. Will any of these forms be abiding? Or, will the Christianity of the future take on an aspect as markedly different from any of these as they are from each other?

I venture to think that this last is true; and that it is a truth the importance of which can hardly be estimated.

The great metamorphoses which Christianity has experienced have not been very many, but they have been very marked, and they have each and all been characterized by two features: they have been comparatively sudden, and they have not been recognized

by the people who were living when they occurred. The phases through which Christianity has passed have been substantially these three: viz, the *Dogmatic*, the *Ecclesiastical*, and the *Mystical* (or "Evangelical"). What will the next one be? I venture to think that it is very near, if not already here, though unrecognized. This paper is an attempt to identify it in the midst of many phenomena which, without the clue, seem meaningless and hopeless. The importance of doing this, if it can be done, is obvious. But, to do so, it will be necessary briefly, to review the past.

It was both inevitable and right that Christianity should at first put on a dogmatic dress. The little group of men who had been profoundly impressed by the person and words of their Judean Master, proposed to themselves to be missionaries. But this fact made it necessary that they should cast, in some portable and transmissible form, their beliefs about the person and doctrine of their Principal. This was not easily nor readily done. It is clear, from the record, that their Master was one of the most perplexing characters imaginable. Beside that, the impression which He left upon them was the result of years of companionship. For them to state clearly just what the impression was, was not easy. It did not get itself done completely for several centuries. Much conferring with one another, and much interchange of opinion by converts drawn from different provinces

were necessary to formulate a working creed. It was an absolutely necessary thing to do ; but it was also natural that, when the Christian Community had been engrossed for three or four centuries in formulating their belief, they should come into the habit of thinking that accurate belief, and an accepted way of stating that belief, were the most important of all possible things. Christianity came, in their minds, to be identified with *Doctrine*. A large section of Christendom stopped at that point, and has ever since refused to move. The Eastern Church rests in Orthodoxy. She takes that word for her official title. And so she sits a spectacle in her Basilica. Old she is, but not venerable. Her hair is hoary, but the fire of youth is gone from her leaden eyes. Wrapt in her embroidered vestments, she slumbers on, as powerless to touch or be touched by the life of the men and women of Russia and Greece, as the mummy of Seti is that of the Fellahin of Egypt.

But the Western Church, with its creed in its hand, passed on into the next phase. It became a great *Organization*. It inherited the constructive spirit of the Great Empire, and bettered its instruction. It identified Christianity with a Church. For the first four centuries, all revolved about Doctrine. For the next ten, all revolved about Organization. Slowly and powerfully the structure was builded. No institution, probably, has ever been formed of as intractable material, under as unfavorable circumstances, or



has commanded the unqualified services of so many generations of astute and earnest men. Within its walls, and guarded by its ever watchful sentinels, the theological system builders continued to elaborate their endless schemes of dogma. They overlaid the Missionary Creeds, and buried them out of sight under a grotesque mass of derivative doctrines. But it was the Churchmen, and not the Theologians, who guided the movement of Christianity during this period. But, long before the period ended, their task had also been completed. The simple missionary Organization, which had been necessary to carry the simple Missionary Creed, was overlaid and buried out of sight in the mighty structure of the Roman Church.

Then came the third phase, known popularly as the *Reformation*. The phrase is misleading. It was not a reformation, but a new step. It was the successful issue of a long series of efforts, made by the most earnest, sagacious, virile and devout men in the Western Church, to carry their religion from the region of dogma and organization into the realm of personal experience. Jerome of Prague, Arnold of Brescia, Wyckliff, Huss, Luther, Calvin, Colet, More, Cranmer, George Fox, Tauler, William Law, John Wesley, all sought the same end. In the modern cant they would all be called "Evangelicals." The secret spirit which they all held in common was the belief that Christianity is essentially the establishment by the individual of a conscious, personal relation with God. This idea

of "conversion" is the differentiate of Protestantism. In American Christianity it has held, until lately, the central place.

Now, it will be observed that each of these phases is an advance upon the one which preceded it. No one of them was possible until the one which went before had been measurably accomplished. Each one was entered upon unconsciously. Each was strenuously opposed at its beginning by the mass who fancied their own stage to be final. Each, when it became an accomplished fact, reacted upon and modified what had gone before.

At present there are unmistakable signs on every hand that a farther step is about to be taken. What will it be? That it will still be Christianity no candid man can doubt. But it is equally plain that it will be as unlike any phase of it heretofore seen as these have been and, in their survivals, are unlike each other.

It is clear, in the first place, that Christianity has already broken out of the bounds which have long contained it. It has broken out of the old bounds of Doctrine; out of the Church; and will no longer submit to conventional "Experiences." There is not a single "Confession of Faith" which serves to express the actual belief of even the most conservative members of the ministry of any church which is supposed to accept such a Confession. They are all in the same boat. The Decrees of the Council of Trent, the

XXXIX. Articles, the Westminster Confession, that of Augsburg or Dort, while they all retain a place of quasi authority in the several churches, have become powerless to hold the real belief of even the clergy. That this convicts the clergy of insincerity will only be alleged by the shallow and the ignorant. A profound change has come about against which they are helpless. They are honestly trying to readjust the conditions with earnestness and singleness of heart. Some think to find relief by formally abolishing doctrinal formulas which have ceased to be credible. Some think to find it by "revising" so as to accommodate the doctrinal statements to the actual beliefs current. Both methods will fail, though it is not in my way, in this paper, to say why. I am only concerned to point out the fact that religious belief *has* broken out of the formulas which once contained it.

In the second place, functions which once belonged to organized Christianity have, one by one, been taken in hand by others. Notable among these are Education and the Administration of Charity. Only one branch of the church now makes any serious claim of right to control the machinery of education. And, in the United States at any rate, a constantly increasing number of her adherents either make this claim halfheartedly under the pressure of their priesthood, or refuse to make it altogether. In the distribution of their alms rich men do not now, as once, make the Church their almoner. Wise men bring gold, frankincense

and myrrh to the King, but they appoint their own agents for its distribution. To speak of those near at hand and notable, I name the Girard College, the Mills Hotel, the Williamson School, the Drexel Institute, and the secular societies for the organization of charity.

In the third place, good men are, in an increasing number of cases, unmoved by the conventional "experiences" of religion. A century ago "The Great Awakening" swept over America like a spiritual cyclone. So sturdy a man as Benjamin Franklin could not keep his feet against it. The masses were swept by it into a religious frenzy. Fitful gusts, more local and less intense, have been present ever since. But men are less impressible by them. Twenty years ago Mr. Moody, the *Evangelist*, could produce "conversions" almost at will. Mr. Moody before he died became the *Educator*.

What do these changes mean?

What is to be done?

To these questions some can give a short and easy answer. "It means," say they, "that we are in a day of apostasy. It is all due to the hardness of men's hearts. We live in the midst of a stiff-necked and rebellious generation." But when these are called upon to say what should be done, they give different answers.

The *Theologian* says, "let us restore to its old completeness our Confession, bating of it no word or

phrase; and, if we must perish, let us fall like our fathers—with the old blue banner in our hands.”

The *Ecclesiastic* says, “let us restore the Church of that period when it had the power to guide the steps and control the conduct of all men.”

The *Evangelical* says, “let us pray.”

They all misread the situation. It has always been true, of course, that a large portion of the community have been indifferent or hostile to Christianity. They are “irreligious” men. They are, therefore, usually thought of as immoral men; for religion and morality are, in the common mind, so intimately associated that they are thought of as present or absent together. If this were the only class to be considered the case would be very simple. But a large, and increasingly larger, proportion of *good* men cannot any longer be called Christian, *if* to be a Christian means any one or all of those things, which it has, thus far, been officially defined to mean. They are good men and women, tried by any test which may fairly be applied to goodness. They are sober, kindly, earnest, sympathetic, clean, charitable. But they are “unsound” in doctrine; they are not “church-members”; they are not aware of having undergone any subjective “experience.” This class is increasing at a rate which few realize.

Says that Presbyterian, the late Dr. Bruce, Professor of New Testament Exegesis, in the Free Church of Glasgow: “I am disposed to think that a great and steadily increasing portion of the moral worth of society lies

outside the Church, separated from it, not by godlessness, but rather by exceptionally intense moral earnestness.”

The leadership of science and art is already almost entirely in the hands of men who have broken with organized Christianity. They are the guides and pioneers in political and social reforms. They are a large minority—promising soon to be a majority—in the management of charitable and reformatory institutions. They are the professors in colleges and the teachers in normal schools. They are kind husbands, faithful wives, good sons, daughters, friends. What is their relation to Christianity? The answer is, *they are Christians in fact; but they are waiting for Christianity to pass into a new phase which will include them in form.*

Like every household, the Church is confronted at times with the necessity of house cleaning and rearrangement of furniture. During the disturbance of this process a considerable number of the family and relatives prefer to live out of doors. They will not do so permanently. They do not wish to do so. One may venture to say, also, that they would play a more honorable part if they remained in the house and lent a hand, and gave their opinions concerning the proper rearrangements, rather than to stand critically outside, waiting till the task be done. But things are as they are. And they can truthfully retort that their suggestions of change in doctrine or discipline were not well

received when they did remain within. But will the Christian society of the future be such as will be able to embrace them? I think it will, and for this reason:

The formal statement of Christian doctrine, and the organization of the Christian church, are always determined by the actual beliefs and practices which precede the formal action. Laws in the religious sphere are analogous to laws in the political sphere; they are but the expression of antecedent habits. What, then, are the present habits of the religious world which will, by and by, find formal expression? Their general drift may be seen in two or three striking phenomena.

1. The altogether unprecedented interest now manifest in the person and teaching of Jesus Christ. Booksellers tell me that there are only one or two books in the English tongue of which so many copies are sold as of *Ben Hur*. Those who have read it know that this is not on account of its literary excellence, great as that is, but because of the way in which it introduces Jesus. Dr. Farrar's *Life of Christ* is one of the few books of which it pays to produce cheap and popular editions. Now, hardly any *Life of Christ* can be found which dates back more than fifty years. They are all the product of the nineteenth century. They have all been written in response to the increasing desire of the community to know just who and what Jesus was, and just what He did and said.

2. The enormous popularity of what one may call the "Drummond Literature." The late Scotch Professor's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," and "The Greatest Thing in the World," and such like, have been hailed by millions as the statement they earnestly desired. With all their shallowness, and forced analogies, they do answer the present desire to express Christianity in terms of actual life.

3. The strenuous attempt to apply the teaching of Jesus to the problems of conduct. John Fiske, Tolstoi, Henry George, Powderly, Leo X., and Mr. Bellamy, have all formally essayed to point out how this can, or ought to be, done. Mr. Fiske, in his "Destiny of Man," says, in effect, that this is already within the possibility of practical life. Mr. George always describes himself as, above all things else, a Christian. "Christian Socialism" has become a phrase to conjure by. The Christian Churches all acknowledge, in a way, their obligation to ease the burden of human living. A conservative Churchman of fifty years ago, who went regularly on Sunday to hear a doctrinal thesis in a Church which was shut up and deserted all the rest of the week, would be dumb-founded if he could re-visit the old holy place and find built on to it a dispensary, a kitchen, a social hall, a lyceum, and, mayhap, a stage.

The change which has come about in the actual thought about religion, may be strikingly seen in the fact, that the motive of the Order of the Knights of



Malta, which existed for the "defence of the Faith," and of the Jesuits which existed for the "defence of the Church," have become unintelligible or offensive; whereas, a Catholic Total Abstinence Society or a Young Man's Christian Association seem natural and fitting.

The machinery for "Revivals," also, which even a generation ago could be set up and worked with *naïveté*, is now clearly in its decadence.

Facts, all pointing in the same direction, might be multiplied indefinitely. But to what do they point? To this: Christianity has passed through the phases of Dogmatism, Ecclesiasticism and Experimentalism, and is now seeking to express itself in the region of *conduct*.

"But," it will be protested, "Christianity always has affected men's conduct, this has been its glory, that it has made men good."

This claim is true, but it is not true in the sense in which it is made. The present Archbishop of Canterbury feels called upon to warn the Church of England that it has never "received a shadow of commission to set forth as Doctrine and Worship that religion which began as Morals and Social order." It is true that Christianity was at first set forth as a "life." The "Faith" which it demanded was not an intellectual but a moral possession. But when Theology began to dominate, the quality of the "life" deteriorated. So far as temper and character are concerned

there could hardly be a more violent contrast than that between the men who formed the first Council at Jerusalem and those who discussed the refinements of Theology in the fifth century or the sixteenth. Where the theological spirit has been in control, it has sharply drawn a dividing line across the area of thought, calling one portion "sacred" and another "profane."

Where Ecclesiasticism has controlled, it has portioned out conduct into "religious" and "secular"; so that the Sicilian bandit, who pays punctiliously his duties to the Church, is not conscious of any incongruity as he crosses himself and mutters an Ave while he goes forth to rob.

Where Evangelicalism has prevailed it has drawn the sharpest possible distinction between "religion" and "morality," making everything of the one, and speaking contemptuously of the other. Luther did not hesitate to say that "a Christian cannot if he will lose his salvation by any multitude or magnitude of sins unless he ceases to believe; for no sin can damn him but unbelief alone."

So that while it is true in the main that Christianity has always had its effect to improve the quality of men's lives, it is also true that it has not always set this before itself as its main purpose. It has been thought of as a device to secure "salvation." Now, the interest for "salvation" is surely receding behind the interest for "conduct." The appeal is about to be

taken to life. Christianity will more and more concern itself with *living*.

But in doing so it will not revise nor formally abolish its previous methods. What is superfluous in them will be allowed to be quietly forgotten. It cannot subsist without a Creed, an Organization and an Act of Choice by the individual. It gained each one of these essentials, as we believe, under the guidance of that Spirit of wisdom with which its Founder imbued it. The reality of its life in the past has been vindicated by the fact that it *has* passed on from phase to phase even though the mass of its adherents bade it rest upon each in turn as a finality. But the Creed will be short, broadly marked, portable. The Organization will be no more complex than is necessary to carry the creed abroad. The initial Experience will be nothing beyond the sincere desire for right conduct. All will issue in, and be tried by their issue in right living. For this purpose and by this means Jesus will become more and more available. In this way Christianity will be seen to be both far easier and far more difficult than it has appeared since the Apostolic days; easier because more intelligible by the moral nature to which it addresses itself, and more difficult, because that manner of life which He taught and exemplified is only possible to supreme faith.



SCRIPTURE, INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY



## VI

### SCRIPTURE, INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY

TEN years ago Professor Thayer, of Harvard, spoke thus to his hearers :

“But inquirers, you tell me, demand certainties. They clamor for immediate and unequivocal answers.

“Doubtless, and overlook the fact that Divine Wisdom rarely vouchsafes such. If God’s Book had had the average man for its author, no doubt it would have abounded in direct and categoric replies to all questions. The most complicated problems of time and eternity would be solved by a process as simple as the rule of three! But, alas! impatient souls, His people do not get into the promised land that way.”

Nothing is more pathetic than the centuries-long reluctance of Christians to admit the elemental truth of their Master’s teaching. He came to set His people free, but they shrink from the responsibility of freedom. He assured them that they were no longer servants, but children; whereupon they long for the minute directions which a master gives to a slave. In a word, they have persistently sought for an “Authority.” It is so much easier to live by rule than to live by spirit. At least it seems to be easier. In point of fact, the distinguishing feature of the religion of Christ is that it vacates all external mastership, turns the individual soul in upon itself, and

declares that by so doing it will find itself face to face with God. It has been well said that of the words which express religion, neither the verb "to love" nor "to believe" has any imperative mood. Christianity is loving and believing. In neither can any "Authority" coerce, not even God! One loves the things which he himself finds lovable; he believes the things which for him are believable. In the presence of an Authority he may be silent, or he may lie to the authority, or he may lie to himself, but the absolute situation remains unchanged.

There have been three conspicuous pretenders to the monarch's throne—the Church, the Bible, and Reason. To speak more accurately, they have not been pretenders so much as they have been worthy monarchs whose sceptres have been thrust into their reluctant hands by prophets who have known the Master's wish in the case, but have yielded to the people's cry, "Nay, but we will have a king over us." Each of these has in turn played the tyrant, but it has always been because the people would have it so. Dr. Martineau has championed the cause of Reason as the legitimate occupant of the throne as against the claims of the Church and the Bible. Cardinal Newman has fought for the authority of the Church. A hundred Protestant champions have maintained the Westminster dictum that "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the only rule of faith and practice." With all reverence, I believe and say that



the Master would have cried, "A plague on all your houses!" I would not be misunderstood. The Church, the Bible, and Human Reason all have their necessary place and function in the economy of Christ's religion. But that function is not properly stated by the word "authority." Authorities they are not. Guides, interpreters, if you will, but masters, no.

Four centuries ago a large and influential portion of Christendom revolted against the tyranny of the Church. They did not thereby cease to be Christians, nor did they cease to be Churchmen. They simply asserted that they who had been made free men in Christ Jesus were not to be brought into bondage by any spiritual master. A large portion of the Christian world believed then, and believes yet, that this revolt was a rebellion against God. They cannot think of it as a Reformation. They see in it a form of that same lawlessness which caused Satan to be cast out of heaven. This is fundamentally the question at issue between Protestantism and Papalism. Strictly speaking, Rome has only one doctrine; that is, Submit yourself to authority. Protestantism is essentially the assertion that the Christian is the *friend* of the Master, and no longer a servant who knoweth not what the master doeth. This position was consistently and valiantly maintained by the early Reformers. So far as obedience to the Church is concerned, they have not yielded yet. Obedience

to the Churches' commands, *as commands*, cannot today be secured in any portion of Protestantism. It is every year becoming more difficult to secure by Rome.

But the burden of freedom is very onerous. Before the second generation of the Reformers had passed away, a movement had set in which had for its unconscious purpose to set the Bible upon the same throne of authority from which the Church had been rudely thrust. The Bible was less fitted for that office than the Church had been, nor had it theretofore been regarded in that aspect by Catholic tradition. But the people had begun once more to cry, "Nay, but we will have a king over us." It was then that the doctrine of "Inspiration" began to be exploited. The Bible was first enthroned as "authority," and thereupon its "inspiration" was urged to establish its legitimacy. The whole development of the dogma lies within the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century, as any one who will take the trouble may read. During that time the *Literæ Scriptæ* were confirmed in a position which they have held until our own time. The Bible came to be called the "Word of God." It became a palladium and a charm. The theologian thought of it as a complete and final transcript of God's law and purpose. The common people adored it as a fetich. It came to be kissed in the courtroom as the sacred thing which alone could invoke truth. It was ap-

pealed to as not only the ultimate but the immediate arbiter in every question of faith and conduct. Without its presence in its entirety it was believed that no people could know God. By its distribution it was believed that that gospel could be spread abroad whose Founder had decreed that it should be propagated only by the contact of living man with living man. It came to hold the place in Protestantism which the Koran holds in Islam. And all this without its own consent, and even against its plain protest!

Just now a large portion of the Protestant world is disturbed by what it thinks to be a breaking away from the authority of the Bible. Is the apprehension justified? What has caused the fear? What will be the outcome of the movement? Of the ultimate issue there can be little question. The servant will be handed down out of the seat of the king. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the product of that long and wide movement toward God, at the centre of which stands "God manifest in the flesh." The Church is that great company of faithful people, from every age and every clime, organized and unorganized, conscious and unconscious, who, by thought, word, and deed, contributed to the bringing in of the kingdom of God. The Bible is the literature of a movement. The movement produced the literature, and not conversely. The movement is superior to the literature and controls it. The litera-

ture gains its peculiar character from the unique quality of the movement. The movement is the master and the Book is the servant. Within a certain very circumscribed area inside the Church, and within about three centuries of time, the servant has been unwisely elevated into a position to which it never claimed title. This action has been confined solely to a portion of Protestantism within Great Britain and the United States. The task now is to remove the Bible from the unwarranted place assigned to it, and to do this in such manner that it will not suffer diminution of the honor which belongs to it of right and in its own place. But the task must be done.

Two classes of people within the nominal frontier of Protestantism fiercely oppose the doing of it. These are, first, the extreme Protestants, whose whole fabric of religious thought is so based upon the idea of an infallible written revelation that they cannot conceive the fabric standing when the foundation should be withdrawn. The other is a comparatively small group of Churchmen who are so enamored of the very principle of authority in religion that they cannot abide question of any authority, even though it be one of which they themselves take small heed. These two join their voices in an outcry against the same kind of dealing with the Scripture which has been freely allowed always and everywhere within the universal Church, with the exception of the limited time and area above mentioned. But the majority is

against them. All Catholic tradition is against them. The Bible itself refuses to side with them. The result is foregone.

But what, then, becomes of the "Doctrine of Inspiration"? To this I reply, The Catholic Church *has* no doctrine of inspiration. It has what it believes to be a fact. But it has never defined the fact or elevated it into a dogma. Only within the limited time and area before mentioned has this been done. Hence it happens that only within that area is the present perplexity felt. The Eastern Church cannot comprehend the difficulty. The Roman Church is untouched by it. The Anglican Church is disturbed by it only to the extent to which she has informally committed herself to a Protestant dogma. Officially she does not recognize any dogma of inspiration. She is content with stating what books are included within the sacred writings, and with declaring that no belief is to be exacted as a condition of membership in the Church which is not recognized in them.

That the threescore little books bound up together in our Bible possess a unique quality has always been recognized by those who were qualified to discern that quality. It is because they possessed this quality that they survived while their contemporary writings have perished. But the name by which this quality shall be called is quite another matter. The word "inspiration" suited the fact well enough so long as the word retained its original indefiniteness of

connotation. It is a serious question now, however, whether it can be happily employed within the area where it has been so long misemployed. It misleads. By ancient and universal usage, "inspiration" was credited to certain men who spoke or wrote. By local and modern usage, inspiration is attached, not to the men, but to the thing spoken or written. A legitimate metonymy has created an illegitimate dogma. That certain men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost is beyond question. But the impulse of the Spirit of Holiness is a moral and not an intellectual one. It does not guarantee accuracy, but it is recognized by the moral sense of the hearer. This is why the words of some men have survived and are a living force in the moral movement of the race. The *men* were inspired.

