

# The UNSHAKEN KINGDOM

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# The Unshaken Kingdom



By

HENRY C. MABIE, D.D., LL. D.

*Author of "The Divine Reason of the Cross," "The  
Meaning and Message of the Cross," "Method in  
Soul Winning," "From Romance to Reality,  
An Autobiography," etc.*



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*Dedicated to the  
Faculties and Students of Christian  
Educational Institutions in the  
South land of America*



## Foreword

**T**HIS volume by Doctor Mabie consists of the lectures delivered to the students and faculty of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary on The Lewis Holland Lectureship. The other lecturers on this foundation were George W. Truett, D. D., W. L. Poteat, LL. D., and John R. Sampey, D. D. This Lectureship was established by the Rev. Lewis Holland, San Antonio, Texas, a consecrated and faithful minister of the Gospel. He was deeply devoted to the plain teachings of the Word of God as interpreted by the Missionary Baptists. He desired that this Foundation should contribute to the publication of that body of truth.

These lectures by Doctor Mabie were greatly enjoyed by the large body of Christians who heard them. It is confidently believed that a careful reading will be most profitable and inspiring. No one can fol-

low the thoughts of this great missionary-philosopher and statesman without receiving permanent spiritual enrichment.

L. R. SCARBOROUGH.

*Fort Worth, Texas.*

## Contents

I.	THE THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN	11
II.	PROVIDENCE GROUNDED IN REDEMPTION.	33
III.	THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST AND OTHER SCHOOLS . . . . .	49
IV.	THE CURE FOR AGNOSTICISM . . . .	71
V.	THE CLUE TO CERTAINTY IN RELIGION .	95
VI.	THE PARADOXICAL ELEMENT IN CHRIS- TIANITY . . . . .	111
VII.	THE COSMIC IMPORT OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST . . . . .	133
VIII.	THE ULTIMACY OF THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE . . . . .	160



## I

### THE THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN

**T**HIS theme, although not explicitly missionary, is one related to all missions that are worth while, because the very dynamic in them, even their legitimacy, is all dependent on whether or not there be timeless and universal principles underneath the missionary movement.

The greatest war in all history is now on. It is the outcome of many decades of international jealousy. Nearly thirty million troops of all nations are facing each other on battle fronts. It is accompanied with a terrorism beyond all previous imagination, and apparently the end is far distant. Incidental to this war, missions have been brought under peculiar strain. Note the situation in Armenia, in our European missions, and the effect immediately or remotely upon all the situations in the eastern hemisphere. At such a time, when all the civilizations are rocking as in the throes of a world earth-

quake, there is, therefore, peculiar relevancy in the consideration of the above theme, for it is evident that we must go to the depths in the rediscovery of our foundations if we are to find a basis on which our confidence in missionary enterprises can stand.

That there are things which even according to the Scripture can be shaken is patent to all; such things as are but preliminary scaffoldings to the final building. For example, the whole Judaistic system was a temporary and provisional order and ordained so to be from the beginning. The Old Testament Jewish ritual, including the Sabbatical seasons, the sacrifices, the periodic festivals, and all the ceremonialism connected therewith, were by Christ transcended and set aside. All civilization, as such, ancient and modern in its forms is ever changing and successively vanishing. Things must be turned and overturned until He whose right it is shall come to reign. Behind the present world war has lain the doctrine of Nietzsche's "superman," and in general a materialistic philosophy. The forms of international law in wide areas have been outlawed and set aside. Indeed, all human law, unless recognized as having its

seat in the bosom of God, must sooner or later crumble. The whole present temporal order must one day cease, and the heavens themselves be rolled together as a scroll. The Scripture sums up all by saying there will be one final shaking in which even the things which are in the heavens, *i. e.*, the highest ranges of our universe will be subjected to deeper tests than we conceive. Yet we need not despair, because all this is to make the more manifest certain "things which cannot be shaken," but must permanently abide.

Thank God! There is a kingdom without a tremor. It is composed of the eternal things of the Kingdom of God, deeper than all the forms of the present order. Among many things that might be named I note a few of these elements which cannot be moved.

I. The first of these is *the throne of God*. This is by no means an arbitrary throne of mere powerful severity such as many imagine. The Psalmist said, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." This throne is what is called in Hebrews "the throne of Grace." This is the throne which is ultimate in our universe. To this throne we are invited to "come boldly that we may obtain

mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

I have elsewhere in a published volume, entitled "Under the Redeeming Ægis," spoken of this throne in the Scriptural term of "the rainbow throne." There are three classic passages which justify this title. The first is in Genesis 9:9-16; the second in Ezekiel 1:27-28; the third in Revelation 4:1-3. The first reference is the appointment by God of the rainbow thrown across the firmament as the token of a covenant that the new race from Noah on shall be continued under a redeeming providential order—that summer and winter, seed time and harvest, shall not fail. The second reference is in the vision shown to Ezekiel about to prophesy respecting the national sins of Israel which are to be visited with judgment. Out of these, however, there will ultimately come the glorious restoration of the chosen people to their land and the continuance of their Davidic Kingdom in some remarkable way. The third reference in Revelation applies to all apocalyptic eons that stretch away into the eternal future. All these periods are to be dominated by the "throne with a rainbow round about it." That is, under a throne in

which judgment is commingled with mercy, severity with tenderness.

This grace is often thought of as a mere synonym of love in the sense of benevolence, as an easy-going toleration of evil, but grace embraces all the qualities inherent in divine holiness as well, hence the throne of grace is a marvellous unity as truly expressive of God's merciful attitude towards humankind.