But what authority shall decide which men have been inspired, and what writings possess the unique quality due thereto? I reply, no external decision can determine. No decree, no council, no *obiter dicta*, can attach the label "inspired" to any book with the certainty that it will adhere. The final appeal is to the Christian consciousness. When that has spoken, a General Council can but register its decree. It may be that in certain instances its voice has not been waited for, or that it has been constrained by ecclesiastical pressure, or that a judgment has been made by a passing authority against its silent protest. No doubt. But the simple fact that a literature frag-

mentary, incomplete, undistinguished by literary skill or intellectual brilliancy, has remained through the centuries a constant, living stimulus and corrective to the world's conscience, establishes its origin from the Spirit of Holiness. It is true that the Church lived for several centuries without it; that it would not perish were the Bible to be lost. This is but to say that salvation is not made contingent upon the ability to read and write. But when all is said, the fact still remains that the writings which we *call sacred are sacred*. Not because they burst into the world through any earthquake of divine visitation, not because they are sent forth by any mighty blast of ecclesiastical wind, but because in them speaks the still, small voice, at the sound of which every true prophet and man of God covers his face. What authority they possess rests upon this fact. The capacity to inspire is the only and the sufficient evidence of inspiration.

But this quality which they possess, they possess in unequal degree. Whether or not any may perchance be included in the canon which possess it not at all only time can show. But this would require long time. Even a possession of twenty centuries' tenure does not establish an indefeasible title. And a General Council in the thirtieth century would have just the same power to pronounce the Christian judgment in the premises, and, if need be, to reverse a previous judgment that a Council of the fifth century had to

reverse one of the third. There is no such thing as prescriptive right in the kingdom of Christ.

If it be objected that this way of thinking vacates the Holy Scriptures of all divine authority, two answers are forthcoming. The first is that this is the way in which the Church throughout all the centuries and to-day has regarded and does regard them. The only exception in time is the three centuries last past, and in space is a portion of the Protestant world of Great Britain and the United States. The other answer is, It does vacate them of all authority except this intrinsic power to inspire. It rests content with the doctrine of the Apostle that "every God-breathed writing is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness."

*In righteousness*; not in science, not in history, not in geography or ethnology. To this, which is essentially the Catholic doctrine of Holy Scripture, what can criticism or scholarship do? What if it should appear that the human race began ages before Eden, or that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, or that there were two Isaiahs, or that the gospel which goes by his name was not written by the beloved disciple? Proof of these things would no more touch the intrinsic quality by which the books live than the discovery that the alabaster box had been carved at Babylon and not in Jerusalem would affect the fragrance of the precious nard contained therein.

We have come to a time in the history of the



Christian world when nothing but realities will be tolerated. Only those things can be accepted as sacred which awake the sense of reverence. Only those things are inspired which can themselves inspire. There need be no fear to submit the Christian Scriptures to this test; nor need any one futilely imagine that he can secure exemption for them from this test.

I would add a word, moreover, about the attitude of Churchmen toward this question of Holy Scripture. One looks with a mixed feeling of amazement at the spectacle of the Bishops of Springfield and western New York joining their voices in the outcry against Dr. Briggs. One is tempted to invoke the dead tongues of Newman or Ewer or De Koven to warn them that they are shouting with the wrong side. Even their rage at Broad Churchmen ought not to seduce them to tear down their own house. The governing principle of that which is called the Higher Criticism is the belief that the literature of the historic Church is the product of the historic Church. But this is also the Catholic doctrine of Holy Scripture. The High Churchman ought to see that if the *ipsisima verba* of the canon be erected into an authority which may not be canvassed without sacrilege, the real foundation for the Church's order and structure will be vacated. This was the contention of the Elizabethan High Churchmen against the Puritans. This was Hooker's ground in his reply to Travers and Cartwright, and he writes this for the heading of his

second book: "Concerning their position who urge reformation in the Church of England, namely, that Scripture is the only rule of all things which in this life may be done by men." This was the position of Seabury and Hobart and Bishop Hopkins. None of these men, I can but believe, would have permitted themselves to be so infatuated with the principle of "authority" as to allow themselves to become the allies of the descendants of the Westminster General Assembly.

The question of Holy Scripture is one which the High Churchman *who knows the ground upon which he stands* is not vexed by. It does not touch him, so long as he keeps out of questionable company. It is open to him to say to the scholar, "God speed you, lay bare the truth, analyze the documents, identify the authors, fix the dates, lay bare contradictions, convict the spurious if there be such, take the books to pieces and arrange the parts in chronological order if you can. None of these conclusions can touch the thing for which *we* use and revere the literature of the kingdom of God."

But if neither the Church nor the Bible nor the reflective Reason are authorities before whom the soul must bow itself, then where is a master? At this point we want to examine more carefully the word used. There is a fatal confusion in the popular use of the word "authority." I have used the word throughout in its etymological sense. An authority

is a master who can get himself obeyed under penalty. In the region where this discussion moves, only a *de facto* sovereign is worth considering. A mere *de jure* authority is of no consequence. Now, in most of the discussion concerning the "Seat of Authority in Religion," men have been content with spinning academic arguments to prove the legitimacy of this or that "authority." One has been content to prove that men should "hear the Church"; another, to prove that "the Scripture is the only rule of faith and practice"; another, "that men should be governed by the deliverances of right Reason." They are beautiful arguments, but they are like the fine-spun pleas of the nonjurors for the "divine right" of the impotent Stuarts. What is wanted is an authority which can get itself obeyed under penalty. And that is precisely what none of those above mentioned can do. My quarrel is the same with the bibliolater, the ecclesiastic, and the rationalist. They all, and all alike, sit down satisfied when they have reached an authority which in their opinion *ought* to be final. What difference whether it ought to be or not, if it is not?

The real vice of all these champions of "authority" is that they cannot admit the reality of God governing directly. They have the feeling that a moral cause can go before the Almighty only on appeal from a lower court. The contention of Jesus is that God has original jurisdiction, and that He has ma-

chinery for communicating His judgments. This is what the Jews could not take in. They lived by "authority." The priest, the lawyer, and the scribe spoke to them the final word. When Jesus bade them venture immediately into the presence of God their Father, they were shocked and scandalized. His disciples, however, gathered courage to follow Him, and so were made free men in Christ Jesus. In the centuries since, they have always tended to grow weary of the burden of liberty, and to turn to the ecclesiastic, the scribe, and the logician, begging to be ruled.

The real authority in the moral sphere is the actual concurrence of the will of God with the moral consciousness of the individual. Whenever this concurrence is reached in any particular case, the individual recognizes it. He may not obey it, but that is because he prefers to bear the penalty rather than to do God's will, but he knows that the King has spoken. He knows it just as the organ-builder knows that a pipe speaks the right note. He may be long in finding the note. He tries it with the octaves above and below ; he tries it with other stops and combinations. For a time there are discords and vibrations. But at last the pipe gives the sound which the tuner has been striving for. When it once speaks aright, there is no longer any doubt. The music, the organ and the ear fit together, and the player has the same certitude of musical truth that he has of his own being. The author-

ity has spoken. In the moral sphere one who seeks finality in truth and duty brings a question before the Reason to test its reasonableness; before the Bible to see whether or not it accords with the moral movement of the kingdom of God; before the Church for the contemporary opinion of the brotherhood of righteousness. He seeks for the harmonious testimony of all the parts of the whole great organ of life that his voice is attuned to the music of God. When he has found it, he is satisfied, for he knows what is truth and what is duty.

The Church, the Bible, the Reason, are ushers to bring the soul into the presence of the King. Who asserts for them an authority of their own wrongs both them and their Maker.



THE FALL,—UPWARD





## VII

### THE FALL,—UPWARD

A WELL-KNOWN writer in a well-known Review lately made this statement :

“It is easy to see that the ‘New Theology’ is about prepared to join hands with Darwinianism, and obliterate the doctrine of the Fall as underlying the fact that ‘the Word was made flesh.’”

It is the peculiarity of the “New Theology” that no one is officially authorized to speak for it, but I venture to think that the above statement will be silently admitted by those who are under its influence as being substantially true. I venture also to say *why* this judgment is accepted by those in whom it has reached the distinctness of a judgment.

The existence of moral evil is not denied by any.

There are in the field three theories as to its origin and nature. Of course these theories are not held distinctly and unmingled. The same person may, and, in point of fact, often does, hold mutually antagonistic fragments of different theories in doctrine and philosophy and may be as strenuous in support of one part of his contradictory creed as of another. But in the case before us the three theories are easily separable, in thought at least.

(1) The first is that of what for convenience' sake may be called "orthodoxy."

According to it there was, long ago, a primeval world which was a paradise. It had a genial climate and a fertile soil. No ice-bound oceans or burning deserts, no thorns or brambles, no predacious beast or pestilential wind, were there. The world was young and wholesome. No nerve had ever thrilled with pain, nor any living creature looked upon the face of death. The plains were smiling with perennially golden grain, and the forest bountiful with pendent fruit. In this Paradise God walked, and was lonely. In it He set the newly fashioned Adam, the first individual of his race. Into his arms He graciously gave the maiden Mother of us all. He created them immortal. Their wisdom was transcendent; their innocence absolute.

But with Adam God made a covenant. The matter of the agreement was, that perfect obedience and unbroken righteousness would be rewarded by continual bliss, and warranty against pain and death; and that for disobedience the punishment should be capital. The parties to the agreement were God of the first part, and Adam the party of the second part. Adam did not enter into the covenant for himself alone, but as the representative of all his race yet unbegotten. They were to have their chance in him, and to stand forfeit if he failed. (Whether the covenant were to remain in force eternally, or whether, after a certain

time passed in obedience, he was to have been confirmed in an indefeasible right, does not appear.) The simple test for the first man's power of moral endurance was to be his abstention from a certain attractive kind of fruit in the garden where he dwelt. An insidious tempter appeared from some unknown and unsuspected quarter, enlisted the more pliable nature of Eve on the side of disobedience, and through her broke down the moral resistance of man. He failed in the test, and catastrophe unspeakable was let loose! Smit-ten suddenly with shame and pain, the offenders crept away already moribund. The voice of God rolling in thunder discovered their hiding-place. The flashing lightning of an offended heaven burned between them and their bower. The jealous earth shot up from her bosom the "upas and the deadly nightshade" among the kindly forest, and choked the wheat with thorns and brambles. The wild beasts, filled, for the first time with cruel rage and hunger, rent and devoured one another. The natures of the offenders themselves underwent a sudden ferment, which left them transformed and totally depraved. Their unborn children not only inherited the taint, but were bound by all the penalties appended to the original contract broken by their father and representative. Thus death physical and moral, the depravity of every son of Adam, and all the thousand ills that flesh is heir to, both in this world and in any world yet to come, are all the outcome of that transaction which, in popular religion and

in technical theology, is named "The Fall." Most Continental and American theology is based upon this notion. So unconventional a thinker as Dr. Bushnell has a strange chapter induced by the theory. If death literally came by Adam, how then to account for its undoubted dominion over the lower animals for æons before Adam was made? The "dragons weltering in their prime" lived by tearing one another, and were so equipped by nature that they could not live otherwise. Dr. Bushnell, seeing this difficulty, hits upon the ingenious theory of what he calls "The anticipative consequences of sin."<sup>1</sup> That is, the sin which was to be, cast its shadow backward, and covered the earth from its beginning!

The theory before us cannot be more clearly stated than in the words of the "Larger Catechism" appended to the Westminster Confession of Faith: "The 'Fall' brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, His displeasure and curse, so that we are by nature children of wrath, bond slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishment in this world and the world to come."

Now, whence came this notion? In the *Old Testament* there is no allusion to it whatever. There every case of moral obliquity is referred to the deliberate and wanton choice of the person offending. His fault is never modified, or the quality of his guilt deemed to be affected, by his relation to Adam. He is in every

<sup>1</sup> Nature and Supernatural, ch. vii.

case accounted worthy or blameworthy, not for what he is *qua* man, but for what he does of his own choice.<sup>1</sup>

The "Fall" is *never referred to by Jesus* in any form. If His words and precepts stood alone in the New Testament the transaction would be overlooked completely. He concerns Himself with the springs of human conduct as they exist now. He uncovers and fortifies new and obscured motives. He refers righteousness to the indwelling of the Spirit of God, but never refers sin to the indwelling of the spirit of Adam.

In the *Apocalypse*, which unfolds the last scenes in the drama of humanity, there is no reference to a great catastrophe at its beginning, and the *dénouement* would seem to be incompatible with such a first act.

The *Catholic Creeds* are entirely silent concerning it. The Articles of the Christian Faith, assent to which is a condition precedent to membership in the Christian Church, have nothing whatever to say concerning the transaction known as the "Fall."

From all this it seems evident, that if the "New Theology" sits somewhat loosely to this theory, it does not thereby argue itself to be irreverent toward the highest authority or indifferent to fundamental truth.

The portion of Christian Scripture by which the

<sup>1</sup> Edersheim: "Life of Christ," vol. i., book 1. "It is entirely unknown also to Rabbinical Judaism."

theory has been always upheld is St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the fifth chapter, beginning at the twelfth verse. To the untheological reader the meaning is sufficiently evident. The propagandist of the new Faith declares that his principal, Jesus of Nazareth, is of divine origin, and has moral relations with every human being. But, just as all men are affected by the character and actions of their original ancestor "Adam," so the whole race stands affected by the character and actions of the Second "Adam." This seems to be all that the writer had in mind. He is concerned with the position of Jesus, and only uses the accepted story of Adam as an illustration and analogy, good for what is good. But instead of being allowed to remain in the subordinate position of an analogy, it has unfortunately been elevated into a capital position among Christian dogmas.

The history of the dogma is, in rough lines, easily traced.<sup>1</sup> It was developed by that great system builder, Augustine. It passed, together with the rest of his theology, into general acceptance in the Western Church. It was elaborated into curious detail during the busy idleness of the scholastic period. Dante popularized the story of the Edenic Paradise for the Latin races, as did Milton for the English-speaking people. Luther, the Augustinian monk, brought the theory with him from his cloister. Calvin accepted it from his master Augustine, and made it the starting-

<sup>1</sup> Hagenbach : "History of Doctrine," p. 59.

point of his system. Through these various channels it has come since the Reformation into the popular mind to be the accepted Christian teaching concerning the moral status of man.

That the theory, both in itself and in its consequences, is entirely untenable would seem to be evident from merely stating it. It is so well entrenched, however, that more than this is necessary. To any one who has come under the influence of that mode of thinking known as evolutionary, such a catastrophe as that of the "Fall" is *a priori* incredible. Such a thing is out of analogy, both natural and spiritual. On the face of it (if it be so read), it is a case of sudden and violent degradation interjected between two periods of steady progress. Up to the date of the "Fall," and from that date forward, the progress is undenied. Instances of degradation, both in individuals and families, are very common, but they differ from this alleged one in that they are *slow, final, and irretrievable*. Their subjects are left stranded on one side of the stream of progress. There is no farther use for them, and they cease to be. The Miltonic "Fall," on the other hand, is sudden, inconclusive, and the penal cause assigned is no sufficient *rationale* in the absence of any moral or religious obligation to accept the fact. The "total depravity" supposed to have been the consequence of this transaction is not a fact, and never has been. A human being without inherent moral goodness—inherent in

the same way as his humanity itself—is something no one has ever seen. It has been imagined in technical theology, but its actual counterpart is to be looked for, not in any man or woman, but in Mephistopheles or a Houyhnhnm. Apart from the somewhat artificial language of the pulpit, neither the idea nor the fact ever occurs.

The associated dogma of inherited guilt is practically obsolete also. True, it survives in the standards of some Christian bodies, but it has ceased to be a conviction to which one may appeal to influence conduct. What preacher would dare to assert boldly, “You deserve to be damned for your share in Adam’s act of disobedience”?

The dogma is no longer held on the authority of Augustine, or rejected with Pelagius; it has simply fallen out of sight in consequence of its intrinsic unworthiness and essential immorality. The “New Theology” does not accept it or reject it; it passes it by.

(2) The theory has in some quarters been rudely displaced by another, which *seems* to be radically opposed to it. Indeed, the place occupied by it is the one most strenuously fought for by all the forces at present in the field. The Theist, the Secularist, the Evolutionist, or the Christian,—whichever one is able to capture and hold this ground,—possesses the key to the battle of modern thought. *What is the ground and origin of human Right and Wrong? Whoso*



holds the key to this will win the battle. For, practically, men value morals above all else. It is admitted on all hands that the sense of right and wrong does exist, and that it is, in its degree, at any rate, the distinguishing mark of man. But the real question is, "Whence comes it, and in what consists its binding force?" Those of the extreme Right say it is an original endowment of man from God, formerly perfect, but now shattered and untrustworthy. Those of the extreme Left say, without hesitation, that it is a faculty which has been slowly developed in man out of the interaction of himself and his fellows with their surroundings. In the crude barbarianism which they consider to be the original status of the race, certain actions were quickly found to tend to the general welfare, while certain other actions were found to work detriment to the tribe. The first sort of course tended to the popularity, and the second brought pain or danger to the individual producing them. The glow of satisfaction produced in the doer of helpful things encouraged him to the habit of such actions. Murder, theft, adultery, having been found to be dangerous to the community, were warmly reprehended. This public sense of dislike to the deeds reacted upon the individuals who felt it, gradually became fixed in each one, and was transmitted to his descendants. It had its origin in the public weal. It emerges, however, generations afterward, in a permanent faculty, which "had lost its memory and changed its name."

Nor has it remained the simple faculty it was when it first became self-conscious. Long afterward it, in Mr. Matthew Arnold's happy figure, came to be touched by the fire of Emotion, and burst into the flame of Religion. Since the death of the late Professor Clifford, this theory has not had another so able and uncompromising an advocate. With certain modifications due to his more cautious and judicious habit of mind, it is the doctrine of Mr. Herbert Spencer. In popular scientific periodicals it is assumed to have been demonstrated. It has found a lodgment in the text-books of schools. It is the basis of action for "Societies for Ethical Culture." The theory is claimed to be, in Professor Clifford's language, "a scientific basis for morals." That very prevalent habit of mind which abhors an unsolved problem as nature abhors a vacuum, receives and rests upon it with peculiar satisfaction. Wherever this theory and the popular notion of the "Fall" are sole rivals claiming entertainment by educated men, this one is almost certain of a welcome.

And this, notwithstanding the fact that it is attended by the very gravest difficulties, both scientific and moral. The more sober-minded evolutionists, whether Christian or Secular, do not accept it. They do not consider it scientific. The facts in the case cannot be coördinated under it. The savage state where the conscience is supposed by the holders of it first to emerge is precisely the place where the pos-

essor of moral sensibility would be most unfit to survive. Where might is right, right is doomed to death. Among unmoral creatures, any variation in the direction of morality tends toward the extinction of its possessor. The faculty coming into existence there is compelled by the exigency of the case to commit harikari. It is "too good to live." "The survival of the fittest" is an irrefragable law, which may not be suspended even in the interest of moral theory.

Then, again, the induction upon which its advocates base the scientific theory of morals is open to the grave suspicion of having been arranged in the interest of the theory. In the nature of the case the facts are difficult to come by, and one cannot help suspecting that the same skill (as of Sir John Lubbock, *e.g.*) which arranges them in one way could just as easily sort and arrange them so as to produce an entirely different result. Within the historic period, at any rate, there has not as yet been forthcoming any instance of a tribe or people making moral advance without the aid of light brought to them *ab extra*. In many instances a very high degree of civilization has been attained to by their unaided development. A Venus di Milo, and a code of Roman Law, have proven themselves to be within reach, but not a Sister of Charity, or a John Baptist.

Present facts are also against the theory. There is no constant relation between knowledge and goodness, nor is there any evidence of a tendency now on the

part of the vicious to learn righteousness by the bitterness of their experience in sin. The theory, indeed, is discredited by the eagerness with which the chronic wrongdoer accepts it. Anarchists, Socialists, Ingersollites,—the whole ignoble company of questionable morality—hail it as truth. One cannot avoid the feeling that it is, at least in part, welcome because it lightens the stress of moral obligation. The charge of Lacordaire would seem to be at least colorable, that “it consoles us for our vices by calling them necessities, bringing in as a witness to this a corrupt heart disguised in the mantle of science.”

(3) But the two theories above indicated are not the only claimants to a hearing upon the question of the moral progression of man. A third, contained compendiously in Genesis ii. and iii., and writ large in the whole Christian Scriptures, we believe.

The story in Genesis is too familiar to need rehearsing. It will suffice to point out that it assumes to be a distinct account of a veritable occurrence. It is sharply separated from what precedes and follows in the narrative, though evidently related to both. Like the portion of the story which precedes it, it moves with majestic stride, an æon in a paragraph, with space for a year of God’s days between verses. It is couched in a language so oriental and so poetic that even Augustine warned against dangerous literalness here.

The first chapter, and to the fourth verse of the

second, sketches the whole of creation, from the chaotic nebulous mist to the introduction of the creature fashioned in the image of God, which is called "Adam," *i.e.*, man. This sketch is the mighty frame into which all that comes after is to be fitted. This having been completed, it proceeds to recount the history of the creation in which the whole long-drawn movement has culminated. It refers most briefly to the preparation of the earth to his use,<sup>1</sup> connects him as to his physical side with matter,<sup>2</sup> endows him with life,<sup>3</sup> and then enters upon the history of *the development of man's moral and religious life*, which is the subject matter of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. This progress is conceived to be by a *series of continually recurring selections*. The first of these is recorded in the story before us. There is no intimation there that "Adam" and "Eve" were the absolute beginning of the race. There is nothing in the word *Adam* to indicate whether it means man, or is a proper name for an individual. It may mean either. In point of fact, it is used in both senses—as the word "day" is used both for the whole time covered by the creative process and for one of its periods. For the writer of Genesis, having for his purpose to narrate the moral development of the race, it was sufficient to begin where that began. To this end he states that God took a man and a woman,—(*i.e.*, a family),—set them in circumstances where the new faculty with which

<sup>1</sup> Gen. ii. 5.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* 7.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* 7.