Now the whole universe is grounded in this throne. This universe is upheld and held together because that throne of grace is there and has been from eternity, despite all the episodal invasion of human transgression. All finite creation depends upon it. All physical law has its energy and perpetuity in it. Gravitation, electrical energy, chemical affinity, and all else in the creation could not exist apart from it. We live in a universe on the whole friendly and gracious. In particular, all created personality has its root in the God of grace and the sovereignty of its throne. Man is made in the very image of God and though marred and biased by sin, yet possesses elements of that majesty seen even in its ruins. The basis of all realization of the Divine Fatherhood is

through submission to this kingship. The realization of this Fatherhood through surrender to legitimate authority is one of the greatest surprises that ever comes to us. President Mullins in his notable book, "Authority and Freedom in Religion," has taught us the beautiful harmony there is in this paradox. We find our normal freedom through complete submission to and the enthronement of divine authority. Accordingly, in the moment of one's collapse to self and sin, the soul rises up and "runs to meet" and welcome the Divine Lordship and control over the soul. Indeed all genuine Christian experience has always as its antecedent the complete surrender to authority in God and His glorious throne. This is so in the nature of things, because there is but one independent being in this universe, and all we finite beings are necessarily dependent and subject. The very law of our being requires that God's authority shall govern us. Let us be thankful that amidst the very crash of worlds such a tribunal as this cannot be shaken, for it is ultimate.

The present day rival in thought to this throne is evolution as naturalistically conceived. To the type of evolution conceived

as a form or method of the divine operation within large areas, yet with certain creative interventions, there can be no objection, but when evolution is conceived as in lieu of Deity, or as supplanting the thought of Deity, it is pure atheism or at best pantheism, and utterly repugnant to the highest reason. It is one of the worst forms of present day idolatry in certain intellectual circles. If one cares for up-to-date discussions of the absurdity of this conception, let him read Professor La Conte's lectures on "Religion and Science," any of the later utterances of the late Sir Alfred Russell Wallace, one of the apostles of the non-materialistic evolution, and particularly his famous reply to President Schaefer of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, who in his opening address at Dundee, Scotland, in 1912, had maintained that all life can be accounted for by chemistry and mechanics. To this address Wallace replied with spirit, and left on record, at ninety-one years of age, the most emphatic testimony against the materialistic origin of life. The summation of this famous answer is as follows :

"I submit that, in view of the actual facts of growth and organization as here briefly out-

lined, and that living protoplasm has never been chemically produced, the assertion that life is due to chemical and mechanical processes alone is quite unjustified. Neither the probability of such an origin, nor even its possibility, has been supported by anything which can be termed scientific fact or logical reasoning."

Over against all this, I submit as belonging to a kingdom which is without a tremor, is the throne of heavenly grace as I have defined it.

Now this throne of grace, or the eternal spirit of which it is the expression, is bent on its own self-disclosure to the universe of man, and hence there arises

II. A second immovable element, namely, *the eternal redemptive movement* as outlined in divine revelation. This redemption is grounded, or has its start not from the simple historical event of the fall of man as described in Genesis, but from the conception of the "Lamb foreknown (as slain) from the foundation of the world." The nature of this redemption is therefore timeless, eternal, though it had a concrete and visual expression in the Lamb of Calvary. Now this redemption is more than a mere recovery from the sin of Adam, more than recovery from freedom's wreck. It involves the ulti-

mate new creation of man in the image of Jesus Christ.

When God said, "Let us make man in our own image" He had in view not the mere rudimental man of Eden that He knew would fall into sin, but the new man in Christ and as glorified with Him forever. It was that consummate ideal which moved God to creation as a whole and to every feature embraced in it. This redemption, therefore, was no after-thought, as if God having tried one method of dealing with man, which broke down, bethought Him of another method to meet the emergency. The redeeming work of God in Christ was no more "emergency measure to meet the surprise of a moral defection" in the first man, Adam. The purpose of redemption was older than the universe. It was the ground purpose of the universe and therefore God's forethought for mankind. But for this forethought, I doubt if God ever would have created man at all, or permitted him to fall into sin. Much less would He have continued the race as pro-created from the first pair. After the sin of that primeval pair in Eden the race would have perished right then and there without a posterity at

all, but for the antecedent purpose to redeem the race, which God unfolded to Eve in that great prot-evangel, "thy seed shall bruise the serpent's head." The very fact, therefore, that descendants have proceeded from our mother Eve, is itself an assurance that they have their existence on the basis of the eternal redeeming purpose which was later more fully outlined. Every child born into the world, therefore, is born not only of the fallen first Adam, but also under the ægis of the redemptive system. Every child is a *potentially* redeemed being, because of this antecedent purpose and provision in God's grace, albeit it needs to be brought by instruction, persuasion, and the Divine Spirit to accept for itself (by a voluntary action the moment it becomes a voluntary being) that provision of grace. In other words, if I may so speak, God had "up His sleeve" an antecedent purpose prior to creation, to redeem the world.

The fact is our universe is *redempto-centric*. It is not, as the early Andover School of Thought interpreted it, "Christo-centric" rather than "Theo-centric," because in reality those terms, when understood, mean exactly the same thing. But to say that the

universe is centered in a redemptive principle in God is to go to the heart of things, for the redemptive purpose in God logically antedates the purpose to create. That is, the ultimate expression of God in this universe is grace; as Paul puts it, "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." In the Hebrews we read, "Of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum"—*i. e.*, "We have such an High Priest who is passed into the heavens . . . into the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man."

The expression of the Deity here referred to is one of the several "better" and eternal things with which the author is dealing, respecting the symbolism of the tabernacle. Dr. Denney of Glasgow remarks with great pertinency that the word "eternal" throughout this epistle has the significance of finality, that is of something ultimate in God's universe.

We need to sense afresh the significance of that great discussion of Anselm in the eleventh century, entitled *Cur Deus Homo*, one of the profound discussions of the ages. True, this is not the last word in theology

respecting the Atonement and the Incarnation. We, however, do well to come back to it repeatedly, and weigh the tremendous import of the question, "Why God was manifest in the flesh." It implied redemption—and this may properly be considered as God's ground purpose, underlying Creation and all that followed it. For further discussion of this subject, see my book entitled "The Divine Reason of the Cross." The ultimate end of all this movement was the self-manifestation of God in Christ, and our own ever-increasing apprehension of that manifestation and joy in it, and in its transmission to others. Our race, therefore, involving the very cosmic order—the heavens and the earth—is a *potentially* redeemed world, and the movement towards its realization is one of the things that can never be shaken, even amid the crash of our mundane order.

III. This redemption just referred to issued in a *providential moral order*, the order under which our world and we all as responsible creatures have our being. This also is among the foundational things unshakable. The late Professor Royce points out in the last chapter of his "Spirit of Modern Philos-

ophy" that there is behind our moral order a Supreme suffering Deity; that is, He suffers sympathetically with all the ills that have arisen under that order. No other explanation of the problem of human suffering is nearly so satisfactory as that which assumes, as Scripture also reveals, that this is the "world of the suffering logos." If this is so, then the moral order is grounded in redemption, and all that we call Providence is but a corollary of redemption.

Just prior to our last Thanksgiving Day, I with several others was asked by the editor of the *Sunday School Times* of Philadelphia this question: "What one thing can you suggest in few words as that for which the world may be thankful in a war-stricken time like this?" After pondering some time, my answer was as follows: "We may be thankful for the moral providential order, a system under which the world war, with all its rack and ruin, has occurred; for under this order there may be occasion for gratitude respecting three classes of events, however distressing they are in themselves; we may be thankful first—for the possibility that dying soldiers by the million at the battle front may, if they will, while dying

go straight into the presence of their Redeeming God—so the most distressing battle trench may become but an ante-room to the Heavenly Glory for every penitent soldier slain in whatever army. We may be thankful, secondly, that all the afflicted relatives of the dying soldiers, if they will, may have their loss and bereavement sanctified to their moral well-being and to a diviner comfort than they ever before knew. And thirdly—under our moral order every one of the belligerent nations may, if in the end it will become filial towards God and His purposes in history, have this awful cataclysm of calamity sanctified to its own national well-being, so as to assume a truer place in history than it had previously occupied.” This is a matter of tremendous moment as respects our thought of the universe as a whole and “the moral uses of dark things.” And bear in mind all this is possible only—under the régime of a potentially redeemed world and the kind of a moral order that has come into being under it. It is therefore worth while to live, under whatever possible circumstances, and so we can maintain an optimistic attitude, and never despair—no matter what occurs.

I here speak of another mystery connected with this subject, viz., the matter of that solidarity of the human race which is a phenomenon of our order. Many are wont to complain that they are placed in this world in an organic connection with all other moral beings; and people inquire, "How can it be just in God to create me in such relations to my ancestors, to my family relations and to society as a whole that I should suffer incidentally for their faults and wrong-doings? Why should I be born with such a heredity?" It is a tremendous mystery, but there is another side to this matter, which when properly viewed should more than satisfy us respecting all our questionings. This very solidarity is also the basis of all our *social inspirations*. If my personal act always stood in complete isolation from all other people and interests, the power of the self-communication of myself to other souls near or far would also be precluded. But the fact that I am organically bound up with every other member of the community, the nation and the world, furnishes one of the highest forms of my social joy and inspiration. A tone, a look may last forever in its power to impress another—my moral decision may make it

easier for descendants in countless generations to act the more truly and freely. My act may affect myriads in China or India or some other distant part of the earth, although I may never see them in this world, and although I may not know one word of their language and could not speak to them intelligently if we met. Moreover, my relation to Jesus Christ, the manifested Redeemer, is such that I may have a new heredity in Him as the new Adam of the human race; and this may, if I avail myself of it, more than counteract all the damage I have derived from the first Adam. This universe therefore on the whole is a friendly universe in its divine intention, potency and moral possibilities, for where sin has abounded in the forms of its infection, grace has "abounded much more exceedingly." These "much mores," as expressed in Paul's thought in the fifth of Romans and its context, indicate something which more than counterbalances all the damage derived from any solidarity of evil. Such is the beneficence of our moral order.

Stand with me in a railway station on an electrified line—read the warning signal, "Danger, Live Rail!" That means if you step upon that live rail or grasp it with

your hands, instant death will follow. There is therefore enormous risk in that live rail and the electric current that fills it with deadly possibilities. Yet, were that dread possibility wanting, that electric current could never be utilized to bear multitudes of people safely to their destination. Those two polarities of evil or good, of danger or safety reside in that current, and it is our personal attitude towards it that makes all the difference respecting its operation. So it is in our kind of world. As free beings, we are here for better or worse! we are free agents. It is a fearful thing to live at all, but it is an all-glorious thing to live in right relation to the redeemed possibilities. Now thank God! such a moral order as this cannot be shaken—hence the solid grounds for our abiding faith no matter what comes.

IV. Then out of this kind of a probation conditioned by the providential moral order under which we live issues what we call *Christian experience*. Indeed the deepest experiences spring out of such cataclysms as we naturally deplore. The very shaking of the temporal things, the removing of the provisional scaffoldings of our life, but the better manifest the real spiritual temple in

its building. We are prone to forget that our life is related to two worlds—and that “the things which are seen are temporal,” while only the “unseen things are eternal.” The problem of life is to teach us how to live our eternal life in the midst of time, and there is therefore a moral necessity in the case that we should learn to surrender the lower values for the higher. This is the deeper meaning of that whole realm of things we call the sacrificial. Sacrifice in the Christian sense does not mean the waste of life, but that we surrender a lower value for a higher. There is here a spiritual exchange, and it is only through the sacrificial experiences that we reach the higher ranges. Tennyson sings, “We rise on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things.” All this is possible to what we call “personality.” Personality is the one thing that can change endlessly and still preserve its identity, that can die to lower forms of life and then rise to higher forms.

Here we touch the realm of the paradoxical. The interior truths of Christianity are the paradoxes, such as abound in Christ’s teaching. These are to be considered later.