He had endowed them would have its proper and necessary environment. That this selection left to the natural process of degradation those who were not chosen would seem probable from the following considerations :

1. It is in the analogy of God's method of dealing with men since history has recorded the same. Thus Genesis occupies itself only with the fortunes of Seth and his line. Cain, his brother, is permitted to wander to the land of Nod,<sup>1</sup> where he founded a nation,—a nation which passed through the stages of pastoral life,<sup>2</sup> concentration in cities,<sup>3</sup> developed the industries, blossomed into art, burst into music,<sup>4</sup> and then passed forever out of sight and hearing. Abraham is selected from his Acadian followers, while they are left to complete the cycle of a civilization untouched by any divine Spirit, and then sink into their decay. Isaac is taken, and Ishmael is left. Jacob is chosen, and Esau rejected,—and so following. “ One shall be taken, and the other left ” seems to have been the method of God's procedure always. Selection implies a corresponding rejection. The Bible is as remorseless as science itself. For the purpose of Scripture, moral fitness is the test. The calling of Adam would seem to be only the first of many such selections, not differing in kind from that of Abraham.

2. In certain obscure nooks and corners of the earth, there exist small groups of creatures, which,

<sup>1</sup> Gen. iv. 16.    <sup>2</sup> Ib. iv. 20.    <sup>3</sup> Ib. iv. 17.    <sup>4</sup> Ib. iv. 22.

while among men, seem not to be of them.<sup>1</sup> They have in their persons and their languages traces of better days. They seem to have been left stranded by the stream of development. So low in the scale of intelligence, so destitute of moral sense, are they, that it is difficult for one to look upon them and believe that they belong to the race which has the first Adam at its start and the second Adam at its culmination.

3. Traditions of the "Fall" are only found among those whose ancestry can be traced to a common origin, or who have come in contact with the race of Adam at some point in their history.

A family is chosen by God, and led by His providence into a fertile and well-watered country,<sup>2</sup> rich in gold and precious stones,<sup>3</sup> surrounded by the flora and fauna<sup>4</sup> which are the concomitants always of civilization.<sup>5</sup> In these surroundings occur that chapter in human history, which, whether relatively or absolutely the beginning, is, at any rate, a supreme epoch. It is the beginning of human religion.

The story sounds far away, and strange. To one who is accustomed to the precision of modern scientific statements, it even seems grotesque,—an echo of the childish stories of a youthful world! Taken

<sup>1</sup>For example: the Bushmen, the Australian aborigines, the Veddahs of Ceylon, etc.

<sup>2</sup>Gen. ii. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Ib. ii. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Ib. ii. 9, 20.

<sup>5</sup>It seems hardly necessary to point out that "Garden" in this connection is a misleading term. The idea of extremely limited space, which the word conveys, is foreign to the story. "*Paradise*," in its classical use, is better. The idea is, an expanse of park-like territory.

broadly, however, it manifests an insight which on any theory, save the Christian, it would be folly to look for in such an early time. It rests morality upon those clear foundations where the broad *communis sensus* of intelligent and upright men instinctively look for it. It declares :

1. *A personal God who can speak.*
2. *A human faculty which can hear.*
3. *A power of will which can choose.*
4. *That the essence of wrongdoing consists, not in damage to the community, but in disobedience to God.*

This new family of Adam, alone of all creatures, having reached the stage of knowing right and wrong, have their newborn faculty nourished and developed by food convenient, and in a fit environment. In the garden of the world they feed upon the fruit of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil." "Forbidden" fruit it is indeed,—food which may be eaten only at a dreadful risk. Knowledge brings judgment always, and must pay the price of its being. When moral faculty rises to the state of self-consciousness, brute-like innocence is left behind forever. The way of return is closed as by Cherubim with fiery swords. Profound degradation is possible thereafter, but *not* along the lines by which the creature came. He can move downward but not backward. His fellowship is no longer with the gentle creatures of the garden,



whose nature he heretofore shared, but with their Maker and their God.

“And the Lord God said: Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand and take of the tree of life and live forever,—therefore the Lord God sent him forth from Eden; and He placed at the East of the garden Cherubim, with flaming sword which turned every way.”

“And so I live, you see,  
Go through the world, try, prove, reject,  
Prefer, still struggling to effect  
My warfare; happy that I can  
Be crossed and thwarted as a man,  
Not left, in God’s contempt, apart,  
With ghastly, smooth life, dead at heart,  
Tame in Earth’s paddock as her prize!”

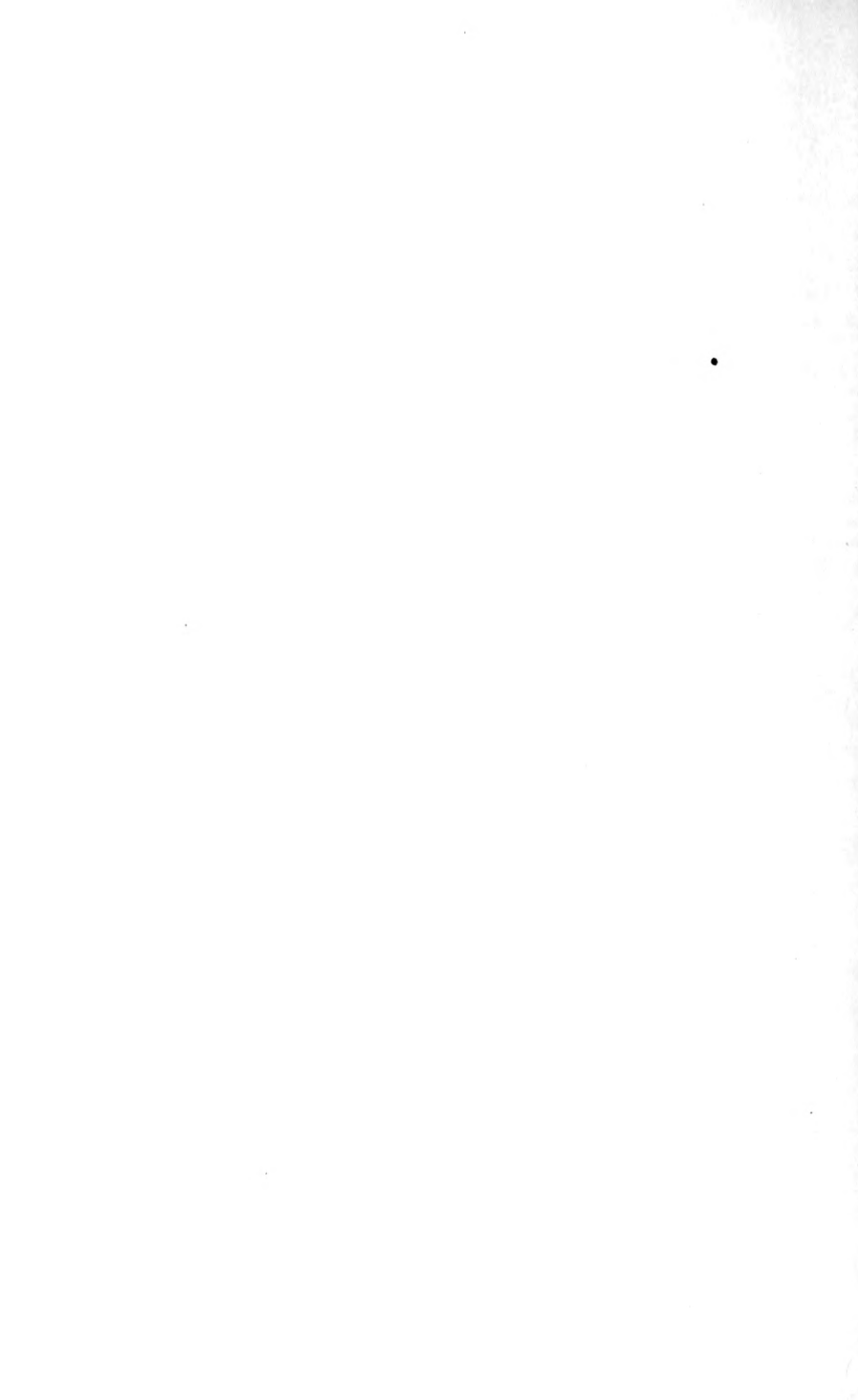
Of the outcome of the transaction, there can be no doubt. It was clearly great gain,—maybe a falling short of the best then possible, but clearly a rise above what went before. Something better still did come into the field of moral vision, even then. The “Tree of Life,” the possibility of immortality, was there. But it came into sight only, a long way off, and out of reach. Only as a memory and a hope did it survive in the tedious steps of progress, until, in the fullness of time, the perfect Man “brought life and immortality to light.”

Moreover, there comes crawling upon the stage, the wily, ignoble representative of moral Evil. When

man emerges as a moral being, he must take his place, perforce, in the league of spiritual states. He has thenceforth to do with many interests. He is a "being of large discourse, looking before and after." It is no fantastic oriental conceit which introduces Satan to the first man who could comprehend his forked speech. That man *must* confront the Eternal Nay in virtue of his station. The doctrine of supernatural evil is developed in the Christian Scriptures *pari passu* with the process of redemption. The Christian smiles when he hears the fact of such existence called in question. He is quite aware that in the Secular Creed there is no Prince of Darkness. But he knows also that there be a thousand things not dreamed of by that philosophy. He reads hopefully the obscure prophecy of better things to be attained through much pain, by the seed of the woman, and he knows that much of that evil is neither brute nor human. If it were, he should despair of the race at the outset. His solace and his ground of hope, when the brute within him is turbulent and the spirit of man is overladen, is the consideration that "it is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me."

The first of these theories, briefly sketched, is propounded by the popular and so-called "Orthodoxy"; the second by the Secular Science; the third by the Christian Scriptures. The first is moribund. The second is dangerous. The third is substantially true. Make what allowance one will for the obscurity, the

puerility, of the story, the fact still remains, that the moral progress of the race has been but the developing of the picture there sketched in broad outline. He whose way of thinking has been most profoundly impressed by the great thought of Evolution comprehends it best. He finds himself caught in the sweep of a majestic movement similar in kind to that which he has followed from the monad to the man. Here again, as at other times, the progress halted, either helpless or at fault, and God vouchsafed the gift of a new motive force. Here His Gift is nothing less than the inbreathing of His own spirit. It endows its recipient with that Divine quality in virtue of which he is capable, under suitable conditions, of being "born again." It accounts for the complex and contradictory impulses which contend in the arena of the soul. It accounts for the old man as well as the new. It tells him the name and origin and limitation of the strange tempter which whispers in the secret chambers of his heart. It brings him in sight of immortality, and bids him long and strive mightily therefor. It bids him work amid briars and thorns; but when he lifts up his face he hears that "he has become as one of us." It binds him to God. It gives him sanction for conduct, and hope for infinite progression. It sets him in the sweep of a dramatic movement. It accounts for the faults of the patriarch, for the faith of the apostle, and the faultlessness of the Perfect Man.



THE RÔLE OF BELIEF



## VIII

### THE RÔLE OF BELIEF

IT is high time that we Christians ask ourselves soberly, "Just what do we believe?—and just why do we believe it?" It will not do to reply that we believe what the Christian Church has always believed; for that is not true. Let one undertake the study of the religious life of the United States, for instance, beginning, let us say at 1825, and he will have no great difficulty in setting down item by item what were the beliefs generally held at that date. There was practical unanimity as to what was called "the essentials of Christian truth." Even the violent storms of controversy which swept over the surface of society did not disturb the beliefs which lay below. The "Christian System" was quite sharply conceived. There were a few infidels who attacked it with clumsy opposition. There were a few Unitarians who sought to modify its theological statements in one particular. There were large numbers respectfully indifferent to it. But the System itself was conceived of alike by all. The everyday creed of the everyday man would have run something thus:

"I believe that there is a God.

"I believe that He made the world, out of nothing,

by a series of fiats, in six natural days, four thousand and four years ago.

“I believe that He made Adam and Eve out of the dust of the earth.

“I believe that in Adam’s fall we sinned all.

“I believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity offered Himself to the angry first person of the same Trinity to be a victim to appease the just wrath which could in no other way be satisfied.

“I believe that by His suffering and death that wrath has been turned aside from such persons as will avail themselves of the substitute thus offered for them.

“I believe that all those who do thus avail themselves will go when they die to a heaven where they will be forever happy; while those who do not avail themselves of it will be sent to hell where they will be forever miraculously kept alive so that they may endure endless torment.

“I believe that if people are good they will be everlastingly rewarded, and that if they are bad, they will be everlastingly punished.

“I believe all this because the Bible says so.

“I believe the Bible because it is an inspired revelation of God’s will and purpose concerning men.”

Concerning these articles there was practically no diversity of opinion. They were assumed almost as axioms. Superimposed upon these was a mass of dogmas which were believed with almost equal unanimity.



The descent of the whole human race from a single pair of progenitors; the universality of the Noachian Deluge; the immediate divine institution of the "Mosaic System"; the literal fulfillment of the Prophecy; the literal infallibility of the Bible.

Above and beyond all these there was an indefinite mass of "denominational doctrines," ranging from the most exalted philosophical tenets, such as foreordination, to the paltriest detail of denominational practice, such as the Amish tenet that hooks and eyes and not buttons ought to be used to fasten Christian men's clothes.

This is a very bald but a true statement of the actual belief of the people of this country at the end of the first quarter of this century. Of course every item of this creed was challenged by somebody, but the thing to be noted is this: there were no other religious beliefs generally extant. It is true that the Episcopalians kept on repeating their Apostles and Nicene symbols, but there were few of them and even they, for the most part had for their week day and working doctrines about the same that other people had.

Such was the theological situation in 1825. Any one who will take the trouble to read through piles of old sermons, tracts, controversial pamphlets, and such like can reconstruct it for himself. Another quarter century passed, and the peoples' beliefs remained unchanged. Still another passed bringing us to 1875, and signs of change begin to appear. The change

came much later in this country than in Europe. During the twenty years between 1850 and 1870 the people of this country had their minds and hearts filled with questions of another sort. They were in the shadow of the over gathering clouds of war, or they were dazed by its flashing lightning and rolling thunder, or they were gathering themselves up slowly from the prostration in which the tempest left them. During this period their religion was largely emotional. It expressed itself in passionate cries to God the Deliverer. The immediate stress of living was so exacting that men had little energy and less inclination to examine the contents of their faith.

But forces had meanwhile begun to be dimly felt which were destined, during the quarter century now drawing to a close, to revolutionize the religious belief of the people. German students had begun that criticism of the Bible which has compelled not only a new definition of Inspiration but an altogether different way of esteeming and using the sacred books. The new science of Geology had gone far enough to forecast the destruction of the accepted Biblical Chronology and to indefinitely expand each of the Creation Days. The new Historical Method had gone far enough to set the ancient Bible stories side by side with ancient legends. The Doctrine of Evolution had won its way so far as to compel a new definition of Creation. The modern passion of philanthropy had begun to modify the theology of the

Atonement by its deeper feeling of God's love and its higher estimate of man's worth.

Few realize how profound and far reaching has been the revolution in religious belief during our own generation. Luther or Calvin, Anselm or Thomas, even Augustine or Pelagius, could they have come alive in 1850 and learned the English tongue would not have found anything strange or unintelligible in the religious speech of the people. But if they had postponed their revisitation until now they would find themselves hopelessly bewildered, they would find people treating as palpably false things which they assumed to be palpably true. They would find that man's conception of God and theology was changed because the conception of the universe and its science has changed.

Who to-day believes that God created the universe in six natural days by immediate command? or that Noah's Flood was universal? or that the Holy Scriptures are a literal and infallible rescript of God's word? or that the Hebrew System was delivered all in a piece to Moses? Or that the work of Christ is to be explained by calling it an equivalent in pain paid to cancel God's bond of justice?

We had better face the facts. The conditions of living are changed, and the change has come with amazing suddenness. On the physical side of life as great a change has occurred between the time of George Washington and to-day as between his time

and that of Cyrus. But life is of one piece. It is idle to suppose that it may be transformed in its arts, its mechanics, economics, science, ethics, and remain untouched in its religion. It is not to the point to declare at this stage with whatever solemnity that "Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Of course He is. God is changeless. So is nature. But it does not follow that yesterday saw the whole of God; or that the adjustments which it achieved to the side of God which it saw are the final ones.

GOD, EVEN OUR GOD



## IX

### GOD, EVEN OUR GOD

THE only starting-point to religious belief is the fact of the moral sense. The only means of transit from the closed ring of Nature to anything which may lie above, or outside of, or beneath Nature, is to be sought for here. The everyday man believes that the mandates of conscience are obligatory. The mandates themselves may be confused or may be hurtful, judged from the standpoint of human good. They may be regarded or disregarded, obeyed or disobeyed, as the case may be. But the individual never really doubts that it speaks with authority. "We ought to do this, we ought not to do that." These distinctions are felt to proceed from some source either within or without, which has a right to speak. The faculty by which one distinguishes between right and wrong is as obvious a fact as is the existence of the faculty by which one distinguishes between sweet and bitter. The power to distinguish is taken as sufficient evidence that the distinction itself is a real and valid one. What is the ground and origin of right and wrong? Whoso holds the key to this will win the battle. It is admitted on all hands that the sense of right and wrong does exist. But the real question is

whence comes it, and in what consists its binding force? Some will reply "It is an original endowment vouchsafed to man by God, and is a possession peculiar to man." Many, on the other hand, assert and believe that it is a faculty which has been slowly developed in man out of the interaction of himself and his fellows with their surroundings. In the crude barbarism which they conceive to be the original status of the race, certain actions were quickly found to tend to the general welfare, while certain other sorts of action were found to work detriment to the tribe. The first sort, of course, tended to popularity, and the second brought pain or danger to the individual producing them. The glow of self-satisfaction produced in the doer of helpful things encouraged him to a habit of such actions. Murder, theft, adultery, having been found to be dangerous to the community were warmly reprehended. This public sense of dislike to such deeds reacted upon the individual who felt it, and gradually became fixed in each one and was transmitted to his descendants. It had its origin in the public weal. Generations afterward it emerges as a permanent faculty which has lost its memory and changed its name.

It is contended also that at least the rudiments of a moral sense are discernible in animals much below the rank of man. This opinion seems to be steadily gaining ground among those who have the right to an opinion on the subject. No one can read the account



of the patient experiments and observations conducted upon the lower animals by Mr. Darwin, Mr. Romane, or Sir John Lubbock, without being impressed with the feeling that the actions of the animals which they describe are not different in kind from the actions of men which are determined upon by means of the moral sense. This conviction has caused grave disquiet in the minds of many religious people. It seems at first sight to break down the last barrier of distinction between man and beast. It appears to degrade the conscience from its high status as the voice of God to the unreasonable instincts of the brute. I think the disquiet is unwarranted. Whatever may be the final decision as to the origin of the moral faculty, the really important thing to be considered is the fact of its present existence. Is the validity of my decision between the morality of two actions rendered any the less trustworthy because my dog is capable of making decisions which seem to spring from the same motive? The reply is, They are no less trustworthy than are the deliverances of my mathematical faculty although a crow is competent to count three. Whatever the faculty shall be seen to come from, or,—to speak more accurately,—by whatever method God has brought it into being, the faculty is here, and men do trust it. That is sufficient. But why do they trust it? Why is right bounden and wrong banned? It can only be because there is some fundamental and eternal distinction to which the moral faculty makes its appeal. It

seems to me as unreasonable to think that the faculty of conscience should have been developed if there be no objective fact for it to deal with, as it would be to suppose that the faculty of sight should have been developed if there were no such thing in the physical universe as light. The conscience leads to something. But to what? The general reply is "To God." But really one is not very much farther along when he has made this reply, for the question at once comes up "What does one mean by God." Here is where a confusion exists which renders valueless an enormous amount of thought and speech concerning religion. It is thoughtlessly assumed that all who say "God" mean by it the same thing, that God is a well defined object, like the sun, for example, and that whenever His name is spoken the word connotes the same thing for all men. No mistake could be greater. It is probably the fact that no two men now and within Christendom have in mind precisely the same thing when they use the word "God." And it is still more evident that the use of this word has changed enormously during the progress of the centuries past. In understanding the Bible for example, much perplexity would be avoided if this simple fact were borne in mind. It is true, of course, that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,—the God of the living and the dead,—is in His own person unchangeable. But it does not follow that Abraham's conception of God was the same as Jacob's, or that Jacob's was the same as

Isaiah's, or that Isaiah's was the same as that of St. Paul. One has only to read the earlier parts of the Old Testament to see that the naïve conceptions of Jehovah which were entertained by those who worshipped Him were such as would be now unsatisfactory even for a Christian child. To their thought He was the God of gods. But the gods over whom He was supreme were thought of by them as actually existing personages. Their God was conceived of as differing from these in certain things, but also as like to them in many other things. Says Professor Piepenbring:

“They represented Him to themselves under the form of man. According to the Biblical narratives God visits Abraham with two companions; He accepts the hospitality that the patriarch offers Him; He converses with him and Sarah, then goes away toward Sodom, accompanied by His host, to whom, on the way, He makes known His purpose to destroy the guilty cities. He forms man out of the dust of the ground, as an artist would do; He breathes into his nostrils the breath of life; He plants a garden in Eden; He takes a rib of the man to make the woman, and carefully closes up the flesh in place of it; He rests from the work of creation when He has finished it. After the fall He appears in the garden of Eden; He walks through it; He calls Adam and Eve; He informs them of the penalties that will overtake them; then He makes them garments of skin and clothes them. He closes the door of the ark upon Noah. He smells the pleasant odor of the burnt-offering that the latter offers Him. He engages in a hand-to-hand conflict, like a man, with Jacob. He attacks Moses in the night and attempts to kill him; He speaks to him as one person to another; He buries him after his death; He pronounces the ten words of the decalogue,

and engraves them on tables of stone. He raises His hand to take an oath. It is only necessary to read a few pages of the prophets or the Psalms to be convinced that God is regarded as possessing all the members and functions of the human body. He is even said to hiss, to cry, to laugh, to sleep and awake.

“It is clear that in the prophets and the Psalms these expressions belong to the poetic style. *But originally, and even at a later date in the mouth of the people, they were not merely rhetorical*; they corresponded to the imperfect ideas that were current respecting the Deity. When the narratives of the Pentateuch, from which we have taken the examples above cited, were composed, they were taken in their literal signification. We think that even at the time when the original narrators borrowed them from popular tradition to stereotype them in writing, they were still generally taken in this sense.”