No rupture, therefore, of the natural con-

ditions under which our life starts can ever render impossible these deeper experiences of the soul—grounded in the paradoxes, which for their very realization involve the removing of things which can be shaken, because this is an antecedent condition to the realization and possession of “the things which cannot be shaken.” Our religion is a great deep—it goes to the foundations of the universe; it is built on adamant, grounded in the Eternal. It utterly transcends the natural.

During the year of the great exposition in Chicago a train near Battle Creek, Michigan, became wrecked, and the coaches took fire. Pinioned beneath the shattered and burning timbers was a Christian woman. She at first screamed hysterically for “help, help!” She implored the men, who were working with axes and crowbars to extricate her, to do their utmost amid the approaching flames. This they did until it became evident that they could no longer stand before the devouring fire, whereupon this woman released them from further effort, exclaiming: “Now I know that I must die, I will show you how a Christian can die,” whereupon she burst forth in a song of praise to

her God and through the flames passed beyond their power.

V. Finally, all this preceding provision which we have just considered in the divine economy results in a new society—a *new social order*. This has been called by that great theologian of the fourth century, Augustine, “The City of God.” This classic work of Augustine’s was written to find a basis of comfort for the church of that period which had become so harassed and distressed through the invasion of the Roman Empire by the Goths and Huns of North Europe. This City of God is a society within a society. It is composed of the regenerate sons of men who have come into the experience of new life in Christ Jesus. This new life results in a unique fellowship, and solidarity of spiritual beings. It is the church invisible, but a society all the more real on that account. It finds its unity in the common divine life created by the Spirit of God, and it is mystically joined together by bonds invisible yet eternal. It is being gathered out of all the peoples of mankind, and it will finally issue in the new corporate life of what the Apocalypse sets forth as the New Jerusalem, a society of wondrous symmetry and

glory, for which all the imagery and glory employed by St. John, the seer of Patmos, stands. The essential thing in all this is the eternal completeness of the divine ideal, which involves more than perfected individualism. It is a new social order, and may be represented under many idealistic forms.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews describes it thus: "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

The essential point for our comfort in all this pictorial description is that, despite all the asperities between men, all the schisms and conflicts between people and nations resulting often in complete anarchy, there is here an assurance of a perfect social order incipient in the Church of God, but ultimately to be actualized in the corporate life of real believers. This, too, is among the things that are unshakable—no matter what social and hostile concussions may arise in

the present world order. The very fact that such hostilities, such strife, such enmity, such hate as enters into present world conflict in Europe shakes our confidence in the stability of so-called civilization, affords a background, however dark, over against which we may in faith construct this bright picture of more than a millennial glory.

No wonder, then, that the Apostle concludes in the context from which our text is taken with the words, "Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

## II

### PROVIDENCE GROUNDED IN REDEMPTION

**I**N this lecture I expand one point embraced in the preceding lecture on "The Things Which Cannot Be Shaken."

For basis I take two Scripture passages: "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh"—"the Lord will provide," Genesis 22:14; and a passage supplemental in thought to this, found in Romans 8:32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Abraham primarily meant that God will provide the redeeming Lamb, but Paul says that the gift of this Lamb is the guarantee of all things that God's people can ever need.

There is nothing that so renders most people unhappy as the habit of complaint respecting their circumstances. But we are to find the divine freedom *in our circumstances*. If they can be altered by any rational or jus-

tifiable act on our own part, that is well. We must not be fatalists. But such circumstances as are unalterable are certainly providential, at least in their moral bearing.

But a caution is to be observed: The Bible doctrine of providence is not that God takes care of those who take perfect care of themselves. That would be no providence for sinful and blundering people such as we all are. The everlasting arms are underneath, with larger provisions for us despite our blundering. The whole moral order under which our race exists in the redemptive economy is itself providential for all men, Christian or Pagan, whether they know it or not. It is of immense moment that all should know it and respond to it. Hence Christian missions. The most experienced of us Christians cannot pass through a trial, say a funeral, or a crisis in business, without the comforts of this Bible teaching. But relying on God's love and grace, all emergencies and exigencies can be met, no matter what, and triumphed over. So my message is to the most discouraged person possible.

If we begin with the Old Testament, the

very name of Jehovah—not the imagined Pagan Yahveh of the destructive critics—implies the doctrine of providence before us. This word Jehovah is the most sacred name for Deity, the redeeming Deity, known to the Hebrew nation, a name which the devout Hebrew still thinks too sacred to be spoken. Hence he substitutes the word Adonai. Then providence is a corollary of redemption and grounded in it. Were there no redemption, there could be no providence. But having given in predestined purpose the chief thing, viz., the timeless lamb of God, that carries with it all the subordinate values for us. That embraces every event and circumstance in the believer's life, from birth to glorification.

When Moses shrank from the commission given him to lead Israel out of Egypt and he inquired, "Who shall I say hath sent me?" God answered, "I am that I am" or (I am that which I will be); "and this is my memorial name forever, to all generations"; that is, God is the eternal self-existent one who would more and more reveal and unfold Himself to and through His people, the Gentile as well as Jew, and forevermore. Such was the meaning of the very name

of the eternal covenant-keeping God of grace.

In the Old Testament there are seven compound names of Jehovah that cover the whole life of the redeemed people. These are Jehovah-jireh (Genesis 22 : 14), meaning redemption and providence, Jehovah-rapha, the Lord that healeth (Exodus 15 : 26), Jehovah-nissi, the Lord our banner (Exodus 17 : 8-15), Jehovah-shalom, the Lord our peace (Judges 6 : 24), Jehovah-raah, the Lord my shepherd (Psalm 23 : 1), Jehovah-tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness (Jeremiah 26 : 6), and Jehovah-shammah, the Lord is present (Ezekiel 48 : 35); the last referring to the final city of God, the New Jerusalem, when the great work of redemption will be complete and God's abiding presence shall be our light forever. Now this sevenfold name, imbedded in the very structure of the Old Testament in its various periods and studied in the light of their various contexts, covers typically the chief spiritual issues that can ever arise in the life of God's people. They presuppose a God of love and grace who has forethought everything pertaining to their redeemed life.