It required two thousand years for the Hebrew people to work out its conception of God. That process was for them, as it is for all people at all times, at once a discovery and a revelation. God's revelation of Himself always lies open before the eyes of all men. Nevertheless, He is hid from all men until they discover Him for themselves. God teaches men religion as wise men teach their children knowledge. That is, they put their children in the way to learn for themselves. The obstacle in the way of imparting all knowledge, whether by the Father in heaven or the father on earth is not that he does not possess the knowledge, but that the pupil can only take it in and make it his own by his own labor, thought and experience. The Old Testament is the fragmentary and incomplete

record of the multitudinous ways in which the men of old felt after God if haply they might find Him, though He was not far from every one of them. In his "God and the Bible" Mr. Matthew Arnold has traced this process and well summed up its result. Probably no man will do it better or more truly for many a day to come. In his well-known phrase "A Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness," he sums up the faith of Israel. Unfortunately he stops at that point, forgetting that the Christian world has passed immeasurably beyond that formula. "God, who in times past, in divers parts and in sundry manners spake by the prophets, hath in the last days spoken by His Son."

But Mr. Matthew Arnold is not the only Christian man who stops content with the Hebrew God. Most of the confusion and doubtfulness into which the Christian world has fallen would have been avoided if the God of popular belief had come to be the God of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I am led to believe that the God of popular thought is the God of the Hebrews, and not even their truest thought of Him. He is an oriental potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He sits upon a throne in some remote heavenly palace, magnificent exceedingly, but far, far away. He is the Supreme Ruler, who conducts the affairs of the universal empire, administers justice, exalts and casts down, rewards and punishes according to his own arbitrary decrees. Says Mr. John Fiske:

“I remember distinctly the conception which I had formed when five years of age. I imagined a narrow office just over the zenith, with a tall standing-desk running lengthwise, upon which lay several open ledgers bound in coarse leather. There was no roof over this office, and the walls rose scarcely five feet from the floor, so that a person standing at the desk could look out upon the whole world. There were two persons at the desk, and one of them—a tall, slender man, of aquiline features, wearing spectacles, with a pen in his hand and another behind his ear—was God. The other, whose appearance I do not distinctly recall, was an attendant angel. Both were diligently watching the deeds of men and recording them in the ledgers. To my infant mind this picture was not grotesque, but ineffably solemn, and the fact that all my words and acts were thus written down, to confront me at the day of judgment, seemed naturally a matter of grave concern.

“If we could cross-question all the men and women we know, and still more all the children, we should probably find that, even in this enlightened age, the conceptions of Deity current throughout the civilized world contain much that is in the crudent sense anthropomorphic. Such, at any rate, seems to be the character of the conceptions with which we start in life, although in those whose studies lead them to ponder upon the subject in the light of enlarged experience, these conceptions become greatly modified.”

I incline to think that the conception of God which has been until lately generally current, is derived from the Hebrew prophets, from the habit of thought and speech which belong to monarchy, from Milton and Dante, and but little from Moses or St. Paul. Until lately this conception of God produced no intellectual distress. It satisfied the sense of reverence, it stirred

a feeling of awe, it provided potent sanctions for conduct. But it did all these because it fitted in with the accepted ideas concerning nature and man. "God" and "Nature" are correlative terms. They must be adjusted to one another. If anything occurs to seriously modify the contents of either term the equation is thrown out of joint. Doubt, distress, perplexity must prevail until the equilibrium shall be restored. This is precisely what has occurred. Within a generation has transpired the greatest mental revolution within the history of human thought. The whole conception of Nature has been transformed. Its origin, its laws, its methods, its goal, are thought of from a new standpoint. But as a consequence the old idea of God and the new idea of Nature are out of joint. Nature has been rationalized, Christianized, but the popular God remains the Hebrew Yaveh.

This change in the situation has been powerfully hastened, if not produced, by the spread of the doctrine of *Evolution*. The popular thought about God is in process of change. Until lately men thought of Him as having His seat at some remote and inaccessible region in space and time. From there He emerged at a definite point in the past and caused a universe to be where before emptiness had been. During a "Creative Week" He labored like a cunning artificer, finished His work, pronounced it very good, rested and withdrew. Orthodoxy was

alarmed and indignant when first called upon to expand these creative days, first into centuries, and then into æons. It piques itself upon having been able to effect this extension without disaster to itself. But the average educated man has since some time abandoned this way of thinking altogether. He has come to believe that time with God is all of one piece, that He works continually, and that He works not from without but from within, that He is not remote or apart from the universe and never has been, that He is in and behind and through all things, processes and forces, not identified with them, but apprehensible apart from them. So far as men are now theistic they think of God immanent. That is to say, they do so in every sphere except the sphere of technical Theology. But the formulated Theology of Western Christendom was builded about the other mode of conceiving God. The decrees of Councils have this in common, they think of a transcendent and not an immanent God. The Evolutionary philosophy can only conceive of God immanent. It thinks of Him as bearing, in a way, the same relation to the universe that the soul does to the body. The soul is not the body, nor is it the product of the body, nor is it to be thought of as ceasing with the destruction of the body. But it is, so far as we can know, conditioned in its manifestation upon the body. So men are steadily coming to think concerning God. They can no longer think of Him as "coming" to the



universe as from a distance. No more do they identify Him with the universe. They see that in His essence He must transcend the universe as mind transcends matter. But they see Him in the universe or they do not see Him at all. They are impatient of the little definitions of the little catechisms which describe Him as "a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." Possibly they have no better definition to offer, but only a more reverent silence. Nevertheless, they must think of Him in terms which fit with their thought of Nature. Probably Mr. Fiske in his luminous little book on "The Idea of God," has said it as well as the current thought about God is likely to be said for a long time to come.

It may as well be confessed that this way of conceiving God is unsatisfactory to many and irritating to not a few. It is not nearly so clearly cut, sharply defined and easily presentable in thought as the one which it supersedes. That one is simple, portable, always available for the practical needs of teacher or exhorter. It is charged against this one that it is vague, elusive, and in places inconsistent. To this charge two retorts are possible. The first is, this is the God of St. John, St. Paul and Jesus. The second is, it is better to conceive vaguely of a true God than precisely of a false one. But the fact remains that a man born and reared under the evolutionary way of thinking about God, man, and nature,—that way which

has possession of the centres of learning, which is in the text-books of public schools, and which colors popular speech,—can no more rest content with the current notion of God than he could present Him under the figure of Buddha or the “oiled and curled Assyrian Bull.” Science is slowly but firmly escorting that simulacrum of a divinity to the frontiers of the universe. God is not the mighty ruler sitting upon a remote throne outside nature, making incalculable incursions from thence within its realms, and retiring again to the high seat. We do not ask who shall ascend into heaven and bring Him down, or who shall descend into the abyss to bring Him up. For we know that He is most nigh. “Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet.” Shall we thrust Him farther away in order that we may distinguish His outlines more closely? Shall we not rather go on serenely, unmindful of the scorn of those who so adore definiteness of doctrine that they will worship no God that cannot be defined?

“Oh where is the sea,” the fishes cried?  
 As they swam the crystal clearness through;  
 “We’ve heard from of old of the ocean’s tide,  
 And we long to look on the waters blue.  
 The wise ones speak of an infinite sea,  
 Oh who can tell us if such there be?”

The lark flew up in the morning bright,  
 And sung and balanced on sunny wings;  
 And this was its song; “I see the light;  
 I look on a world of beautiful things;  
 But flying and singing everywhere  
 In vain I searched to find the air.”

## THE NEW SITUATION



## X

### THE NEW SITUATION

WE are confronted with a situation. Practically all under forty years of age have been educated under the domination of the New Learning. Their teachers and their text-books have been for the most part silent concerning religious belief. When they have not been silent they have been Agnostic. The newspapers, magazines, periodicals which they read give but little space to the discussions of religious problems. When they do deal with these it is usually to point out some alleged incompatibility of religion and science, or to harmonize some such antagonism. So it has come about that this is characterized as an "Age of Doubt." It would be more accurate to characterize it as an age of uncertainty, hesitation, perplexity. For doubt in the realm of religion usually carries a connotation of antagonism. That is not the mark of the doubt of to-day. It is not so much doubt as doubtfulness. The steadily deepening moral earnestness has brought multitudes to be at once more willing and less able to retain many things "which have been most steadfastly believed amongst us." Take them altogether, people were never so well disposed to believe the truths of Christianity, and never so perplexed as to precisely

what those truths are. There is a widespread distaste for what is called dogma. Doctrinal sermons are listened to with impatience, if hearkened to at all. Doctrinal treatises have no charm for the multitude. Time was when they had. When one looks over faded pamphlets which preserve the sermons to which multitudes of people eagerly listened half a century ago, his wonder is not at their inconclusiveness, but their dullness. But they did not seem dull then. Why do they now?

Rightly or wrongly, the impression is abroad that Christ has been lost in Christianity. The person has been hidden by the theology. The truth has been overlaid and obscured by the creeds. The cry of the time is "Back to Christ." The titles of the books which serious-minded persons are reading are but variations upon this theme. But who is this Jesus? What does He stand for? What does His life signify? The reply to these questions must needs constitute a creed. Why then not take the dogmas which have been so laboriously constructed by the Church in the ages past, press them upon the people, fortify them by argument, defend them against opposition, prove them by Scripture, and so bring men to belief? I reply, because the thing is impossible. It is true that many think it is possible. They would reply to questions by more strenuous assertion. "Dogma the Antidote for Doubt," is the happy title of a treatise by a venerable bishop who may be taken as the representative of those who

are of his way of thinking. But the world's reply, while in its present mood, is in the words of Henry Ward Beecher, "Dogma is the skin of truth stuffed and set up in a museum."

The time is certainly fitting for the modest attempt here made, that is, to disentangle those beliefs which are fundamental and essential from those which are secondary, incidental or paltry. The everyday man stands appalled and disheartened at what he has come to think the complexity of the articles of the Christian Faith. He is urged to believe, but then he is urged to believe so many things that he hesitates, not so much at their difficulty as at their mass. A few years ago that monster of learning, the Rev. Dr. Schaff, essayed the task of gathering together and printing "The Creeds of Christendom." Three great octavo volumes of nearly a thousand pages each were the result of the attempt. Many of them are now unintelligible. Still more are obsolete. But the impression left upon the mind of the average man who sees the work is that Christian truth is an enormously complex and difficult thing. When he observes farther that each Confession of Faith is repudiated by the adherents of all the other confessions, he is led to ask in the temper of Pilate "What is Truth?" Now if such a man could be brought to see that these highly elaborated systems are but the personal opinions of individuals at different times throughout the Christian centuries, and that they are of no obligation except such as their intrinsic

reasonableness may carry, he will feel a great sense of relief. Mr. Huxley very properly resented an expression used by Principal Wace in a controversy with him. "The word infidel, perhaps, carries an unpleasant significance. Perhaps it is right that it should. It is and ought to be an unpleasant thing for a man to have to say plainly that he does not believe."

Fair-minded men will side with Mr. Huxley. Whether belief should have praise, or disbelief odium, depends altogether upon what the thing is for which belief is asked. Most men to-day are believers, unbelievers, doubters and seekers, all at once. They have a right to ask of the Christian Church,—What, precisely, are the things for which you ask credence? and, How far is membership in your society dependent upon assent to those things?

What has Church membership to do with belief in doctrine? It is right to say at this point that I approach this question from the point of view and with the prepossessions of a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, or as we prefer to think of it, the Anglo-Catholic Church. The general attitude of this Church toward Doctrine is one which is a puzzle to multitudes outside, and often little understood, even by her own members. The contribution which this Church has to make toward clearing up the religious perplexities of the time is not any neat, coherent, bundle of dogmas, but a practical method of dealing with dogmas. This is really the feature of that Church



which ought to arrest attention. For instance, she includes in her membership and in her Ministry those who, so far as doctrine is concerned, are Calvinists and Armenians, believers in the Real presence and Zwinglians, believers in the Verbal Inspiration and those who regard the Bible as literature, believers in Eternal punishment, and Universalists, Evolutionists and special Creationists. All these, and men with all sorts and shades of prepossessions and beliefs, dwell together in the same ecclesiastical society and with rare exceptions, no one ever thinks of questioning another man's right of citizenship. This practical policy is the rational outcome of her fundamental conception of what the Church of Christ is. She believes it to be, like the State, an ordinance of God for all men. The condition of membership in it must therefore be easy and simple. It is meant to be Christ's Institute of Righteousness. It must be easily accessible to sinners—intellectual as well as moral sinners. Any condition of membership which she might make would be null and void in so far as they go beyond the conditions which the Master has laid down. It is only on this ground that membership in the Church can be pressed on any one as a duty. The policy of the Roman Church is, as we believe, indefensible, because she urges Church membership as a duty, while she at the same time erects conditions which are intellectually intolerable. Protestantism, on the other hand, has multiplied the doctrinal condi-

tions precedent so enormously, that it has practically ceased to insist upon Church membership as a duty, and only offers it as a privilege to a select few. That this is the situation is easily discovered. Let a stranger who is willing and anxious to coöperate with the Christian Society and to join in her Sacraments, but who says frankly that he does not believe in the dogmas of Papal Infallibility, or the Immaculate Conception, ask for Confirmation at the hands of a Roman Bishop, and see whether or not he will be received? Let the same man apply for membership in a Protestant Church, saying at the same time that he does not believe in the Inspiration of the Bible, or generally in the particular Confession of Faith about which that denomination is organized, and see whether he will be admitted? It is not at all to the point to inquire whether these doctrines alluded to are true or untrue. The point is that a Church is acting *ultra vires* when it makes any such beliefs a condition of membership, or of admission to its Ministry. Any one who is a disciple of Christ has a right to membership in His Church. However feeble his belief, however erroneously he may conceive of Christ's power, however he may stand in need of instruction and development, he has a right to membership in the Society. He is not called upon to seek it as a favor. He stands to the Church as he does to the State. One's political opinions may be ever so wrong, or ever so opposed to those generally held by the people of his own

country, but he may not be outlawed for opinions. He can only be refused citizenship or be disfranchised for conduct.

This is the view of the Church, practically, though not very consistently acted upon by the Anglo-Catholic Church. It is greatly to be desired that the "Club" idea of the Church should be dislodged from the popular mind. "What must I *believe* if I join your Church?" is the way the ordinary man speaks. "If he don't believe what his Church holds he ought to get out of it," is the way the newspaper expresses the popular notion. But apply the same theory to citizenship in the State, and one sees its absurdity. If the Church be a divine institute in which membership is obligatory upon every disciple of Christ, then no conditions can be made, or should be regarded if made, save those which He Himself laid down. The unpardonable offence of dogma is when it thrusts itself into a place of authority to which it has no title. The question is not concerning its truth or falsity, but its function. This Church repudiates the claim of authority for all dogmatic statements which go beyond the range of recognized facts. The facts upon which Christianity is based she believes to be real facts, and its phenomena real phenomena, but the relation of these to each other and to the new truth constantly being uncovered, are open to be constantly re-stated in the language of successive generations. When traditional statements cease to be intelligible they be-

come to all practical concern, false. If they be still insisted upon they become stumbling stones and rocks of offence. It is distressingly apparent that this has come to be the fact.

“The religious world is given to a strange delusion. It fondly imagines that it possesses a monopoly of serious and constant reflection upon the terrible problems of existence ; and that those who cannot accept its shibboleths are either mere Galios caring for none of these things, or libertines desiring to escape from the restraint of morality. It does not appear to have entered the imaginations of these people that outside their pale, and firmly resolved not to enter it, there are thousands of men,—certainly not their inferiors in capacity, character, or knowledge of the questions at issue,—who estimate the purely spiritual elements of the Christian faith as highly as they do, but who have nothing to do with the Christian Churches, because in their profession of belief on the evidence offered, would be simply immoral.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not wise to dismiss this as a railing accusation brought by an adversary. It is a mere statement of fact made by a man who had a trick of knowing facts when he saw them. Moreover, what he says is true.

“I certainly believe that there are many more unpolished diamonds hidden in the churchless mass of humanity than the church-going part of the community has any idea of. I am even disposed to think

<sup>1</sup>Huxley : SCIENCE and CHRISTIAN TRADITION, Appleton, p. 140.

that a great and steadily increasing portion of the moral worth of society lies outside of the Church, separated from it not by Godlessness, but rather by exceptionally intense moral earnestness. Many, in fact, have left the Church in order to be Christians."

It may be well at this point to call attention to what we mean by belief. The formula is, "I believe." We do not say "I know." We do not know. Not a few are needlessly distressed because while they can demonstrate the reality of what they believe in other spheres, they cannot altogether state the ground of their religious beliefs, or convince others of their reality. It is one thing for one to be able to give a reason for the hope which is in him, and quite a different thing to make another man believe the same thing. The best that one can attain to in this region is the possession of "a reasonable, religious and holy hope." If a man can but justify to himself the essential reasonableness of his beliefs, it is enough. But this justification is reached only to a very limited extent through processes of logic. Emotion, affection, experience, are quite as potent, and quite as legitimate agents as reason. Doctrine is nothing more than the attempt to express belief in terms of the understanding.

That is the reason of the adoption of the method which I have determined to follow. The attempt has often been made to take the articles of the Catholic Creed one by one and establish them in the court

of reason. Classical instances of this sort are such as "Pearson, on the Creed," and "Liddon, on the Divinity of Jesus Christ." Such arguments have a place and use. They clarify and fortify belief in those where it is already present. But it is to be greatly doubted whether they have ever produced belief where it is lacking. What I seek is at once more modest and more difficult. I would induce belief in those who are hesitating, doubtful, perplexed, and unable to believe. To do this one must commence with an appeal to those realities which come within the everyday experience of the everyday man. If these experiences, when drawn out into consciousness and formulated in intelligible propositions, should show even a likeness to the statements of the Catholic Creeds, it will be just so much gain to the Truth and to the Church.

## NATURE AND GOD





## XI

### NATURE AND GOD

To what then are we as Christians and as Churchmen committed? I reply, in general, we are committed to a belief in the reality of religious phenomena. That is to say, we believe that the facts and forces which we talk about and claim to deal with in our religious life, are real facts and real forces, that they are not mere sentiments or ideas to which no objective facts correspond. We hold them to be something far more than creations of fear and figments of fancy, or formless clouds of emotion. When we speak such words as "God," "Duty," "Revelation," "Providence," "Immortality," "Eternal Life," we believe that we are handling real things and not imaginary things. This is really the point at which the religious man and the non-religious man diverge. The latter shuts himself within what he calls "Nature," while the former claims both the right and the power to step outside this circle and to move in a region which he still calls natural, but which the non-religious man calls "supernatural." It ought to be said in passing that this antithesis of natural and supernatural is, strictly speaking, illegitimate. The actual antithesis is between the real and

the unreal. Whatever is is natural. In the plane where it has its existence its very being vindicates its naturalness. The fundamental question about that whole set of phenomena which are called supernatural is not "Do they exist outside of Nature?" but "Do they exist at all?" This is the crux.

There are two ways at present current of thinking about the universe: One of them is the way which is familiar to religion, and the other to science. Perhaps the scientific way will be called to mind more vividly by a simple mention of a few of its representative names than by an attempt to define it. There are two or three such names which have been heard now for nearly a generation from the pulpit, and in the religious press, and in all discussions about religion, until their very mention may provoke a smile. The reason why the names of Huxley, and Tyndal, and Spencer have been so frequently used is not so much on account of what the intrinsic force of what they have said or written, but rather because they stand as convenient symbols to represent a way of looking at things. This way Mr. Balfour has called "Naturalism."

That general conception of the universe is, roughly, that actual existence ends with those things, facts, and forces which either come within the perception of the senses, or can be logically derived therefrom. Naturalism takes its stand in the centre of a wide circle. That circle includes within it Nature, to the utmost

conceivable limit of space. Within that ring it conceives to be at work a complex machinery of matter and force. Whether there be any existence within this circle which science cannot deal with, it does not pretend to say. What it alleges is that when men keep to the field of Nature their feet are upon the ground and they move with a sense of security. It approves of the dictum of Kant that existence is an island, shut up within Nature as in intangible barriers. It is the country of truth, but it is surrounded by a broad and stormy ocean, the proper place of illusion, where many a fog bank, and many an ice-berg give false promise of new countries, incessantly deceiving mariners, who are ambitious of new discovery, with mighty hopes, and involving them in adventures which can never be abandoned, and yet which can never be concluded. This naturalistic way of regarding existence has come to be very common. Within a generation the frontiers of nature have been almost immeasurably extended. Places where mystery lurked once, have now been illuminated by the searchlight of science. The result has been to create what may be called credulity as toward the natural, and skepticism as toward the supernatural. It is more a temper or disposition of mind in the community than an intelligent or reasoned conviction. Nevertheless, it exists, and indeed, is the outstanding fact with which the religious man has to deal. It is by no means confined to scholars or scientific men. The

business man, the professional man, the mechanic, are all alike under its influence. They say, "When we are dealing with the things of Nature we feel sure about them; when we are asked to consider the things of another world, we are unable to think or act with certitude."

We who are Christians feel the force of this very keenly. We, too, are under the influences of the spirit of the Age. Nevertheless, we have convictions concerning the unseen things which are quite as deep and real, and affect our practical conduct as much as do our beliefs in the reality of the things which we touch, and taste, and handle. How then, shall the Christian believer who is not a fanatic or dreamer, or idealist, justify,—not alone to the world about him, but to himself,—the existence of his faith? We believe in existence in two planes. We believe that they are both equally natural. We have in mind that they are apprehended by different methods and that they operate in different ways, but we insist upon their actual existence. How shall we adjust our religious belief to our scientific creed?

Several methods have been tried with very unsatisfactory results. One of them is to apportion existence into two provinces over one of which Reason rules, and over the other Faith. Says Mr. Balfour:

"This method consists in setting up side by side with the creed of natural science, another and supplementary set of beliefs which minister to the needs and

aspirations which science cannot meet, and which may speak amid silence which science is powerless to break. The natural world and the spiritual world are in this view each of them real, and each of them objects of real knowledge. But the laws of the natural world are revealed to us by the discoveries of science, while the laws of the spiritual world are revealed through the authority of inspired witnesses, or divinely guided institutions. The two regions of knowledge lie side by side, and contiguous, but not connected, like empires of different races and language, which own no common jurisdiction, nor hold any intercourse with each other, except along a disputed and wavering frontier."

This method has attractions for very many, but is not without the gravest practical difficulties. It calls upon Reason to deal with natural facts and upon Faith to deal with spiritual facts. It sets these two powers of the soul over against each other. It proposes to parcel out the universe between them. It represents as an intrusion the entrance of either one of these faculties into the domain of the other. It thinks that for this world the wisest mode of procedure is to open one's eyes and keep one's mouth shut, while the proper attitude toward the facts of the other world is to shut one's eyes and open one's mouth and swallow whatever faith may place within it. The trouble with this scheme is that human nature is all of one piece. Reason and Faith are not two separate faculties like hearing and seeing, taking cognizance of different class of phenomena. Each one of them is the action of the whole personality. If the religious faculty be

nothing better than credulity plus hysterics, its deliverance will neither be responsible nor respected. All that any man really believes must be capable of being brought into some unity. The human soul must always experience a feeling of distress at any attempt to create within it a perpetual schism. Naturalism and orthodoxy are alike ill-advised when they insist upon this division of territory. What we call faith cannot be done without by a scientific investigator. What we call science cannot be done without by a believer. As Mr. Balfour again says "there are many persons, and they are increasing in number, who find it difficult or impossible to acquiesce in this division of the 'Whole' of knowledge into two or more unconnected fragments. Naturalism may be practically unsatisfactory, but at least the positive teaching of Naturalism has secured general assent, and it shakes every instinct for unity to be asked to patch and plaster this accepted creed with a number of propositions drawn from an entirely different source and on behalf of which no such common agreement can be claimed."

Nor has Professor Drummond's effort to confuse the natural and the spiritual worlds been more satisfactory. At first sight one is likely to be taken by the brilliancy of his argument. A more careful reading, however, usually leaves upon one the impression that he has reached his conclusions by means of the ambiguity of his definitions.

Here then is the situation: We move within the ring of naturalism. Its diameter has been enormously extended. In space its frontier has passed out of view beyond where old Böotes leads his leash or Sagittarius draws his bow in the South. In depth it penetrates below the deepest discovery of microscopic life. In height it overarches and essays to include within it the moral sense of man. But at every point where one approaches it with the desire to escape its boundaries, he finds himself confronted with the legend "No thoroughfare."

Is there any divine voice? Is mere interpenetrating it any divine energy? How shall one pass from the things which are seen to the things which are unseen? As we have observed, one cannot send Faith out in quest of discoveries while Reason stays at home and manages the affairs of the household. Where then shall we seek for the path of exit from Nature and of entrance into Religion? It would seem to be plain enough that if any such gate is discoverable it must be one which can be discerned from the side of Nature.

Of course there is a conception of divine revelation which is not disturbed by the present situation. It thinks of God as coming from the outside, of His own motion, and by arbitrary methods, breaking into the territory of the natural for the purpose of proclaiming His truth. The part of humanity has been and is to sit still and wait. God will rend the

heavens and come down. Men have but to hearken and do. This conception is eminently simple, but unfortunately the facts of nature and of revelation are against it. God has found men only when men have sought God. Revelation and discovery are reverse and obverse. If God is to reveal Himself He must be sought for. But where? And how? Along what path shall one travel, and what shall he accept as his guide?

The consensus of the religious world has practically agreed here. The wicket gate which leads out into the celestial country is Conscience.



## EVOLUTION AND GOD



## XII

### EVOLUTION AND GOD

TWENTY years ago my attention was for the first time seriously engaged with the doctrine of *Evolution*. Up to that time I had thought of it, in a general way, as being a proper theme for jesting. I had contributed my poor quota of jokes upon the Darwinians who "sought their ancestors in the zoölogical garden instead of the Garden of Eden." I had thought that a sufficient answer to the Theory, for practical men, was to be found in the fact that monkeys have tails and men do not.

But the rapid spread of the theory, and its sober entertainment by men of whose sanity, at any rate, I could not doubt, led me to look at it more seriously. For several years thereafter, I devoted what time I could spare from the duties of a parish priest in a country cure to the reading of every available book which had up to that time appeared in French or English bearing with any directness upon the subject. It seemed to me then, as it seems to me now, that whether true or false, the theory must have the closest possible relation to my religion.

When I first came to see what the theory involved, it seemed incompatible with my Christianity, or, in-

deed, with the honest possession of any religious faith whatever. My mind revolted against it. It appeared to me to be one of those strange mental crazes which Bishop Butler thought could now and then envelop a generation in the same way that a temporary insanity sometimes seizes upon an individual. The theory seemed to me to be unworthy of man and to leave no place for God. It was apparently without sufficient proof for its alleged facts. It appeared practically dangerous to persons and to society in that it transferred duty to a new, untried, and insecure basis. It seemed to dethrone all familiar and intrenched authority for conduct, and to leave those who sincerely accepted it free from the sanctions which I conceived to be necessary to insure righteousness.

Since then, like most intelligent men of our generation, I have read and thought much upon the same theme. Indeed, it would be impossible for any one whose life brings him in contact with the movements of thought, to be untouched by that idea which is now, and has been for more than twenty years, the dominant one.

The result has been that familiarity insensibly removed the horror which its strangeness caused me. Now, I have come to accept it as being in the main true; and I have found that it does not produce at all the effect upon my religious faith or morals, or those of others who receive it, which I apprehended. Such a reversal of judgment, made soberly and deliberately,

is something which a man must justify to himself. From a somewhat extensive and intimate acquaintance among clergymen, I have found that the number of those who have passed through a similar experience is very large. I have, therefore, made my "confession," because I know that in the main I speak for many besides myself.

I do not stop now to define the doctrine of Evolution. Any one who does not know what it is cannot be told in the compass of an essay. It is a theory of phenomenal existence deduced from the observed facts of existence. It has pushed itself forward by force of its sheer reasonableness, until it now dominates every department of secular science. I do not think it would be possible to find a single person who has been educated in the physical sciences within the last twenty years who is not an Evolutionist. Its scientific opponents died a royal death in Professor Agassiz—but they are dead. It has in a generation rendered obsolete whole libraries of apologetics. Bishop Butler's *postulates* are now the subject matter of "The New Evidences." It has produced a new Psychology, a new moral Philosophy, a new Anthropology, and is now working a revolution in *Theology*.

It cannot be otherwise. "Science" and "Religion" cannot be kept apart. Human nature is not constructed with bulkheads. The contents of one compartment flow into and color the contents of

every other one. The dreariest of all failures have been the attempts to "reconcile" "Religion" and "Science." Truth is one and needs no mediator. So much as I may possess of Religion and of Science are identical. I cannot distinguish between them even in thought. I think in a certain direction and for convenience' sake call it a religious act; I move in another direction and call the action moral; and in a third and call it scientific. In very truth the terms might be used interchangeably. If my religion be honest and spontaneous, it has, therefore, a scientific quality. That is to say, it is a procedure which receives the sanction of my whole being, and justifies itself in the same scientific way as does the truth that two and two make four. This identity is so complete that everything which changes or modifies my conception of the material universe changes also my conception of the spiritual universe, and *vice versa*. As thoughts of the two emerge, they mingle with and color one another at the very fountain-head before they flow into consciousness. I find, therefore, in myself, what occidental Christendom is finding in itself, that the contents of my religious belief have become penetrated and saturated by a thought of the material universe which came to me later in time than did the contents of my faith.

Theology and Anthropology are correlatives. One's thought of what God is is dependent upon what he thinks man and the universe to be. If either side be

changed without a corresponding modification in the other, the equation is thrown out of balance, and one experiences a strange sense of distress. Such a change has occurred in our time.

Whence and how came the things which we see? The heavens and the earth and the sea? The teeming life of plant and brute and man? Most of us were reared to think of them as the cunning work of a great Artificer, each of them fast set in that order or place or nature in which it was placed at that time a few thousand years ago when "Creation" was ended. We unconsciously thought of the Creator as independent of his creation. We thought of creation as complete. Things were, as to their essential natures, such as they had been at the beginning; and such they would remain until the great Builder should reappear as the great Destroyer. We have found that the facts are not thus. The universe of to-day is not that of yesterday, the universe of to-morrow will not be that of to-day. All things are moving, changing, transforming themselves. When Mr. Darwin showed that in the animate world species were not fixed and final, but fluid and plastic, he destroyed at a stroke the old conception of creation. If his reading of the facts be true, we are now in the midst of the creative process. The movement which we see, and of which we are a part is not different in kind from that "creation" which we had fancied ended long ago. The *mechanical* notion of the universe and

of God's relation to it is rapidly disappearing. The terms which were in use a generation ago are no longer heard. Doctor Paley's "watch" has been laid away. People no longer speak of "mechanism" and "adaptation" and "design." They speak of "organism" and "development" and "growth" and evolution. The way of thinking about nature has changed.

At this point I wish to say that I am intentionally avoiding the technical terms and phrases of philosophy and metaphysics. My purpose is to set forth the changes which Evolution has caused in the *common thought* about God and religion, and not the changes in those theories with which philosophies deal. The two things are not the same. There may be twenty theories about God, held by different philosophers in the same community, at the same time. But the community itself has a notion of its own which may be different from any or all of them.

Western Christendom, since Augustine's time, has had its own notions about God and Nature, both of which notions it accepted at his hands, not because they were true, but because they were easily presentable in thought. Its theology, its anthropology, and its science have been until lately adjusted to one another. The theory of evolution has destroyed the adjustment. The current notions about God and the new thought about nature cannot get on together.

According to the average man, the points at which



God and nature touch each other are Creation, Revelation, Incarnation, Miracles, and Judgment. Besides this there is a shadowy thought of a Divine superintendence of affairs called Providence; but this is usually conceived of in such a vague and contradictory way, that the notion will not yield up its contents to analysis. Now, these terms do not connote the same things to an Evolutionist that they do to an immediate Creationist. I have already quoted Mr. John Fiske's confession of his own youthful conception of God as a celestial timekeeper noting in a volume all a boy's deeds.

I am quite aware that it may be said that the youthful philosopher's idea of God was a better and safer one than the one for which he exchanged it in his mature years. I will not quarrel with that. It may be so, conceivably. But I wish to point out that the child of an Evolutionist, belonging to a generation, and reared in a community where the new thought of nature and man prevails, could no more present to himself thus his idea of God than he could present Him under the figure of the Buddha or Baal. That way of thinking which we term evolution has changed all this. It dominates contemporary literature. It has possession of the centres of thought. It is at home in the university. It is in the school-books which our children use. It colors popular speech. It has recorded itself permanently in the structure of the human mind. The notion of the transcendental God,

the great Artificer, the great Wonder-worker, the great Judge, which has obtained in Western Christendom for fourteen hundred years, can no longer hold its place. Science has escorted this simulacrum of a Deity to the frontiers of his universe, and, with many expressions of consideration, give him his *cong e*.

That what I say is a true statement of the situation, I bring three representative witnesses to testify. First, the secularist and agnostic, Mr. Samuel Laing:

“There are two theories of the universe which are in direct conflict: the one that it was created and is upheld by miracles—that is, by a succession of secondary supernatural interferences by a Being who is a magnified man, acting from motives which, however transcendental, are essentially human; the other that it is the result of Evolution acting by natural laws on a basis of the Unknowable. Both theories cannot be true.”

The *second* witness is Professor Le Conte, the devout Christian and distinguished man of science:

“If the sustentation of the universe by the law of gravitation does not disturb our belief in God as the sustainer of the universe, there is no reason why the origin of the universe by the law of Evolution should disturb our faith in God as the Creator of the universe. . . . But it is evident that a yielding here implies not a mere shifting of line, but a change of base; not a readjustment of details, but a *reconstruction* of Christian *theology*. This, I believe, is indeed

necessary. From the point of view of Science some very fundamental changes in traditional views are already plain. Of these the most fundamental are our ideas concerning God, Nature, and Man, and their relations to one another."

The *third* witness is that group of English clergy who have brought their testimonies together in that volume called "Lux Mundi," under the editorship of Dr. Gore, Principal of Pusey House, Oxford:

"God's immanence in nature, the 'higher pantheism,' which is a truth essential to true religion as it is to true philosophy, had fallen into the background. Slowly but surely the [opposite] theory of the world has been undermined. The one absolutely impossible conception of God in the present day is that which represents Him as an occasional visitor. Science has pushed [that] God farther and farther away, and at the moment when it seemed as if He would be thrust out altogether, Darwinism appeared, and under the disguise of a foe did the work of a friend. It has conferred upon Religion an inestimable benefit by showing us that we must choose between two alternatives. Either God is everywhere present in nature or He is nowhere. We must return to the Christian view of direct Divine agency, the immanence of Divine power in Nature from end to end, or we must banish Him altogether. It seems as if in the providence of God the mission of modern science is to bring home to us [this conception of God]. We are not surprised,

therefore, that one who, like Professor Fiske, holds that 'the infinite and eternal Power that is manifested in every pulsation of the universe is none other than the living God' should instinctively feel his kinship with Athanasius."

How, then, will the Evolutionist conceive of God and His relation to Nature? I reply that, in the first place, his notions will not be nearly so clearly cut, sharply defined, and easily presentable in thought as those which have been current. It will be charged against them that they are vague, elusive, and in places contradictory. And the charge will be true. But to it two retorts are available. First, that this is true also of Job and Isaiah, of St. Paul and St. John the Divine; and the second is that it may be better to conceive faultily of a true God than to conceive accurately of a false one.

The Evolutionist believes that he sees things in the very act of becoming. They are being transformed before his very eyes. He has discovered that the physical forces which he sees at work are transmutable, and are, therefore, one. He expects that the vital and psychical forces which he sees to be also at work will be found ultimately to be identical with them. He is not able to distinguish between "natural" and "supernatural." There is one energy and only one. It manifests itself in the attraction of gravitation; as vital force it holds organized matter together in living things; it "wells up in ourselves in

the form of consciousness." It enfolds and interpenetrates them all, and in it all things live and move and have their coherence. It is *Wisdom*, for it is the subjective side of what we see objectively as design; it is *Righteousness*, for it harmonizes with moral consciousness; it is *Goodness*, for it is felt whenever the sense of sonship is awakened with its attendant affection.

"But," it is asked, "is this eternal, all-embracing, all-penetrating Energy a *Person*? Can it say *I*?" To this I answer, Yes and No. If men would stop for a moment to examine what they mean by the sort of "personality" which they usually predicate of God, they would not use the term as glibly as they often do. By personality they mean the power to distinguish in self-consciousness between the subject who thinks and other existences which have an independent subsistence. That idea of "personality" attributed to God means Dualism. The Evolutionist conceives differently of God. He thinks that all things are *one* in Him. When He thinks, wills, feels, the whole universe is involved in the act both as subject and object.

The human brain is a highly organized mass of matter in a certain condition called living. Associated with it is thought, will, emotion. The two things manifest themselves concomitantly. As thought is to the human brain, so is God to the universe. Symmetrical and orderly movement in the molecules of the brain is at once the sign and the con-

sequence of thought. The devout evolutionist sees in the infinitely complex but harmonious movement of the universe the sign of the indwelling God. He cannot think of God coming into the universe *from without* to create, to regulate, to deliver. He does not ask, Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Him down? for he knows that He is always here. He reverently waits and watches to see the Divine ideas express themselves in terms of life and matter. He believes that the sum total of things as it exists at any one moment is the best expression of God's thought at that moment possible; but that it must give place to the next one which speaks still more perfectly. He does not sharply distinguish between the Revelation which is accomplished by one means and that accomplished by another, calling the one Divine and the other Natural. He sees development both in the book of grace and the book of nature. Both of them uncover God "multifariously and fragmentarily" as men become able to see. He waits with confident expectation the "fullness of time" for the Perfect Man, and is not surprised to find that He and God are one. He sees a Divine quality not only in all perfect things completed, but in the slow processes by which they reach completeness. He is not surprised at the crude religion and faulty morals of Patriarchs, and is not perplexed in the presence of goodness in the pagan world. He agrees with Justin Martyr, as quoted approvingly by those devout

Evolutionists, the authors of "Lux Mundi," that "those who lived under the guidance of Eternal Reason, as Socrates, Heracleitus, and such like, are Christians, even though they were reckoned to be atheists in their day." He does not believe that the "Kingdom of Heaven cometh with observation." He does not think it true to say, "Lo, here is Christ, or lo, there!" He believes that God manifest in the flesh has taken up into Himself all things; that the whole phenomenal universe together and in its myriad parts is moving, changing, transforming itself, and recombining, not blindly and without a goal, but by orderly methods, which it is the function of science to discover and formulate, toward that harmonious equilibrium of spiritual and natural harmony for which no phrase stands so fittingly as that of the Master, "The Kingdom of God."

Now, I am painfully alive to the fact that this whole way of thinking and speaking seems to many to be vague, elusive, and unsafe. It is beyond all comparison easier to think of the world as created at a definite moment of time so many centuries ago, by the hand of a God who appeared out of the immensity to do that task; that He then fashioned cunningly all living things in genus and species as they are now; that ~~man rebelled against Him at once, and were all abandoned by Him to their fate, except a certain few whom He looked down upon from above and gathered out from their fellows into a commonwealth with~~

which alone He held relations; that, at a definite point centuries thereafter, arbitrarily chosen, He reappeared to select other some, absolutely a great multitude, whom no man can number, but relatively an insignificant number from the teeming myriads of men; that, with these exceptions, a rebellious and blighted world is abandoned by its Maker to its own purposeless confusion, waiting for its end to be accomplished in one dread catastrophe.

This conception of God and the world is simple, portable, always available for the practical needs of a teacher or exhorter, easy to state and easy to receive. It is the theology of the Salvation Army. It obtains commonly among Roman Catholics and Methodists. It is what newspaper writers have vaguely in mind when they are moved to deliver themselves on questions of theology. It was the theology held in common by Jonathan Edwards, and Luther, and the doctors of Trent, and Calvin, and Thomas Aquinas, and Augustine. It *may* be the true one; but I do not think so. It was not the theology of that sweet soul, Pelagius, or Origen, or Justin Martyr, or Clement, or Paul, or John; nor, have I so learned Christ.

Says the *Popular Science Monthly*: "Two things are evident, first, that the traditional religion has lost its hold on most scientifically educated men; and, second, that such minds will not be content without some religion." Such are the great mass of the minds



with which we have to do. What shall we say to them of God?

Bishop Huntington thus quaintly says, or sings:

“The Parish Priest  
Of austerity  
Climbed up a high church steeple,  
To be nearer God,  
So that he might hand  
His word down to His people.

“And in sermon script  
He daily wrote  
What he thought was sent from heaven,  
And he dropped this down  
On the people’s heads  
Two times one day in seven.

“In his age God said:  
‘Come down and die;’  
And he cried out from the steeple,  
‘Where art thou, Lord?’  
And the Lord replied,  
‘Down here among my people.’”



**GOD MANIFEST**



### XIII

#### GOD MANIFEST

I SUPPOSE that all intelligent men do, in a way, believe in God. It is difficult to see how phenomena can be thought of at all without having at least in the background of one's mind the consciousness of some sort of existence which is not phenomenal. Avoiding the language of metaphysics, I do not see how one can observe reasonableness in the sequence of things without tacitly assuming a Reason which lies behind things, and who is in some way the cause of things. In a word, and speaking for myself alone, I find it impossible to believe in a heaven and an earth without believing in a Creator of the heavens and the earth. I know that some men are capable of doing so, but I am not. Of course I do not conceive of Him as having completed His creation at some time in the past and from the outside. Creation and Providence seem to me to be the same thing. Or, to speak more accurately, Creation, so far as one can see has been in progress, and is in progress, and will be eternally. Chance and progress, integration and disintegration and reintegration, even in the natural universe is "eternal." At least it is so to all practical purposes. For the phrase "eternal" is but a symbol, like the

Algebraic. One thinks the series of changes backward or forward to the point where his mind falters and stops. What lies beyond he labels with the symbol of an unknown quantity and calls it "eternal." No two men mean the same thing by the word. Much vain disputation would have been saved both in Philosophy and Theology if men had always borne this simple fact in mind. They have wrangled over the questions as to whether matter is eternal, or whether future reward or penalty shall be eternal, forgetting that *ex vi termini* they have not been able to define eternal.

It is not until we reach this point that my distinctively Christian belief begins. So far I only believe in God because I find my mind so constituted that it refuses to rest upon the universe as a finality.

But thus far, and by these methods we have not reached the Christian God. That there is something behind the phenomena which we see, seems to be an almost unanimous conviction. The mind refuses to rest upon the universe as a finality. I cannot think of phenomena without passing on to think of a substance, a *sub-stans* as a background for the things which are seen. I think it must be intelligent because I shrink from the thought of intellectual confusion at the inmost heart of things. I think it is good, partly because I see that evil seems to have within it a quality which tends to destroy itself, but chiefly because the most imperative and categorical of all my

faculties seem to declare it. I "ought" is what I owe. But owe to what? to whom? The moral sense is the rift in the encircling wall of Nature through which noble souls have always gone out in confidence to seek God. From Isaiah and Epictetus to Carlyle and Amiel the burden of the prophet and the faith of the righteous man has always been that there is "a power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness." But is this the last word?

"I falter where I firmly trod,  
 And falling with my weight of cares  
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
 That slope through darkness up to God,

"I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
 And gather dust and chaff, and call  
 To what I blindly feel is Lord of All,  
 And faintly trust the larger hope."

Is this all? Natural science and secular philosophy sadly answer, yes. Thirty-six years ago in the first volume of his *magnum opus* their fittest spokesman declared, "The Power which the Universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable."<sup>1</sup> The same depressing conclusion is reaffirmed in the final volume issued yesterday.<sup>2</sup>

At this point we are arrested by the voice of Jesus Christ offering to uncover the eternal secret of God. Why should we heed Him rather than another?

<sup>1</sup>Herbert Spencer : Forst Principles.

<sup>2</sup>Synthetic Philosophy, Vol. iii.

This is the parting of the ways. Multitudes of intelligent men, not ignorant of the course of human thought, have parted company with their scientific friends, and hearken unto Christ. Two men are in the same laboratory, the same school, the same business, equally familiar with the world's knowledge. The one sees in Christ the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The other sees in Him but the noblest of the world's dreamers.