God does not indeed ordain (or foreordain)

an unpropitious event, in itself alone considered, perhaps perpetrated on us with evil intent as in the scourging of Paul at Philippi or in the tortures inflicted on Judson at Ava, for the sake of the pain, but He does ordain in His grace the moral bearings and the ultimate "peaceable fruits" intended for us to realize afterwards.

The doctrine of divine providence is a central thing in Christianity. Christianity is the only religion in the world that has such a doctrine, or that can have. This for two reasons: first, because the God of our redemption is the only kind of a being competent to provide providence for us; and, secondly, because our possible harmony and fellowship with Him is the only condition on which things on the human side can be made "to work together" for our good. After all that you may seek in comparative religion—say, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, Brahmanism, Buddhism or Shintoism—you will find that none of them has any teaching on the providence of God. Most of these religions are fatalistic, or if not that, they are legalistic, as Judaism was. But our religion is evangelical.

In the New Testament, anxiety on the

part of a disciple is absolutely forbidden (Matthew 6: 24-31). Not that we are to be careless and reckless, going as we please with our lives, and thus presuming on God's mercy. In the eighth of Romans we are assured that "All things"—not all things *except* some particular circumstances that try me—"work together for good," how we do not know, "to them that love God," *i. e.*, to those whose attitude is filial towards God's manner of dealing with them.

God has a plan for every life, as Bushnell has brought out in his great sermon based on God's word to Cyrus: "I girded thee, though thou hast not known me." But the pathos and tragedy is that many people do not find even the hint of such a plan for them. This plan we never see complete in advance, but if we live the life of faith, then we shall see it progressively, step by step as we move on.

Remember how Paul said: "I have learned"—he had been initiated—"in whatsoever state I am therein to be content." That was from the man who had been in Roman prisons, who had been flogged until his back ran down with gore, and yet who "sang songs in the night," until the earth-

quake wrecked the prison, and the jailer smitten with fear and conviction came crying out, "What must I do to be saved?" You, no less than Paul, need not lie awake nights worrying to think what is to become of you to-morrow. Just lie down in serenity and relax in your heavenly Father's arms, remembering that the forces of to-morrow will be marshalling themselves to become agents and ministers to your need when the morrow comes. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth, . . . waiting for (or waiting on) the redemption" (Romans 8:22). "The whole creation!" even Jupiter and Neptune, Mars and Venus, and the myriad suns in their courses, all ministering to God's purpose in you. Why then fret and chafe because you cannot see beyond the present moment? God is Jehovah-jireh. He foresees, forecares, and foreprovides. Many people have asked me why I put that old Chester motto across the gable of my house at Northfield. "God's providence is mine inheritance." Because it is the story of the deepest crux and crisis of my individual life. When I was broken down and in despair, a nervous wreck, purposing to abandon the ministry forever, logically involving giving up the

Bible and God and all things connected with them, trusting in second causes, imagining that any cause in His material universe is as deep as God Himself: it was then I collapsed before God with a broken heart and felt as if the crust of the earth just opened and let me through and I went down and down until I struck the center. And what did I find there? Hell? Far from that. I fell, to my surprise, full into the arms of my heavenly Father, and I discovered that His love is infinitely better and deeper for me than mine for Him. By that breakdown in health He was simply shutting me up to a different life. I would have ruined my ministry but for that breakdown and you may, my brother, with all your promise, if you do not have some similar crisis to reëstablish your trust in God. I pity the man who has not had some time a thorn in the flesh. It is through those infirmities and so-called misfortunes that we chiefly learn the deep things of God.

One would not ask a flippant person about his belief in the divine providence. When we want to ask that question, we go to some bedridden person, to some one with an incurable disease,—we go to such to see

their faces shine and hear their song. In my pastorate in Indianapolis many years ago I called one day on a young girl of seventeen, who was a paralytic. I was advised to go there for my own edification. I found that girl with an open Bible on her lap. She was unable to turn in bed or feed herself or even turn the leaves of her Bible, but her heart was peaceful and her face happy. She so impressed me that I had her brought one night in a wheel chair more than a mile to my prayer-meeting, that my people might hear her testimony and look upon the halo on her face.

To revert to Paul. You have often observed his use of the word "boast" or "glory." If you ministers who have a good Englishman's Greek concordance will look up the Greek behind that word you will find it to be *καυχάομαι*. This word occurs fifty-six times in the New Testament, and fifty-three times it is Paul who uses the word. In Romans we hear him say we "glory (or exult) in tribulation also"; that is, Paul who was "in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft," who "five times received forty stripes save one," who was "thrice beaten with rods, once was

stoned, thrice suffered shipwreck," was a "night and a day in the deep," was "in perils manifold," etc., still was the most triumphant of all the apostles. He says: "If I must needs glory"—that is, to vindicate the grace of Christ in me—"I will glory of the things which concern my infirmities." In other words, Paul had settled in his heart that God's plan for him was the very best thing possible and so, when in the Roman jail, he characterized himself not as a prisoner of Roman law, not of Jewish bigotry, but of Jesus Christ, "a prisoner of hope." He looked clean through prison bars and even over the headman's block with his exultant eye on the crown. In Ephesians he speaks of himself as "an ambassador in bonds," but he uses the verb rather than the noun, and so virtually says: "I am conducting an embassy," albeit in chains, "heading the greatest legation the world ever knew." Although bound to a soldier in the Roman *prætorium*, his radiance was manifest even to all his guards. He was during that imprisonment, paradoxical as it seems, the freest man in imperial Rome. This was Paul's habitual attitude and be it remembered not because he was on occasions an inspired

writer, but as a typical believer with real faith in God's providence. It is the proper attitude for us all.