But why should I heed Jesus Christ rather than another man upon such a matter? And the answer I give myself is something like this:

I believe in Jesus Christ to begin with, because He has been able to get Himself so widely believed in. I find Him to be at this moment the most striking personality in the world. More men do actually listen to Him when He speaks about God than to any other. He has held ground and steadily gained ground through so many centuries; His teaching has evidently given satisfaction and rest to so many; and among these have been included such numbers of those who bear every mark of seekers after the truth, that I must needs join myself to them, at least to listen. I lay emphasis here upon the distinctness of His present personality. I am not concerned yet with the agencies by which I am introduced to Him. The record of His life in the gospels may be ever so inaccurate. His early disciples may have misapprehended Him greatly. The Church may be built around a caricature of His



teachings. All this does not yet affect the case. We may think lightly of all such discrepancies if all we wish for is an open path to the mind of Christ. Only the craving for an explicit and final "authority" makes them serious. The path is open enough. There is a lifelikeness about His figure as it is now conceived by the world which seems to me to be unmistakable. There is a verisimilitude and coherence in His teaching which is sufficient to vindicate its historical accuracy. When I listen I am convinced that "never man spake like this man" upon those subjects with which He concerns Himself. I am arrested first by what He says; and then by the effect of His teaching upon His own life and destiny.

He begins by saying, "I am the Son of Man"—an oriental form of speech intimating his preëminent possession of those qualities which belong to humanity. As one of his contemporaries would have said when wishing to assert his love of peace, "I am the Son of peace;" or another vaunting his valor would say, "I am the son of war," so he at the very beginning challenges attention to the essential nature of Man. He declares that when the consciousness of humanity is carried to the ultimate power it becomes conscious of Divinity. He applies to himself the two phrases Son of Man and Son of God as interchangeable. He appeals directly to human consciousness as the witness of God's essential fatherhood. He was the first to take his stand upon this fundamental rock. He stood

upon it, and allowed all contradictory forces to break themselves against him. He said in effect :

“One is your father, even God. It is not His will that a hair of your head should be lost. You may trust Him absolutely, not only to do wisely by you, but to do lovingly by you. The forces of the universe are dominated by good will. The essential nature of God is not might, nor wisdom, but love. God *is* love. This is the fundamental fact of existence and always has been. Even in eternity God was moved by that imperious instinct of propagation whereby love expresses itself among all living things. God is from eternity, father and son. Ye are His offspring. The universe is the Father’s child. Wherever any atom of it rises into self-consciousness it becomes aware of its kinship with God. This is its most primal instinct. Whenever it comes to itself it says, ‘I will arise and go to my Father.’”

Jesus claims a unique and exceptional clearness of vision for Himself here. He asserts that men are not alive to what is the fundamental fact concerning themselves, their descent from God. He does see it distinctly, it is the fact which governs His conduct. He asserts that He discerns it because He is the “man most man.” At this point arises the inquiry, how did He come to see that which other men do not see, or see so dimly? Was it in virtue of any peculiar quality or gift belonging to Him which is wanting in other men? I defer for the present the attempt to answer this question

farther than to call attention to the uncompromising way in which He called upon all to see and act upon the fact exactly as He saw and acted upon it.

He roundly asserted to men and women at all stages of moral and intellectual acuteness or obtuseness,—“Ye are the children of your Father who is in heaven; His dominant quality is paternal affection; this affection wraps you round about and can no more be detached from you than can a mother’s love from a sucking child; if you will only open your eyes you will see that this is true; if you will act upon it practically you will discover that even those forces which bring you into distress bend to it and are to be interpreted by it. I do so.”

From this ground of truth He goes on to announce a practical corollary,—“If ye are all children of one father ye are therefore brethren of one another. Then you must act accordingly.”

Men have been accustomed to act upon the theory that beyond certain very narrow limits, they cannot trust their fortunes to the operation of the sense of humaneness, that is of mutual kinship, with its corresponding affection. They have looked upon the mass of men as strangers from whom little or nothing of good was to be expected. Each has been habitually on the alert to guard himself and his own interests, to protect those by resenting all attack, and if need be by destroying the aggressor. He says, “In My kingdom which is the régime of God men will not act so. If

any man love father or mother or sister or brother more than Me he is not worthy of Me. If any man take up a sword, he shall perish by the sword."

Now, it is abundantly evident to thoughtful men that this is true. Even wise men do not fight. Any scheme of life which revolves about the principle of selfishness is self-destructive. It moves in a vicious circle from which it never can escape. Nature red in tooth and claw with ravin is the standing parable of its truth. If a strong man armed keep his house, the strength of his fortification challenges the strength and resources of the robber. If a nation build up an armament against another nation, it is answered by a corresponding armament. Each one must of necessity add force to force in the titanic rivalry until the burden of the armor become crushing. Then it must fight for the opportunity to disarm. When, finally, one stands supreme, overlooking its shattered rivals, its very attitude evokes enemies, and again begins the horrible cycle. But men while seeing this have thought that it was just one of the world's conditions which must be accepted and within whose bloody frontier they must pass their existence either in actual or possible violence. Jesus says,—“You must disarm without waiting for your neighbor to lay down his weapons. Take the attitude of a little child who ventures into the arena with a smile. At first you may be trampled upon or hurled violently out of the way with damage to yourself, for the lust of blood is strong upon the

gladiators and they are urged upon one another by the world's clamor. But do not fear. Not a hair of your head shall be wasted. If you are smitten on the one cheek turn the other; if your brother curse you bless him; if he take your coat offer him your cloak; only by acting so can you uncover and set in play that force which in the long run is the only potent one to which your fortunes may be safely tied, the power of love."

Now, it is obvious that all this is true, and also that the world is slowly coming to see that it is true and to act upon it. The slow but steady gentling of manners is but the slow conquest of Jesus' theory of life over its rival theory.

But He does not shut His eyes to the immediate consequence of this mode of life to those who adopt it. It will bring a cross. Indeed, He calls His theory the way of the cross. This, in His mind, is that "doctrine of the cross" which His followers, having their minds filled with the Hebrew and Pagan ideas upon which they had been reared, quickly transformed into the theory of "Expiation." He proposed not to bear the cross for the people, but that they should each take up his own cross and follow in His steps. But He always declares that that way life lies, and death the other way.

I have stated in the last paragraph what seems to me to be the points which give the elements of the orbit of Jesus' teaching in that portion which touches

upon human living. These are, the paternal love of God; the kinship of men; and the Doctrine of the Cross. Are they the dicta of a man? or of a God? or of a God-man? This last alternative has long been a phrase to conjure by. Blind orthodoxy has mumbled it as the pagan, suckled in a creed outgrown, mutters his Ram! Ram! Ram! But on the other hand it has served wise and holy men as the fittest short term they could apply to Jesus Christ. It is a condensation of the phrases by which He habitually describes Himself, Son of God and Son of Man. These terms upon His lips seem to be the expression of a complex experience in His own consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

When His sense of being as a man is most intense He speaks with the most profound sense of Divinity. Yet there is clearly no trace or suggestion of mental disturbance. One has only to listen to His serene self-contained lucid speech to feel that "this madness would gambol from." What will account for this strange sense of oneness with God? There is nothing in it which resembles the "God-intoxication" of the oriental enthusiast. Nor is there anything which calls to mind Socrates' familiar dæmon. While His consciousness was complex it was clearly single. What-

<sup>1</sup> But little study seems to have been given to the psychology of Jesus. So far as I am aware but one extant book deals with the peculiar psychological processes in Him which are indicated by His discourses, replies and actions, and this book not successfully.

See Bernard; *Mental Characteristics of Jesus*. Also Canon Gore; *Dissertations*.

ever its component elements may have been they were perfectly fused in a single personality.<sup>1</sup> Whenever He thought, moved or acted, one feels that it was the action of the whole being. But it is equally clear that He claimed an essential Divine quality for His words and person which has no parallel among men. The consensus of human judgment has dismissed as a madman or as a blasphemer every other man who has so much as intimated a similar claim. It is very noteworthy that both these explanations of His character were given during His life; and that they were both rejected by a community which knew Him well and was hostile to Him. His own explanation of His God-consciousness would seem to be plain enough, whether or not it be accepted as true to the facts of the case. He asserts with much iteration that it was due to His mode of living; and that it was open to any other who chose to follow Him. He first uncovered and then resolutely followed that moral energy in Himself which He asserted to be pre-potent, that motive which expresses itself in thought as an absolute confidence in God's fatherliness, and in action by living in love with one's fellows. His outward life would seem to be but the exemplification of the fortunes of one who has achieved such an inward triumph. The force of things as they are lays upon such a one a cross; it

<sup>1</sup> I need hardly point out that the term "personal" as used in speaking of the Trinity, for example, has little in common with the term "personal" as used in common speech.

leads him to death; but cannot break the continuity of his existence through and after death, for the reason that the force to which he has adjusted himself is more persistent and more potent than the environment which contains him.

Here many notions very common among Christian folk must be definitely abandoned. To think of Him as a self-conscious personality "coming" to this outlying world from the seat of God's eternal power remote in space, and incarnating Himself in the form of man with an independent self-conscious human soul, is in fact not to think at all. To accept such a piece of mental imagery and call it a "mystery" is unworthy. Men are prone to sit down at the border of what they choose to call holy ground under the pretense of taking off their shoes when their real motive is intellectual indolence. There is a candor and forthrightness about the New Testament Scriptures which invites to an examination not only of what Jesus is, but of how He came to be what He is.

Let one in this reverent and fearless mood open the gospels and he will find himself at home. He will be met at the threshold with the challenge Behold the Man! If he look upon Him long enough, steadfastly enough, and with sufficiently clear sight he will be likely to cry, "My Lord, and my God!"

He was a man, a Hebrew, a Nazarene, born A. U. C. about 746. His roots were in the crumbling generations. He was a rod of the stem of Jesse. Heredity



and environment wrought in and upon Him as well as another. Of His early life absolutely nothing is known. Of His youth a single incident is told which may very well have happened, or may equally well have been a pious imagining thrown backward upon His early life from later years by those who loved His memory. He comes upon the stage as a man in mature life, in response to the summons of a prophet who sternly preached the gospel of Repentance. To this preaching He at first responds, but after a little pronounces it to be inadequate. He lays His axe to the root of the tree. He substitutes for John's gospel the gospel of the New Life. Repentance may indeed rid the soul of parlous stuff, but it will give no guarantee of future purity. It opens no spring of spiritual life. It is a mechanical process of cleansing. What is needed is a vital process of growth. The prophet who had made experiment of his own medicament was the first to acknowledge this. He foretells the decadence of his own gospel and the increase of the new one. And Jesus declares that great as is the Prophet of Repentance the least in the kingdom of life is greater than he.

That Jesus had slowly and painfully wrought out His spiritual discovery is plain. He had in the new life achieved consciousness of His divinity and recognized the secret voice of God saying, "Thou art My well-beloved Son; this day have I begotten Thee." But He held it yet unstably and in spiritual tumult.

It must be tested before He could definitely entrust His fortunes to it. Nothing could be more psychologically accurate than the story of the Temptation in the desert. The firstborn as well as all his brethren must face temptation solitary. In the secret place of his innermost life he must make trial of his new felt divinity. Will he satisfy his hunger for bread or his hunger for righteousness? Will he commit his destiny to those forces which build up the kingdom of the world and the glory of them? Or will he serve the eternal force which stirs within him? Will he cast himself down from the spiritual elevation where he is, trusting that somehow God will bring his life to a right issue? The threefold aspect of His Temptation is not exhaustive but it is typical. It attacked His slowly achieved but distinct consciousness of His divine nature. From that time on His life was a constant temptation. His theory of living was tested by the reactions upon it of social life, of religious institutions, of political arrangements. John, preaching the gospel of Repentance, could withdraw from all these and fight his barren battle as well in the wilderness as elsewhere. Jesus' Way could only be tested by living, and is possible only in the midst of life. After His final storm of doubtfulness and hesitation had subsided He walked serenely into the market-place, the synagogue, the home, the firstborn of a new race, and, in consequence, the firstborn of the sons of God. Trusting Himself to the heavenly arms which He believed

to be about Him, He appealed unhesitatingly to the good will of men. The result of His experiment is recorded in the gospels. At once He called for followers. The condition which He exacted was that each of them should discover within himself the same confidence in God's essential fatherliness, and the same inexpugnable good will to men which was in Himself. The Sermon on the Mount was His address to the little forlorn hope. Some of them it frightened. They went backward and walked no more with Him. The author of *Ecce Homo* has pointed out with transcendent subtilty and truth the way in which His "Call" acted as a winnowing fan in His hand. It winnowed ruthlessly. He was seeking for seed from which should spring a new race of men, and would have none except such as possessed the principle of life in it. That He selected wisely, the issue has shown, for each little one has become a thousand. But it was clear to Him from the first that the conditions of life were such that, until they should be changed, it would be impossible for any one acting as He proposed to retain his life.

He called his working theory of life by the short word "Faith." Hardly any word in human speech has since been so misused. What He meant by it is clear. He meant that act of the will by which one determines to live by the rule of love and trust. Whoever wills so possesses Faith in proportion to the strenuousness of his determination. "Believing in Him" meant the moral conviction that His "Way" was a right and prac-

ticable way. The word in religious speech has almost entirely lost its original connotation. It has come to be practically synonymous with credulity in one connection, and with religious emotion in another. One can see even in the later Epistles, especially those of St. Paul, the beginning of this change of use. With Jesus, "believing" simply meant the willingness to adventure in this world upon a mode of life under the domination of divine and human love. The difficulty and painfulness of such a life are so great that one will only adopt it under the light of a moral illumination equivalent to being born again. He who has achieved it has, in Jesus' phrase, "come to himself." That is, he has discovered what is the essential and constant quality in his own nature.

The outcome of this life of faith in the case of Jesus is well known. His way was in the face of all accepted manners. He exasperated alike the moralist, the ecclesiastic, and the conventionally religious man, the sociologist and the magistrate. If He was right they were wrong. If His kingdom were to prevail theirs must needs perish. The world was not without a morality. It had a method of conduct evolved from the experience of the race, stated in terms of jurisprudence, sustained by immemorial custom, fortified by religious observance and ecclesiastical ritual. The representatives of every one of these turned upon Him. He did not attack them or propose any reform for them. He bore Himself toward them all much as

a man would bear himself toward the fantastic arrangements of a village of lunatics in which he found himself living. Actions which seemed to them natural and therefore bounden, He declined altogether to perform. His notion of nature was not theirs. Conduct which seemed to them unnatural and impracticable He demanded and showed. With an amazing appearance of simplicity He assured them that their laws were unrighteous, their ritual irreligious, their ethics immoral, their church a synagogue of satan. He tested all men and all institutions by their actual effect upon the lives of men. He pronounced them and theirs ungodly because He found them to be inhuman. The Church existed for its own aggrandizement. The State had no ruth. The rich had no bowels of compassion. He turned away from them all in a sort of divine rage, after heaping maledictions upon them which they never forgave. He discovered that they were all so committed to their mode of living that there was no hope of their accepting His mode. Then He turned to the people, the common people, the average man, who then as always simply accepts existing conditions of life without deliberately giving bonds to them. These were sufficiently free to adopt His life of Faith if they chose. At first they heard Him gladly. His display of the beatitudes which lay far along in the path to which He invited them was alluring. But when they confronted the Cross which those must needs carry who trod that path, they fell

away. Only a few, whose natures were remotely akin to His own walked with Him. Evil and selfish men shrank from Him as driven by a magnetic repulsion. Among all His followers was not one who would not antecedently have been pronounced good. Even the Magdalene was already sick of her sin into which she had been drawn by the excess of her love. It could not be said of her,—“Thy sin’s not accidental ; ’tis a trade.” The malefactor who hung upon the neighboring cross was a misguided patriot, brave and devoted enough to have struck a blow in insurrection against that tyranny which his countrymen contented themselves with safely cursing. He drew to Him the pure, the tender, the generous, the brave, the spiritually minded. They who had ears to hear heard. For the rest, having ears they heard not, and seeing they did not understand.

He bade those who chose to share His life of Faith become in every particular like Himself. When they were struck with the sight of His moral exaltation, He bade them surpass the moral point at which He was, and to be perfect even as their Father in heaven is perfect. When they marvelled at some of His mighty works he assured them that it was possible for them to do even greater works than these. At every point of His own development He paused to assure His hesitating disciples that the way was as open for them as for Him, and to bid them “follow Me.” He declares Himself to be the manifestation of God in

man. The burden of His work and life is that if a man will unhesitatingly follow the divine nature which is in him he will come into his own natural inheritance of powers undreamed of and amazing.

That He found Himself able to perform "many mighty works" seems unquestionable. It is possible, to be sure, to disentangle the person of Jesus from the whole "miraculous" setting in which the gospels frame Him. Unitarianism and *soi disant* "Liberal Christianity" has essayed the task to do so. They pique themselves somewhat upon their success. But the figure thus separated out, and to which they point saying *Ecce Homo*, is so wan, pallid, vague and unsubstantial that it arouses in the passer-by but a languid interest. It is easier, upon the whole, to admit the fact of His strange works than it is to account for the historical Christ without them. It may well be that some "signs" are attributed to Him in the gospel record which He did not do; and that some marvellous things which He did do have perished from memory. Indeed, this would seem to be the testimony of the gospels themselves. But that He possessed and exercised occult powers appears true. And it seems equally true that in varying degree, His disciples did the like. It is interesting, but not obligatory, to examine and come to a definite belief concerning this one or that among His miracles. The essential thing is to find some intelligible *rationale* of His seemingly unique powers.

Unthinking traditionalism here looks upon Jesus as God masquerading in human guise. God is for it the antithesis of "Nature." Wherever He appears in nature a circumference of disturbance surrounds him. Natural processes are interrupted, set aside, or turned backward at will. If He appear in the "person"<sup>1</sup> of a man, it is still not a man but God who acts. But this conception empties Jesus' nature of all significance and meaning. It was not His explanation of His power, nor does the record of His mighty deeds fit this conception. He speaks and acts constantly as though He conceived what we call "supernatural" powers to be intrinsically natural to any man who would live as He lived. When He walks upon the water He chides His friend Peter for sinking. When the disciples confessed their inability to heal a lunatic, He upbraided them as a faithless and perverse lot. He asserts in general that "all things are possible to them that believe." If in any instance a disciple makes assay of his "supernatural" power and fails, Jesus ascribes the failure to lack of "Faith." Let us now recur to His definition of Faith. We will see that it has nothing in common with that credulity which is content to stupidly walk blindfold; nor with that imaginary act of the will by which it offers to coerce the understanding into accepting as true that at which the understanding rebels. It denotes *a working theory of life*. It is the fact of submitting one's self unreservedly to

<sup>1</sup> Latin *persona*, *i. e.*, a mask.



the goodness of God, and living in inexpugnable love for one's fellows. Such a manner of life, He teaches, will, if persevered in, uncover in the individual adopting it potentialities which are intrinsically "natural" to men, but which seem "supernatural" to the majority because their mode of life has no place in it for their exercise. It is a peculiarly Christian faculty only, as He asserts in varied phrase, because Christians alone are really *humane*; and belongs to Him in completeness because He is preëminently the Son of Man. It is an appanage of the Christian mode of living. Even John the Baptist "did no signs." John was not a Christian. He was the consummate fruit of the world's mode of living. His Baptism of Repentance did, and can, wash the soul of many foul spots. But the Christian life is the reopening of clogged fountains in the essential nature of man.

Were the miracles of Jesus the works of God? or of a man? I reply, his assumption is that they were of God *because* they were the natural expression of what He asserts to be the divine quality inherent in man. In Him, this divine faculty had become self-conscious, and by so doing had come to recognize its oneness with the God-father. For this reason He found it natural for Him to think and act in such ways as we are accustomed to think natural only to God.

His powers were not absolute or without limit. They found the frontier of their exercise at the limit of human capacity. There were places and occasions

where "He could not do many mighty works." The limits which concluded His knowledge concluded His power. Of a certain thing He said that "no man knoweth it, not even the Son, but the Father." In a word, from a human child He increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with man and God until He touched the circumference of human capacity, and "manifested" all of God which Humanity is capable of expressing. What more could He? He is, *for men*, the perfect expression of God. He manifests all of God that man can contain, or can see. His contention is that He reaches that divine fullness of life by carrying to its ultimate the essential nature and faculty of man. He bids men follow Him. St. Paul sees "the measure and stature of a perfect man in Christ." He is the "firstborn among many brethren." By the will of a man He overcame the obstacles to the development of a man, and having done so discovered that He was the Son of God. Then He turns to His brethren and bids them come to themselves, and by so doing discover their common kinship with God.

Thus He becomes to us Jesus, the Christ, the anointed one, His only Son, our Lord.