It must not be forgotten, although it commonly is, that the alternative denial or negation of this Bible doctrine of providence is cold, icy fatalism—something worse even than chance. For example, some religious teachers have a habit of saying of an untoward event like the death of a child from diphtheria: "God had nothing to do with that. It is the working of mere natural law; cause and effect, bad sanitation and the like." Law is there, but that is not the whole case, and I challenge any minister of religion to console the afflicted on the ground that God has abdicated to "law and company." Those who thus speak seem oblivious of the fact that by excluding God from any relation to such an afflictive event, they do not get rid of the real difficulty: they simply relegate all to *fatality*; and fatality is impotent to procure one solitary benefit from affliction to the subject thereof. Fatalism has no place for the personal and paradoxical, of which the personal God is master, and with which Christian experience, especially of the afflicted, is filled. There is no basis whatever for real

consolation in the mere outworking of fatality. But if I stand by a poor mother bending in grief over the casket of her dead child, no matter what laws were violated in her affliction, I can say to her : " Despite all that has occurred, no matter who blundered, and whatever laws were violated, God, the all loving personality of this universe in whose will alone every so-called law has its coherence, yet sustains such a relation to your poor broken heart as to relate the moral bearing of this event to your present comfort and eternal welfare. Therefore, in the last analysis you are not victimized, as you would be if fate only ruled." We may not see *how* God can thus relate Himself to misfortune and turn the tables on it, but through our confidence in the supreme Authority of this universe, as personal, as one who is able to use the fixities of nature and law so as to bring out of them some new combination which no law of itself could ever effect ; we should thus have a source of consolation, no matter what the form of the affliction.

Even a human personality, like an aviator or a submarine commander or any inventor, can transcend laws, with no violence done to anything ; and cannot the maker of all

things do as much? On such grounds as these the doctrine of divine providence finds an unassailable basis in our universe for the subjects of redemption.

During my pastorate in St. Paul some years ago this incident occurred. One day three cable cars coupled together, in coming down a long inclined railway from St. Anthony Hill to Third Street where the line takes a sharp curve, the cable which controlled the cars broke. The result was that the three cars as they reached the curve at the base of the hill overturned and were badly broken up. Many passengers were injured and two or three were killed, among them a well-known citizen who resided on St. Anthony Hill. The death was, of course, a great shock to his widow, who, after the mutilated body had been brought home, as she sat in her chamber began to reflect upon her sorrow and she thus soliloquized: "Now I can nevermore go down to the spot at the foot of the hill where this tragedy occurred because it would be a chamber of horrors to me," which she feared would haunt her memory forever afterwards. But as she thus reasoned some one seemed to say to her, "But you could go if I were to go with you."

The impression was so strong she answered, "Why, certainly I could;" and suiting the action to the word, she put on her wraps and walked directly down to the spot. Our mistake often is in not facing our trials, and we vainly try to run away from them. As this brave woman reached the spot where her husband had met his death, instead of finding a place of horror the Lord of glory disclosed Himself to her as she had never seen Him before and she walked back up that long hill to her home as if borne by angel's wings. She thus caught a vision that never left her. When I called upon her two or three years succeeding the event, she met me at the door and the radiance of her face and the cheer in her heart told me that this was not a passing illusion, but that for her "The shadow of death (had been) turned into the morning."

Years ago a dear friend of mine and one of the district secretaries of our missionary society, Dr. W. S. McKenzie, lay dying of a dreadful internal cancer. Towards the end of his malady he became an intense sufferer, yet he used to lie on his back holding a pad before him, and would write notes to the clerks in our office whom he tenderly re-

membered. He wrote this to one of them : " Should you ever be tempted as a Christian to be afraid of death I beg you to dismiss it. There is one who for us has tasted death in its bitter reality, and its very substance. Since then we, His followers, have to meet only the shadow of that reality ; and a shadow never hurt any one." Calling on him one day and finding him very serene I inquired : " Do those dreadful tortures which you endured at the beginning of your disease still continue ? " " Oh, yes," he replied, " they are worse than ever. A lady called here the other day and hearing no complaint from me, she remarked to my wife as she left the house, ' How fortunate that your husband is a Scotchman, for nothing but a Scotchman's grit could endure so bravely what he does.' " This being told to McKenzie, he replied, " All the ' grit ' in Scotland couldn't endure what I suffer every hour of the day and night. It is only pure grace that can hold up a man in my case." And then he added, " Mabie, I seem to be sitting away up here above the clouds on a mountain range where all is peaceful, and looking across the deep dark valley far below I see another sunlit ridge opposite me,

often like the forecourts of glory. Down there in the valley where the clouds are rolling, the lightnings flash and thunders peal: there's my disease. I look down upon it and say with every pang that comes, 'Go on, do your worst, every pang but brings me nearer to those sunlit heights beyond. I shall soon be there.' " That this doctrine of providence is most deeply believed by the greatest sufferers among the saints proves its truth. Men and women are all about us in this world whose hearts have been broken. They have been disciplined and chastened through awful trials that they cannot understand. But they would not exchange the spiritual value they have derived from these for all the world besides. Here is the conclusion of the whole matter, as one has said: "Human strength alone is as insufficient to support the weight of a feather as of a mountain, but with that strength which is ever granted to the filial hearted, the mountain will not be more oppressive than the feather."

### III

#### THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST AND OTHER SCHOOLS

**I**T is characteristic of the schools of the world, generally speaking, that they are schools of opinion. They are the expression of human intellect chiefly. They often presuppose historic debates. They are a product of mentality and generally as opposed to other forms of mentality. Such a school is that of Confucius, in China, of Laotse also. Such is the school of Hindu Brahmanism, and of Mohammedanism. True, Buddhism, as wrought out by Prince Siddartha, or Gautama, introduced a more serious note than his Brahman precursors used, *i. e.*, the moral note, the note of personal renunciation for the good of others, and even of mercy to animals. Nevertheless, even this system of thought, together with all the others above named, was primarily a philosophy, rather than a religion in its true sense. Buddhism, the best of all these systems, gathered in the half-truth of self-re-

nunciation, even of life itself, but it had no sufficient goal. While it taught that man must in some deep sense *lose* himself, it did not teach how this same man was to *find* himself in a diviner self, that is, as Christianity puts it, in the Christ of God. It taught death to self, but it stopped short of the resurrection-life in Christ Jesus, which is the goal of all true and proper self-renunciation. "We die to live," we "sink to rise," or as Tennyson sings, "We rise on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things." In other words, all the so-called ethnic religions are, as Harnack has said, not religions at all; they are mere philosophic cults and relatively to Christianity they are superficial. They miss the deep realities embraced in the Christian paradoxes.

The truth is, as expressions of a single aspect of the human soul, as products of the intellect, they are necessarily partial and inadequate. A true religion must relate itself to and draw upon the reverent and obedient moral attitude and action of the entire soul of man. This soul is a composite product, made up of intellect, feeling, conscience, imagination and will. As such it came whole from the Creator's hand, made

in His image and reflecting entire personal being. For purposes of religion, therefore, the entire soul must be brought into relations with its entire God. Indeed God cannot reveal or authenticate Himself to the fragment of a human being; and mere intellect is a fragment, however sublime a portion of personality it is. A thoughtful friend of mine is in the habit of saying that "The paradox is a necessary characteristic of a divine revelation of God to man." This is so because a paradox is a truth which, apparently self-contradictory to intellect, is seen to be true and simple when tested by life, that is, by the combined action of the whole soul of man. In divine revelation the whole Deity goes out to man, and it requires the whole man in order to be in reciprocal relation to the God who reveals.

From this point of view it will readily be seen why it is that all mere intellectualism always does, and always must, result in agnosticism. Those forms of religion, therefore, which are products merely or chiefly of mentality, are shallow and inadequate religions, no matter how many millions have been brought under their sway. It is on this account also that the historic religious cults,

as such, present impediments in the way of Christianity, the one final religion, far more difficult to overcome than those presented by pure Fetishism, or Animism. Thus far in the history of modern missions the great bulk of converts that have been won from paganism have come from the Animistic or spirit-worshipping people, rather than from those cults which represent inadequately or falsely reasoned systems of thought. Mere thought does not reach to God, does not reach reality. This is abundantly illustrated even in Christendom. The highly intellectual sceptics are the most difficult to reach, because they have drilled themselves to detach their intellectual processes from other and deeper activities possible to their personality. It was this, we think, that Christ had in view when He said, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." That is to say, those philosophic religious teachers who have not properly reckoned with their own moral and volitional powers have in so far despoiled themselves and their disciples of those fundamental exercises "without which no man can see the Lord."

At this point we see the fundamental

diversity of the two philosophies emphasized in the Bible. The first is the Satanic type. It approached the primeval man with the suggestion, "Listen to my enticements," "for in the day that ye shall eat ye shall be as Gods, *knowing*." Ah! but that was only half the truth, which often turns out to be a whole lie. True, the eyes of the fallen were opened, but to know only their shame and fall. They fell short in the fatal act of that insight which is deeper than mental knowledge which they might have had had they remained true.

The second philosophy is that represented by Christ at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. "*Be ye—be ye therefore perfect, or complete—even as your Father in heaven is perfect; exercise all the godlike qualities that belong to your complete person and ye shall attain something unspeakably greater than mere knowledge: namely, holy, godlike being.*"

Now despite all the wonderful attainments that have been reached through the centuries, the temptation of the worldly ambitious is to fall into the snare, in the realm of education, of what I have called the world, or Satanic philosophy. It is always enticing and clever,

often serpentine. On this pattern many forms of university life are built, which narrow their horizon to the merely intellectual, and forget or ignore the deeper factors of human well-being that need to be regarded and trained. The great continental universities of Europe are generally on this pattern ; the imperial universities of Germany, France, Russia or the Scandinavian countries and, to a large extent, ancient universities in Britain, like Oxford or Cambridge, where the religious factors have been overlooked or subordinated to the proud and intellectual, are on this pattern. And I regret to say, universities in the new world, as they become rich and self-sufficient, tend in the same direction. So sure as they aim to become supremely intellectual, they become, however highly equipped with endowments and apparatus, but mills of opinion ; they are prepared to grind any form of intellectual grist that may be brought to them. They select professors of the keenest and cleverest powers representing every shade of opinion. The question of truth as such is always in danger of being overlooked or ignored. Of course it is not necessarily so, but the temptation is great to the worldly mind thus to conceive a university. Of

course the realms and departments of legitimate investigation are manifold ; a real university must embrace within its sphere as many departments of human life and action as possible, such as the arts and literature, law, science, medicine, surgery, engineering, economics, journalism, statecraft, theology, etc., to the end of the chapter. The term "university" is a large word, and it must be comprehensive, catholic, ecumenical, world-wide and heaven-high in its aims and inquiries. But when I have said "heaven-high," I have in one word suggested the point at which some of the most ambitious universities in the world in the main fail. They have not from the start kept in view that their supreme function is not to attain to mere opinion in any realm, even theological, for its own sake, but all is to be for God's sake, for heaven's sake, for the sake of the whole round of personal interests of the human family, and for those timeless and eternal values which give to truth its meaning. A true university must be organized in the interest of *truth*—truth per se. And truth, as such, can never be reached in its highest form in any realm, apart from an act of will, a moral and personal and entire

committal of both teacher and pupil to the God of truth who presides over a kingdom of truth.