**THE DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS**



## XIV

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS

IT is because it is of the essential nature of God to bear the Cross that men assume it whenever they awake to their own divineness. It is not easy to account for the strange reluctance to associate the idea of suffering with God. More sober thought would show that it must perforce be the constant fact and habit of his existence. His life must be an eternal pang as well as an eternal ecstasy. Suffering is the correlative and background of love for any inferior by any superior personality. If the lover love more than the loved he must suffer in the loving. If the lover be wiser than the loved he must bear solicitude and pain for the ignorance of the loved. If he be better than the object of his affection he must carry the heavy load of sorrow for the frailties of the loved. Pain is the sad necessity of parentage. At such time as the sons of God shouted together for joy their Father's burden began. Creation involves suffering for God. The father sitting in his house and aware moment by moment of the doing of his prodigal child must bear in his heart the aching agony of a yearning love which is compelled to bide the time of its fruition. The whole creation groaning and travailing in pain to-

gether must fling the shadow of its agony across the face of the All-Father. "Crucified from the foundation of the world" is not a phrase coined in the busy idleness of philosophy, but the scientific statement of an eternal fact. It is the concomitant of Creation in the experience of God. Now it has been said above, creation is to all practical purposes eternal. That is to say, for all human uses thought itself is conditioned upon phenomena. Metaphysics may fancy that it can conceive of God existing in serene absoluteness before the universe was, or as independent upon all phenomena. But if the content of such fancy be carefully examined it will be found to be empty. It will be found to contain symbols and not realities. God, for us, is expressed in terms of Creation. There are no other terms, or, to speak more accurately, we cannot affirm or deny that there are any other terms. Jesus' assertion is that Creation and the Cross flow simultaneously out of the essential quality of God which is Love. St. Paul intimates that they will ultimately be absorbed together "when the Son also Himself shall be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all." Between these two *termini* the whole drama of existence is concluded. Within this span is to be sought, if anywhere, the nature of God and the destiny of man. Jesus' doctrine of the Cross is therefore identical with His doctrine of God. He bears His cross, and bids men observe Him the while, declaring that he that hath seen Him hath

seen the Father. For fatherhood and pain, love and cross-bearing are bound up together. The crowning fact of His life stands as the convenient expression for the whole of it. His nativity, baptism, fasting and temptation, His agony and bloody sweat, His cross and passion are all suffrages in the litany of His life. "The Cross" is the portable formula for their totality. In this supreme fact He claims to be the manifestation of the Father. He declares, in effect, that suffering is the penalty of loving; that it is the expression of loving; that it is the weapon of love; that by it love conquers; that this is true for men because it is true of God, and because men share the nature of God being His offspring. While He lived, a few who were near to Him believed Him. But even their belief seems to have been produced more by the contagiousness of His personality than by a clear apprehension of His Truth. Those in the wider circle who gathered about Him soon deserted Him. Even the most intimate group were in the end staggered at the actual crucifixion, though they had in their theory accepted it as the legitimate outcome of His Way. His reappearance brought them together again, but in a perplexed and bewildered mood. He had given them a truth concerning the fundamental fact of existence; a way of procedure which He Himself walked in, and which He declared to be intrinsically Life; but they were slow of heart to believe that the obligation of all

these was in the nature of things. It has often been asserted that His disciples received from Him His Truth in formal propositions, apprehended it clearly, and passed it on unimpaired to their successors. The record itself shows that this was not true. They comprehended Him but partially. In great part they misconceived Him altogether. They were far more clear as to His Way than they were concerning His truth. They could and did adopt that mode of living which was His, and which led them as it had Him to the cross or to the lions. But of the Truth upon which His Way was based they had but partial understanding. Indeed, He Himself affirms that they were not equal to it, and that it could only be made known slowly by the operation of the spirit which He would leave behind Him. The facts of Christianity came first; the theory followed haltingly. He had previously announced as the law of the case that "he that doeth My will shall learn of My Doctrine whether it be of God."

But the life of Jesus Christ is an event in time. Of necessity it had relations to the time when, the place where, and people in whose presence it was lived. All these helped in some ways and in others hindered the clear shining of His light. How they helped has often been remarked upon, how they hindered has been but little noticed. The movements of human history prepared a way before Him, but they also placed obstacles in the path which were as real as



those which had previously barred His coming. His Truth was conditioned by the capacities of those to whom it was spoken. The hearts of many were turned to Him, but the minds even of these were largely preoccupied with ways of thinking foreign to His way. After He had gone His followers essayed to formulate and champion His Truth. To do so they expressed it in the terms with which they were familiar. In some ways these terms were inadequate, in some ways they were faulty. Human speech had to be dealt with as the missionary in our day is compelled to deal with the meagre languages of the pagan tribes to whom he wishes to preach. Their vocabulary had no words for his ideas. He has to re-create a language before he can impart his message. If he try to use the terms they have his message is cramped within them or defiled by them.

The fatal though unavoidable error was the attempt to express Jesus' Doctrine of the Cross in the terminology of the Hebrew ideas of sacrifice. His doctrine of God crucifying Himself was wide as God. Their notion of "expiation" was narrow as Judaism. His Truth came down from God. Theirs came up through fetishism from primitive savagery. His was the expression of God's true disposition. Theirs was the expression of human fear and cunning. "I am from above, ye are from beneath," was His dictum to the Jews. But, unfortunately, the Hebrew sacrificial terms had a certain superficial fitness when applied to

Jesus' life. There was blood in both. There was pain in both. Thus their essential antagonism was obscured. St. Paul the theologian of the early Church strains to make the imagery of expiation fit with Jesus' Truth and is constantly perplexed and perplexing.<sup>1</sup> His clear conception of the spirit of Christ strives to find expression in the terms of his inherited thought, and bursts the formulas which still constrain it. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews concludes it altogether within those formulas.<sup>2</sup> The instinct of the early Christians refused to accept those statements, and the Epistle found no place in the New Testament Canon until that instinct had been dulled. But the Hebrew thought of expiation, which was itself a survival from an early savagery, thus became the accepted vehicle for the expression of Jesus' doctrine of the Cross. The ancient Liturgies embody the idea *because* they were ancient. Formulated by those who were reared in Judaism, or in Paganism, whose idea of expiation they expressed they have perpetuated the confusion which has for so many centuries obscured the central Truth of Jesus. The same Hebrew-Pagan rationale of Christ's work early became fixed in Christian Theology. The Catholic Creeds do not contain it, and to this fact above all else they owe their universal acceptance. But in the more formulated "Systems" it has been for fifteen centuries the

<sup>1</sup> Pfleiderer; *Influence of St. Paul, etc., passim.*

<sup>2</sup> Rendal; *Theology of the Hebrew Christians.*

organizing principle. Chrysostom, Augustine, Thomas and Anselm, each in his own time and sphere of influence formulated it and fixed it more and more firmly in the popular Christian mind. It finds at once its simplest and most *naïve* expression in the Roman Mass. It is equally present, though mixed with other elements, in the Anglican Communion Office. It is the underlying theology of the Salvation Army. But the Christian consciousness has never been easy under it. Whenever "the spirit of life which was in Jesus Christ" has been strong, this pagan conception of God and His attitude toward men has receded. It has failed signally as a motive power for righteousness of life. Where it has been presented by the missionary as the "good-news" of Jesus it has appealed to a mercenary motive, and led those who accepted it to attempt to escape from a threatened peril. For such security they have been willing to pay only a minimum of self-sacrifice, and to accept but a formal restraint upon conduct. To make the appeal successful it has been necessary to depict in lurid and fear compelling colors the torments of hell. In all its transmutations the idea has remained in substance the childish attempt of the savage to placate or buy off the wrath of a malignant and offended god. This is equally true whether the victim be thought of as a breadfruit offered by a squalid Papuan, a bull by a Judean priest upon a brazen altar, or a Man at Golgotha by the unwitting *plebescite* of a race. The essence of all is the

same. It is the proposal to purchase from the Almighty by gifts a release from the penalty of wrong deeds. Many influences are now at work to banish and drive away this ancient superstition to that evil place of ignorance and fear from which it first emerged. In the first place, the origin and growth of the idea of Sacrifice has begun to be studied.<sup>1</sup> It has but lately dawned upon us that races of men are upon earth now at every stage of development. There are still Edens in which Adams are even now beginning to know good and evil. The counterparts of Abraham and Moses and David and Ezra live and have lived at many places. At a certain primitive stage of progress this notion of expiation begins to show itself always. It marks a stage of intellectual and moral forwardness. It is of the world's childhood. It gathers about itself a cult. It starts with the raw meat proffered to an obscure idol, and survives in the adult race until it be outgrown. So far from being a system revealed to Israel from above, it is seen to be a common trait of all people at a certain stage of their immaturity.

Again, and more specifically, the more careful study of the Bible has made it evident that the Sacrificial System did not in point of fact hold the place in Hebrew history which has been traditionally assigned to it.<sup>2</sup> This is purely a question of fact.

<sup>1</sup> Spencer ; *Data of Ethics*, Lubbock ; *Primitive Races*, Quatrefages ; *The Human Species, etc., etc., etc.*

<sup>2</sup> Colenso ; Wellhausen ; Robertson Smith ; Driver ; Briggs, etc., etc.

From investigation it thus appears to be demonstrated that Moses, instead of being the founder of a complex and symmetrical system of Sacrificial Ritual did but limit within the narrowest bounds possible to him a habit of belief and worship which his people had in common with all peoples of like time and progress. Like all prophets he strove to lift them to a higher and truer idea of their real relation to God; and, like all wise men he allowed some things "owing to the hardness of their hearts." It now appears that the System attributed to him was not in fact introduced in his time nor for many centuries afterward; that it cannot claim either his sanction or the sanction of God; that the line of development in which he and the Prophets who succeeded him strove to lead this people, was one which was obstructed at every step by the survival of this Pagan ideal; and that, finally, the gorgeous Sacrificial System itself came into existence as a recrudescence of a creed outworn. So far, then, from being the "ante-type" of Christian worship, it seems to have been but a *pseudo* development which perished of its own faultiness. Jesus was "priest of the order of Melchisedek which is king of peace." Moses and the Prophets, not Aaron and the Prophets, are in the line of His ascent.

Again, the generation which has thus come into the truth in the study of Anthropology and Biblican Criticism is the same one which has displayed an altogether unique solicitude to discover the secret of

Jesus' power and to translate His spirit into actual life. It is most significant that the interest of the Christian world has turned away from the study of formal Theology to the study of the Life of Christ. It seems to be becoming convinced that a false start has been made long ago, and seeks to regain that place where the paths diverge in order to follow the true one under the guidance of Jesus. The religious thought of our time is determined to find its way back past the Tridentine or Reformation System, past the medieval traditions, past the Catholic Creeds, refuses to pause with Paul, clamors for the very words of the Master. It "would see Jesus." The names most widely known in the Christian world of this age whether among scholars or people are, Strauss, Bauer, Keim, Edersheim, Farrar, Stalker, Drummond, Bruce, Brooks. And all for the same reason. They introduce their readers directly to Christ. They have the zeal of a first quest. If Christendom really believed that it had already in possession His secret this interest could not be awakened. The most epoch making book in the religious world for centuries is *Ecce Homo*. Every fresh attempt to learn Christ's secret is inspired really by the deep conviction that for some reason and in some way it has been lost or overlooked. Can it be true that this is the situation?

It is certainly the fact that each denomination of Christians believes that every other one has in some way missed the Truth as it is in Jesus. The Catholic

believes this of the Protestant. The Protestant believes this of the Anglican; the Anglican believes this of both; and the Oriental believes this of all. May it be that what they all believe is true? Does not the very existence of the belief vindicate its correctness? While they all agree substantially upon the facts of Jesus' career and receive the same record of His word, they disagree utterly upon the true significance of these deeds and the interpretation of these words. What will account for these disagreements but the theory that they have all alike misinterpreted Him? And if this be true, or if it be only partially true, what remains to be done but to go back to the beginning and start afresh? This may be a humiliating thing to do. For great multitudes of Christians it may be an impossible thing to do. Nevertheless, it would seem that we have come to the place where no other course is open.

When we come to see that the whole nexus of sacrificial ideas are but the survival of Paganism, and Judaism, that its underlying idea is false and immoral, unworthy of man and untrue of God; when we see that the Sacrificial System was an intrusion into the course of Hebrew development and an obstacle to its natural movement; when we see that the Prophets denounced it as paltry and hurtful; when we see that Jesus held aloof both from its facts and its phrases; when we see how and when and why it fastened itself upon the Christian Society, surely we must be ready

to abandon it, and to seek some truer rationale of the burdened life and painful death of Christ. It may be as well to confess that the task will not be an easy one. For in Epistles and Missals, in Liturgies and Confessions and Summæ, the substitutionary idea holds the field. They all reek of blood! They all conceive of salvation as a commercial transaction. It is a commodity bought with a price. But then, Jesus' real doctrine of the Cross is also entangled with them all. This has given them their viability. The task now is, in a word, to disentangle the Cross from the Altar.

What, then, is Christ's Doctrine of the Cross? It cannot be more simply stated than in His own phrase; —“If any man is willing to come after Me, let him take his cross and follow Me; for whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever is willing to lose his life shall find it.” All His words are but the expansion of this which He announces as an eternal truth. It is true, He says, of Himself, of men, and of God. The starting-point of His doctrine is the fact of pain and evil in the world. Heretofore, He says, when men have tried to resist evil, they have tried to beat it back as they would repel a hostile foe, by force. Resist not evil. To attempt escape from it by resistance is as futile as to try to cure a burn by applying fire. His Sermon on the Mount is His Pronunciamento. Let evil break itself against you; do not break yourself against it, is His secret. And this whether evil assails in the form of pain or of wrong. If it be pain,



turn upon it with love for God, and its sting is gone. If it be wrong, turn upon it with love for men, and the wrongdoer will be disarmed. Says Mr. John Fiske,

“In the cruel strife of centuries has it not often seemed as if the earth were the prize of the hardest hearts and the strongest fist? To many men the words of Christ have been as foolishness and a stumbling-block, and the Ethics of the Sermon on the Mount have been openly derided as too good for this world. In that wonderful picture of modern life which is the greatest work of one of the greatest seers of our time, Victor Hugo gives a concrete illustration of the working of Christ’s method. In the saint-like career of Bishop Myriel, and in the transformation of his life-work in the character of the hardened outlaw, Jean Valjean, we have a most valuable commentary upon the Sermon on the Mount. By some critics who would express their views freely about *Les Misérables*, while hesitating to impugn directly the authority of the New Testament, Monseigneur Bienvenu was unsparingly ridiculed as a man of impossible goodness, and a milksop and fool withal. But I think Victor Hugo understood the capabilities of human nature and its real dignity better than these scoffers. In a low state of civilization Monseigneur Bienvenu would have had small chance of reaching middle life. Christ Himself, we remember, was crucified between two thieves. It is none the less true that when once the degree of civilization is such as to allow this highest type of character, distinguished by its meekness and kindness to take root and thrive, its methods are incomparable in their potency. The Master knew full well that the time was not ripe, that He brought not peace but a sword. But He preached, nevertheless, that gospel of great joy which is by and by to be realized by toiling humanity, and He announced ethical principles good for the time that is coming. The

great originality of His teaching, and the feature which has given it its hold upon men, lay in the distinctness with which He conceived a state of society from which every vestige of strife, and the behavior adapted to ages of strife, shall be forever and utterly swept away. Through misery which has seemed unendurable, and toil that has seemed endless, men have thought on that gracious life and its sublime ideal, and have taken comfort in the sweetly solemn message of peace on earth and good will to men."

All this is true and admirable ; but much more is true. Jesus announced His ideal of life, not at all as the practical solution which a wise man might give to the problem of conduct. He announced it as the very Word of God. He declares that light and life and wisdom are the fruit of love ; and this because God has made things so, and because He is so Himself. "If ye believe in Me, keep My commandments. I have but one commandment:—thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." To obey this commandment is equivalent to taking up the Cross. Love, the Cross, and Life, are the motive, the means, and the end of existence for all who share the nature of God. Whether it be in the person of Jesus Christ against whom Hebrew malignity wrecked itself, and became forever after impotent ; or Stephen against whom Pharisaic hate destroyed itself ; or Polycarp whose love quenched provincial rage ; or Telemachus against whom luxurious cruelty broke itself ; or of that innumerable multitude out of every tribe and

tongue and kindred under heaven who by patient continuance in well doing have won their enemies, by these and by their method have been won the only permanent triumph so far gained.

The Cross of Christ is not an isolated monument rising out of the confused and purposeless waves of life's ocean whereto shipwrecked mariners may cling for refuge. It is the sailing directions by which the voyager guides his craft throughout his whole course. Not they who "look only to the Cross for salvation," but they who "take up the Cross and follow Him" are Christians. The first is a mercenary sentiment which defeats itself; the second is the divine mode of life for men. He that saveth his own life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it."

For the gospel's sake. This was His motive. For its sake He laid down His life. He declared that His laying it down was an act of deliberate choice. "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." It is an area where no compulsion can operate. Every man has the same power to lay down his life, and if he repent the determination when he begins to feel the cost, to take it up again. Jesus laid down His life before the world's evil for it to work its will upon. He steadfastly refused to save it by taking it out of the way of the world's evil. It was easy to see what the immediate result would be. "He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things, and be

killed." Of course He must. He had started upon a Way which led there naturally. He must follow it to the end, or else abandon it and turn back. The compulsion is always from within. The hard and unreasonable conditions of life may hold the witless rustic Simon the Cyrenian and compel him to bear a cross. But such a misfortune is an isolated incident without spiritual consequences. Jesus' Doctrine of the Cross is this:—God suffers because God is Love: men are the sons of God, inheriting His nature; they come into their inheritance and become masters of life only through Love; and the Cross is the necessity of Love.

And so, He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

We have seen above that Jesus' Way led Him into the possession of a more abundant and potent life than any other has shown. This brought Him into relation with the physical environment of life. The fountain of living flowed so abundantly in Him that it was at least once able to pour itself over "the wheel broken at the cistern" in the body of his dead friend Lazarus, and set it moving again. It flowed so purely that it was able to distil clean blood into leprous veins. When "virtue went out of him" it stanchd the unclean wasting of an inform woman's life; lifted the paralytic who could by no means raise himself up; clarified the thick humors of the blind; brought vigor to the distorted legs of the cripple; woke the little maid from the sleep of syncope into

the fresh joy of living. And, in a measure, His disciples did the like. They all did it by touch, by impartation, by contagion. Was this "Natural"? or "Supernatural"? I reply, the antithesis is not legitimate. He assumes that these and greater works than these were natural to men of their sort. They but acted in character. His "Disciples" were men who by following Him had also become partially conscious of like endowments. These powers, He declared, belong to the real nature of man. They are unsuspected, latent, to all practical purposes non-existent in the ordinary man. They are awakened into consciousness and quickened into potency by moral processes. He calls this moral process Faith, and refers to it as His "Way." "Oh! ye of little faith," He cries to them when they stand helpless in the presence of the epileptic whose father begged for cure. "These signs shall follow them that believe, they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." That is to say, the new type of man whom he reveals and who is produced from the ordinary type by His Way shall be, to such extent as He pursue that Way, freed from certain physical limitations, and possessed of physical potencies quite unique. They will have life and have it more abundantly. This life will naturally safeguard its possessor against many ills, and he will be

able to share his abundance—at a cost to himself—with the needy. He does not intimate that they will be freed from the constant laws of growth, decay and dissolution. But that by becoming preëminently *humane* they will be able to resist such evils as flesh is not heir to but stands exposed to while it starves outside its legitimate inheritance. He says to the sick of the palsy, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” He associates physical disease with moral lesion. Moral purity is, to His mind, the prophylactic against disease. It is also the *vix medicatrix*. According to the record, those nearest to Him, and while they were sustained in their moral exaltation by His presence and contagion, found themselves possessed of strange powers, to their exceeding great amazement. “Lord, even the devils are subject to us,” they report upon their return from an excursion. The same “signs” showed themselves in a few after he passed away. But they became more and more infrequent, and finally passed away as the Christians declined from their high moral exaltation and Christianity became a “Religion” instead of a new power of living. Their places came to be occupied by the fantastic “miracles” of the middle ages. When the Church as an organization fell away from His Way its members began to lack His Life. It took up the sword instead, and all unconsciously committed spiritual suicide.

But for one who held steadfastly to His Way of the Cross the issue was Life, a life which physical dissolu-

tion was powerless to touch. Therefore, He rose again from the dead. To such an one death is an incident, an episode. He has anticipated it. The life which was in Him had been strong enough to build up for itself a spiritual body, organized in advance in sufficient stability to survive the shock of physical dissolution. The life had become the seed from which springs the new body. The body is not that body which shall be but some other and "God giveth to every seed its proper body." So Jesus reappeared in a body; in His own body; in the body which belonged to Him in that stage and progress of Life. From the record it is plain that it both was and was not "that body which had been." Physical identification is only possible where physical tests can be applied. In the nature of the case the laws of matter, as we know matter, are not available here. It is conceivable, and indeed likely, that the distinction of "material" and "spiritual" which we make between the life which now is and that which is to come, is an unwarranted one. Probably they are both conditioned by matter. Many things indicate that we are on the brink of discoveries in matter which will compel a readjustment of all our definitions.<sup>1</sup> But at all events, no question of material identity as we now conceive of matter has any place in the doctrine of the resurrection. Jesus' career is consistent throughout. By the perfection of His

<sup>1</sup> Dolbear; *Matter, Ether and Motion.*

humanity He became conscious that He was the Son of God. By taking up God's manner of life in His person of a man He found the Cross upon Him as upon the Father. By walking steadfastly in the Way of the Cross He found Himself filled with an inex-pugnable Life. By the power of the life which was in Him He passed through the shock of dissolution undisturbed. Being then free from the conditions of material existence He moved without let or hinder-ance alike into hell and into heaven. In all alike He was a Son of Man and a Son of God, and manifested the inherent nature and capabilities of both.



THE OTHER LIFE



## XV

### THE OTHER LIFE

IT would hardly be too much to say that belief in a future life came into human thought as a result of the career of Jesus. While it is true that a vague, formless, phantasmal notion of the persistence of the individual after death did obtain in places before him, and has been entertained beyond his sphere of influence, still it is true historically that the belief in a future life owes all its clearness, form, and practical efficiency to the contribution which he made to it. Before him the belief, where it amounted to a belief, was practically inoperative on account of its vagueness. In the Homeric poems, for example, the ghosts of the departed were thought of as thin shadows of their former selves, shivering in the twilight of the Underworld. Even Achilles, to whom is assigned the kingship among the shades, is represented as declaring that he would "rather be the meanest slave on earth." When Virgil depicts the condition of the shade of Anchises, his picture is indeed more definite than that drawn by Homer, but it is doubtful if its very distinctness does not introduce a grotesque element which makes it all the more difficult to receive. The immortal dialogue in the *Phædo* shows Socrates

and his friends groping in the same vague shadow. In the master's mind was alternately "faith crossed by doubt and doubt crossed by faith." His abstract argument for immortality seems conclusive enough *qua* argument, but it eludes all attempt to picture before the imagination the concept with which the argument is concerned. The same helplessness marks the thought of future life in those places where it appears in the Old Testament. It may be said without much fear of successful contradiction that no appeal is ever taken in the Old Testament from the life which now is to that which is to come. No possibility of either bliss or calamity there is ever urged as a motive to modify conduct here. And this, notwithstanding that a vague belief in the fact of a continued existence beyond the grave was widely entertained. The reason is plain. The belief lacked form. The question, "with what body do they come?" remained unanswered. Lacking an answer to this the belief in "immortality" remained an inoperative fancy. The transcendent influence of Jesus here is owing to the fact that He has supplied a thinkable form for what was before an elusive even though persistent instinct.

It is well to learn once for all that no conscious being can exist, or be conceived of as existing, except as such a being express itself in terms of matter. For consciousness is not possible to any subject except as such personality is reflected back upon itself from something different in kind from itself. That from

which alone such reaction can come to Spirit is Matter. In each personality the spirit asserts its being in self-consciousness, but this consciousness of self is simply the expression in terms of spirit of the constant law that action and reaction are equal and in opposite directions. The spirit can only arouse consciousness of self by pressing against something which is not spirit. It acts outwardly from its own centre, and the reaction is consciousness. The spirit can only be aware of itself in its successive moments through the medium of a body.<sup>1</sup> Jesus has made the belief in immortality available by giving it a body. This opens the question "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" There has been a strange hesitation in accepting the answer which St. Paul gives to the question. His reply is, substantially, *first*, that the body that shall be is *not* materially identical with the body which now is; and

*Second*, that there is provision in the universe to furnish forth the spirits which live with bodies composed of matter spiritual.<sup>2</sup> With the first of these

<sup>1</sup> If it be objected that this reasoning implies the eternity of the physical universe as the condition of God's self-consciousness, it is sufficient to reply that so far as our capacities of thought are concerned this is true. Whether it be true "absolutely" or not, one cannot either affirm or deny, for he cannot formulate to himself the alternative proposition. One cannot think of God without having in his mind the material universe as a background against which he sets the concept of God. If any one doubt this, let him make the experiment.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 35-50.

statements the modern world is in hearty agreement. It is so evident that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," that the world of to-day will sooner throw away all belief in a future existence than entertain the crude notion of a physical resurrection. The qualities of the human body have come to be well understood, and it is seen that immortality is not only not one of them, but that it is something which cannot be impressed upon it.

The beliefs concerning the future of death which have long held the field are three. *Either* men have tried to think of disembodied spirits as passing on and enduring; (Plato, Augustine, Spinoza, Fiske,) *or*, they have thought that the spirit and the body break up together and go out together into chaos; (Moleschott, Virchow, Heackel, Burmeister, Darwin,) *or*, they have thought of the material body being regathered after disintegration and endowed with immortality, (Current, so-called "Orthodoxy"). This last has come to be the belief of the great mass of Catholics; probably also that of the rank and file of Protestants. A little steady reflection will show that none of them can be the truth. To consider them in their order, a "disembodied spirit" is simply an unthinkable *pseudo-concept*. And again, the quality of immortality cannot be predicted of a physical body. And finally, to think of the personality ceasing with the dissolution of the body is to conceive so palpable a violation of the constant law of the persistence of force that it is becoming increasingly

hard to believe it. One can see what the physical energies of a man are, or at least, how they act and into what they are transformed when death intervenes. They can be weighed, traced, accounted for in terms of physics. But the psychic energy which has been implicated with them demands equally honorable treatment. If that energy be quenched it must needs be by a force which is akin to it. When it disappears its exit must be accounted for in terms of some equivalence. It is difficult to think that the psychic energy which has taken to itself a natural vesture moulded to its uses, and renewed so many times in the course of life, will suddenly find itself shivering in naked impotence to clothe itself and perish for want of a garment. It is easier to believe, in the abstract, that there is a spiritual body as there is a natural body; and that as we have borne the image of the earthly we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. The difficulty all along has been to conceive of a body fitted for the next stage of the soul's existence. There are many indications that physical science itself is about to bring relief to our thought.

One of the results of the modern study of Physics is that it has compelled us to reopen our accepted definitions of Matter. It is being found not to be the "gross stuff" which Plato miscalled it. The studies of Lord Kelvin, Hemiholtz, Langley, Dolbear, and Tesla and a host of others have transformed our conception of the material universe. There is the

matter which we see, feel, touch, weigh, of which our senses take cognizance; and there is also the ethereal matter with which all space is filled, with which our world is interpenetrated, which obeys laws of its own, and which mocks at the limitations of our physical laws. For an instance, let one reflect what happens when light passes through a block of glass. Light is a specific form of undulation in a material medium. The waves start from the sun millions of miles away, chase one another through what we mistakenly have called "empty space," and sweep through the mass of glass, one of the densest forms of matter, as water flows through a sieve. The waves are propagated through a material medium. The ether which transmits them, and which transmits another wave form called magnetism, and still another called heat, is at once dense and tenuous, potent and subtle. Matter it is, demonstrably, but matter of a sort which defies all our definitions. But it is clearly stuff of such a character that if by any means a body might be fashioned of it for a human spirit, such an embodied and conscious personality, while still in the sphere of Nature, would be in a region which, as related to the one in which we move, might fairly be called supernatural. It would not be unclothed but clothed upon. A new mode of existence would be opened up to such a person. It would be a materially conditioned existence of course, but as we have seen, no other mode of existence is conceivable.



There is a strange tendency to miss what is the real question at stake in all our discussion concerning a future life. It is *not* the question of absolute immortality. Absolute immortality can never be predicted of anything but God the Absolute. The simple problem before us is to find some bridge by which to pass from the life that now is to a succeeding one. That one may not, and by all analogy will not, be endless or indefeasible. The question of its duration and of its conditions will arise only for those who are in it if any such there can be. But at present one can only feel like a man crossing a quaking bog, his only task being to find a new standing ground as he feels sinking under him the last tussock in sight.

The possibility to survive the shock of physical dissolution and to move on in a continuous existence is spoken of in the New Testament as Life. It is described as "eternal," with reference not to its duration but to its quality. It is not conceived of as the common and natural element of all men, but as something which is to be striven for strenuously, and which may be attained, or may not, as the case may be.

The notion that every human being is compounded of a "body" which is perishable and a "soul" which is intrinsically immortal, is a Pagan idea which finds no shadow of support in the Christian Scriptures. They speak of eternal life not as an endowment but an achievement. Jesus reiterates this (Matt. xvi. 25; John xi. 25, iii. 15, v. 24, iii. 5-7, etc., etc., etc.). St.

Paul explicitly asserts his own uncertainty as to his own immortality, and prays "that by any means he might attain to the resurrection of the dead, not as though he had already attained." (Phil. iii. 11.) The problem is then to find a physical basis for the spirits' life beyond that point where matter, as we usually conceive of it, becomes no longer available, and to ascertain what is the *nexus* between the spirit and such a body. It is indeed only the question of the revelation of mind and matter carried one stage farther than the one in which we now live. The general principle to be used in its solution is the dictum of St. Paul that "God giveth to every seed its proper body."

The spirit is the Seed. His contention is that the strange potency of the seed to take to itself fitting matter in which to express itself is a potency which is constant and perdures in every region where life exists. As there is one kind of flesh of beasts and another of man, so there are bodies terrestrial and bodies celestial. That is to say, as each form of life in the ascending scale through the fishes, the birds, the mammal and the man "finds itself" in a body of fitting matter, so, the same law is continued onward into the next ethereal stage. Conscious existence is everywhere conditioned upon matter. The soul must have a body, else it ceases to be a soul. The human spirit in building up for itself a physical body uses something, more or less, of every element. The body of man is the epitome and recapitulation of the ma-

terial universe as the soul is of all orders of all antecedent forms of life. As the body is closely compacted together in the womb it passes stage by stage, through every step of past cosmical history. The man is the microcosm of the life and the matter thus far developed. He attains his development by processes of which he himself is largely unconscious. That is, where he attains at all to the measure of the stature of a perfect man. But long before this process reaches completion, it would seem that a new process may set in which has its issue in a life which in common speech is called Eternal. "Are there few then that be saved?" It would seem so, both by the analogy of Nature and by the words of Jesus. "For strait is the gate and narrow the way that leadeth unto Life and few there be that find it; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go out thereat." Life climbs up slowly through its ascending orders until self-conscious, moral beings such as man is reached. When these pass the purely animal stage so far as to be morally self-conscious, each one becomes capable of beginning the process of building up for itself a body of such stuff as will abide. Jesus brings life and immortality to light by pointing out the condition upon which perduring life depends; and by displaying in His own person an actual instance of such a life. According to Him it is contingent upon Moral conditions. He endorses that human instinct which has always associated

eternal life with goodness and eternal destruction with moral badness. He points out that this is true for a reason so simple that it has seemed incredible. Sin, in its last analysis is suicide. It is living to the present environment at the expense of the next one. It is an arrest of development which is punished with degradation. All those actions which men agree to call morally evil may be reduced to two, which are essentially one. They are either Lust or Murder. All those multiform immoralities which revolve about the fact of sex are forms of the attempt to express the sense of living in the terms of flesh. "For lust, when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished issues in death." It does so because it withdraws the vital energy which would else be employed in building up the spiritual body, and dissipates it upon that form of matter which is in its nature capable of but transiently expressing the life of the spirit. On the other hand, all those forms of wrong which are called by such names as covetousness, dishonesty, hate and theft, are but rudimentary forms of murder. "He that hateth his brother is a murderer," for "hateth any man the thing he would not kill?" He taketh a life who taketh that which doth sustain the life; "and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life in Him." Because all life is so bound up together, the living spirit who makes a murderous thrust at another pierces his own soul. Action and reaction are equal and in opposite direc-

tions. It is perillous even to trip up one of the little ones.

We come back then to the dictum of Jesus that persistence of living is contingent upon a certain mode of living. As St. Paul put it, "he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap destruction; and he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." That is to say, continuity of existence is dependent upon moral achievement. As the spirit is the *substans* which determines the form of the physical body, so it is conceived to determine the form and vitality of the body which shall be. As every act of self-consciousness is the occasion of complex changes in the molecules of the natural body, so it may be thought that concomitant changes are produced in the spiritual or ethereal body which may be built up simultaneously.<sup>1</sup>

But the condition of the forming of that body is not what the champions of the theological doctrine of "Conditional Immortality" have supposed. It is not contingent upon the transfer to the soul of any magic

<sup>1</sup>It will be noticed that this way of thinking is substantially that hesitatingly put forth by Stewart and Tate in "The Unseen Universe." Mr. John Fiske in criticising that book says, that "the weakness of their theory lies in the fact that is thoroughly materialistic." It is materialistic, but in this I conceive its strength to be. Mr. Fiske opposes to it the *pseude* concept of a life of pure immortal spirit. It is because that concept is practically impossible that the religious world has fallen back upon the gross thought of "the resurrection of the flesh." It has thus been caught upon the dilemma of either believing an incredible thing, or abandoning altogether the belief in a future life.

“grace.” It is not dependent upon Baptism. It is not contingent upon act of so called “faith.” The continuity of life is contingent upon the actual existence of life. The man who is not really living now cannot possibly live hereafter. Jesus’ assertion would seem to be sufficiently explicit, “except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” He is not forbidden to do so, but he cannot. “Except ye eat My flesh and drink My blood ye have no life in you ;” and then He proceeds at once to say that eating His flesh is “doing His will.” But what was and is His “will”? What other than the irrefragable determination of the whole nature toward goodness? The Christian doctrine is that every man is in very fact the architect of his own eternal destiny. There are two kinds of life possible to every man who has arisen to the stage of moral self-consciousness, the life to the flesh and the life to the spirit. The first of these two modes of vital energy produces the physical body which is conducted within what we know as the laws of matter. The second carries its personality over into a further stage whose mode can only be guessed at, or constructed out of analogies. To this end the flesh is impotent it is the spirit that quickeneth. One might say that the spiritual body is in the natural body as the natural body in the womb. At a certain stage it is natural for it to be “quickeneth.” (1 John v. 21, vi. 17, viii. 11; Eph. xi. 5; Col. xi. 13.) It may fail in this and so miscarry. It may come to the birth,

and then perish at any stage before maturity. Bearing in mind the two well-known facts, *first*, that no human soul can exist at any stage without a body; and *second*, that being born does not give any guarantee of continuing in life, and with the light which Jesus' career and teaching throw upon the problem, we may look steadfastly toward the life which is to be. It is the passage from one kind of a materially conditioned state to another state similarly conditioned. Whatever significance the appearance of the risen Lord may have beside, this is palpably the first one. It demonstrates the possibility of a kind of human life so potent and tenacious that it can go on expressing itself in a body after it has passed the frontier of what we know as matter.

How is such a passage effected? It would seem, by all analogy, that by many it is not effected at all. Many are dead while they live and they must surely remain dead when they die. By many others it is probably achieved so incompletely that they pass into the next stage as Richard complained that he had been thrust into this, "scare half made up." It is attained by those in whom the spirit has antecedently gathered to itself a form built up of some substance which can be the physical basis of the next one. Probably, if by any means we attain to the resurrection of the dead we will find the change to be much smaller than we imagine. But the essential mystery must be the same "there" as "here." The nexus between

psychical and physical energy, between thought and matter, between soul and body, can never be stated. For, being a phenomenon which concerns both mind and matter it can never be stated in terms of either one. The sum of our information would seem then to be that if one be "born again" and if the spiritual body which such birth compels be sufficiently developed, it passes with the spirit into the new life as the natural body arrived with it into this one. The natural life is the period of gestation for the spiritual life. The spiritual body is in embryo. Where it is sufficiently developed to perdure the shock of physical dissolution, then by death it is born into a new environment. Of course, all language is inadequate in this discussion. But the metaphor used by St. Paul has become classic. The physical body is the *seed* which encloses a germ. It must die and unwind its integuments. From it the spiritual body springs. In any case the seed must perish. This would seem to be true of men as it is of wheat or any other grain. But whether it shall arise into a renewed life depends upon its own vital energy. The chrysalis may arise a winged and decked citizen of the air, it may disintegrate in a silken shroud from which nothing comes, or it may emerge a puny weakling only to flutter for a little while in its new home before it perish finally. This is the second death.

For all this Jesus stands; for the belief that each man born into the world is capable of being born



again; for the truth that the new birth is correlated with moral energy; that physical death is only an episode in the career of such a twice-born man; that the hold of such a newborn soul upon the material universe is so strong as to bend fit matter to its need at every stage of its progress; of all this Jesus is the revealer and the instance.

It will be seen that there is no room in this conception of "the Life of the world to come" for either the modern Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, or the Protestant belief that the article of death fixes indefeasibly the destiny of every man.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>I am aware that Anglicans entertain some notion concerning an "Intermediate State," but the contents of that belief is so obscure that it is difficult to ascertain with precision what it is.



**THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH**



## XVI

### THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE Holy Catholic Church is an article of faith only and not a demonstrable fact. The only reasonable attitude toward it is the same as that toward God, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, or the Future Life. The Holy Catholic Church is not a thing which has been seen, or which can be seen now, but an ideal fact toward which Christ's disciples move and by which they are moved. The Church is happily defined as "the blessed company of all faithful people ;" but inasmuch as there have never been any people altogether faithful there has never been the Church of which very great blessedness could be predicated.

It is not uncommon to find people who hold this article of the creed in quite a different way from what they do the others. They are somewhat shocked and scandalized when they are reminded that the Church is a belief and not a demonstrable phenomenon. They had supposed that it was the latter. The fact that they were not able to point to it and say—"there is the Church which satisfies the definition," does not disturb them. Such Churchmen have the curious power to personify an abstraction in the religious sphere as similar persons have in the political sphere.

In the one they call the creation of their fancy The Church; in the other they call it The State. There are many persons who actually believe in a democracy who still speak of a "State" to which, in their opinion, many of the ordinary functions of society should be intrusted, forgetting that they themselves are the State. In like manner many think of the Church. To it they attribute the qualities of holiness, wisdom, purity, and other transcendental attributes, forgetting that they themselves are the Church.

The Church, in point of fact, has never been either one, holy or catholic, but it has nevertheless held within it these ideals as goals toward which it has moved. They are ideals which no other institution known among men has ever seriously set before itself. It seems clear that Jesus proposed to convey His influence forward in time and outward in space by means of an organization. His favorite phrase was "My Kingdom." It is quite true that His formula The Kingdom of Heaven was His expression for a régime of holiness. It meant that condition of human society which in His Way of living should be universally adopted. But it seems equally plain that His hope was to bring in the universal Kingdom toward which He looked by first setting up a small and perfect organization into which could be gathered those few who were ready to begin at once the new manner of life. He proposed that the little flock would gradually expand in numbers, and grow more and more

pure in quality, until it should absorb and assimilate the race. The marks or "notes" of this Society were to be, unity of feeling and purpose, purity of life and thought, and complete hospitality for all who were willing to adopt this way of life. That is to say, it was to be One, Holy, Catholic. The three permanent institutions which He Himself established within the Society corresponded to this purpose. The Lord's Supper is the symbol of unity; Baptism with water is the symbol of holiness; Preaching is the symbol and instrument of Catholicity.

It is easy to see that He proceeded after the most direct and straightforward manner to attain this end. He surrounded Himself with a small but very compact body of men and women who are from the first spoken of as His disciples. The test of admission which He applied was the most rigorous conceivable. In the language of the Baptist, He winnowed them as with a fan. "If ye will do My will" was His test. We have already examined at length what His will was. This test did not address itself to any intellectual or social, or even to any conventionally religious qualities. He did not attempt any hard and fast delimitations of His Society. He was content to let any one join it who would. But He set free a force within it whose potency He serenely rested upon to either transform or eject every one who came within its influence. Sometimes it did the one, sometimes it did the other. Of one man it is accurately stated that "He went out

from us because He was not of us, for if He had been of us He would no doubt have remained with us." But the Society was sufficiently compact and its frontier sufficiently defined from the beginning for the purpose it had to subserve. The history of the Christian Church is a strange story, not so much on account of its romantic fortunes, but because there has wrought within it and upon it a force which has no analogy in any other organization. It is not surprising that Gibbon misinterpreted it. Its actual existence has so little corresponded to its own ideal, while at the same time, it has held so tenaciously to its ideal, that men have been puzzled. It must be borne in mind that it began not as it would, but as it could. The material upon which the ideal began its work was most unpromising. It would be hard to conceive of a previous training more unsuited to their ultimate purpose than was that of the Twelve. All their habits of thought, all their prejudices and preconceptions, all their environment were unfavorable. And the larger company of the disciples were like them. Reared in Hebrew exclusiveness they were to become the apostles of humaneness. Themselves the product of a religion which looked chiefly upon ceremonial purity, they were to become the ensamples of ethical holiness. Full of the spirit of prejudice and caste they were to be the champions of universality. It is not to be wondered at that they fell far below the ideal of Christ's Society. That they did fall far short of it is



evident to any who reads the record without prejudice.

Both probability and fact warn us against looking to "The Primitive Church" as the realization of Christ's ideal. It was not that, and it is evident that He did not expect it to be. The Church is an organism and follows the law of all organisms. Its normal type is to be sought for not at its beginnings, but after it has had time and opportunity to develop. It is because men have thought of it as a mechanical structure that they have so largely fallen into misconception concerning the Early Church. But the thought of our day is becoming biological here as everywhere, and replacing the mechanical modes which have prevailed. The difference between an organization and an organism is vital. If the Church were an artificially manufactured structure it would be at its best at its beginning. If on the other hand it be a living organism its perfection of existence must be looked for after it has had time to grow. It may be said in passing, that all questions concerning the divine right of Episcopacy or of the Papacy or of any other method of organization, or concerning the mode of Baptism, and all like contentions, have their rationale in that mechanical conception of the Church which is becoming more and more powerless to hold men's thoughts. Whenever the Church comes to be conceived of as living, all these questions recede or take an altogether different form. Prescription ceases to impress with a sense of obliga-

tion. We become easy when history uncovers defects which would otherwise strain our faith. The actual present condition of things becomes intelligible, and our hope for the future revives. When one looks abroad upon the Church to-day it is hard to discern its unity. In fact it is not one. Nor can one candidly say that it is either holy or catholic. If we must suppose that at any point in its history it has been all these, then we must say that it has ceased so to be. And with that conviction dies all hope for its future. For a living organism which has once been defeated in its purpose of life dies. And it is never resuscitated.

If the Church ever displayed the note of Unity, *when* was it? Certainly not in the Apostles' time. "One said I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, and another I am of Cephas." The Jews and the Hellenists were at odds within the Church from the very beginning. Nor was it about trivial matters they disagreed; it was about questions which touched the very fundamentals of the Faith. It was concerning the essential quality of human nature, as between Paul and James. It was about the catholicity of Christianity, as between Paul and Peter. It is seriously to be questioned whether they were agreed as to the nature of Christ Himself. Was it in "the period of the Councils"—or in the "time of the Fathers"? I have read the Fathers, both post—and ante-Nicene. At one time I thought to find in them a picture of life and action of a holy, united and

catholic Church. I have not found in them either unity of conception concerning the Church, or conspicuous holiness of thought, or any real idea of catholicity. I know that wise and good men have found all these things there, but I have not been able to do so. And I have been forced to the thought that those who have found these notes present have done so because they have brought them with them. What Council is there which did not rise out of antecedent lack of unity as its occasion? And what Council can be pointed to as one which secured unity as a result of its deliberations or its canons? What is Nice? or Chalcedon? or Constantinople? or Florence? or Trent? or the Vatican? To ask these questions is to answer them for any one who holds by facts and not by theories. At no point in her career has the Church been able to give anything like a unanimous reply to any question of either Doctrine or Discipline. The dictum of Vincent of Lerins "*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*" is the most impotent of fetiches. Of course, if it only means to say that everybody is wiser than anybody, nobody will question it, and in that case it need not be quoted in Latin. But if it be offered as a practical test of any single dogma or custom, there is not one which can endure it. No one can be instanced which has been held "always, everywhere, and by everybody." Even at those times when the outward organization has been most powerful and when a large unity of action has

been practiced, there have been flying columns which refused to march with the main body, and declined to take their orders from the recognized authority.

And all that has been said concerning the note of Unity is equally true as to the notes of Holiness and Catholicity. They have never been exhibited.

And yet I believe in one, holy, Catholic Church. I believe in it. If it were a matter of experience, or if it were demonstrable by any process it would not rightfully have a place in the creed. One does not say *credo* of things about which he can say *scio*. But I am quite aware that the contents of my belief are not the same as that of many of my brethren. They, fondly as it seems to me, believe in a perfect Church which has been and is lost; while I believe in one which never has been, but surely will be. My faith looks to the future, not to the past, however sacrosanct that past may be thought to have been. Not that I am unmindful of the past. It is only by examining the path of evolution of a living organism that one can give any forecast of its future. The history of the Church, whether written in the Old Testament or in the New, or in the Fathers or Decrees of Councils, is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."



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