The questionable university which I have in mind is the institution that is *not responsible* to any proper authority. It is lawless, self-centered, idolatrous, responsible it may be to the Kaiser, or the state, and so sinks out of sight its moral distinctions when a racial or national issue arises, and war comes on; responsible it may be to the King, to Parliament, or other human standards not necessarily moral or spiritual. It is this type of school which I have called a "school of opinion," which rarely gets beyond the habit of debate or dispute, and lives in the realm of theory and abstraction. Such a school rarely works out in the formation of that kind of character, that type of personality, of which the world stands in dire need.

Over against the type of schools I have been describing stands the school of Christ. This school stands in no antagonism to any legitimate features of the schools previously considered. It would gather in all the results of true and sincere intellectual inquiry. It aims at supplementary, or perhaps I would better say complementary, values<sup>1</sup>

which other schools are tempted to ignore. It may act with the largest equipment or with the smallest according to circumstances. It is in no necessary conflict with those necessary but fragmentary conceptions of education that have prevailed in the ambitious secular universities. But its realm is larger, profounder, and absolutely comprehensive, if true to its mission. The school of Christ deals with the ultimates of life and being. It has for its legitimate pupil the entire soul and personality of man. But it has features that are entirely distinctive; and these I now proceed to point out.

First of all, Christ Himself laid the foundation stone in the declaration made concerning Himself when He said, "I *am* the truth" as well as "the way" and "the life," that is, He personally embodied or incarnated every ideal that belonged to training and life discipline in His own being. He did not merely *hold* the truth as a system of opinion, He certainly never patronized the truth, but He Himself *was held and commanded* at every point by the truth. He was truth's real child and product. And this assertion that Christ

was the truth was not a mere statement of fact to be kept isolated in Himself. He intended that each disciple in His school should in his finite measure himself also progressively embody the truth: and to do this required the habitual, voluntary and moral action of the whole being of the disciple. He was expected therefore not to attempt that impossible feat of holding his thought in one closed compartment of his being and his morality in another compartment. The pupil of Christ is never to forget that he is psychologically and morally a unitary being. Hence it is also that a man cannot hold his religion in one compartment of himself and his business or politics in another. They are necessarily intermingled and organically one. What a man is in business or in politics that he is in religion and *vice versa*, or the man deceives himself. None of the Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde duplicity can be tolerated in the school of Christ although some would seem to think so. Hence, the general weakening in our current formalized Christianity. It is said that once when one of the court preachers of France, perhaps Bourdaloue, was discoursing in the presence of royalty

on these tendencies of human nature to two-sidedness, the King burst out, "Ah, sire, there are indeed two men within us," whereupon the preacher retorted, "Even so, your majesty ; but one of them must perish."

Perhaps the central passage on this whole subject is in that found in the eleventh chapter of Matthew. Christ had been upbraiding the doomed cities of Bethsaida and Capernaum because of their intolerable unbelief. They had witnessed some of the greatest of the Master's works : they had had lesson upon lesson respecting His gospel : they had received sufficient light, intellectually speaking, to have set all western Asia in a blaze of glory, but because of their wicked hearts of unbelief they had spurned it all, even trampled it beneath their feet as swine would the costliest pearls. Hence, the legitimate pronouncement of their doom upon them by Christ, "Thou Capernaum, thou Bethsaida, that hast been exalted to heaven" (in point of privilege) "shall be cast down to hell."

Then turning from this fearful denunciation for this abuse of light, Christ burst forth in this address to His heavenly Father, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and

earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent—the merely speculative minds—and hast revealed them unto babes; that is, to minds ingenuous and simple enough to act with their whole natures towards the truth.” And then He adds, “All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” A question respecting *knowledge*, in the deepest sense of the word, is here involved. Christ is here talking about the deliverance into His hands of the moral secrets of the universe, which secrets also underlie all forms of legitimate authority and power. The knowledge of the Father therefore on His own part is something far deeper than intellectual cognition; and so also no man can really know God as the Father save one who is in the spirit of loyal subjection to Him as the Son always was, and as He longs to have all His disciples to be. Accordingly, at the end of this discourse all are thus invoked: “Take my yoke upon you and learn of (or from) me, that is, *from my method of learning*; through a

humble submission of my will to God's as the patient ox submits to the yoke." And to all such the promise is certain of fulfillment: "Ye shall find rest to your souls." And so the yoke which was feared as irksome becomes easy and the burden light.

Now Christ Himself was the ideal pupil in this school of His heavenly Father. He became incarnate as the Son of Man that He might live this life and work out this archetypal form of all discipleship. He expects therefore that all His followers, in every age and in every realm, will become pupils in this school and on the same pattern. This did not mean any narrow conception of education and life training. It consists with the very highest types of expert knowledge, such as have been reached through the ages by the expert masters of thought, such as Copernicus, Newton, Kepler, Bacon and all really educated men down to Gladstone, Lord Kelvin, Sir Oliver Lodge and every other devout and masterly student of latest time. But it is also a school in which the youngest and most elementary disciple may be a beginner in childhood. It is therefore intended to be the most comprehensive and ecumenical school possible. But its prime qualification

for matriculation forevermore is a spirit obedient and wholly loyal to every ideal belonging to the entire soul.

This principle has found a marvellous expression even in the kindergarten philosophy of Friedrich Froebel. The child almost from infancy is taught to *make* the cube, the sphere, the triangle, the circle through formations of clay and sand, in order that through its volitional action and creative power it may the more deeply know and conceive the thought concretely expressed by action. The great "father of modern philosophy," Immanuel Kant, expressed the same principle. It is at the bottom of the profoundest discovery he made after twelve consecutive years of reflective thought: that in every experience of knowledge the whole personality is involved. The rational soul in an experience of knowledge is always *active* rather than passive; it goes out from itself and unites its full personality with the object it cognizes, so that what we really know is a composite product, a "construct" of the object cognized plus the grasp which the active soul brings to it. And it is this fact which makes our knowledge, although relative, a dependable knowledge. It is not

absolute knowledge like that which God has, but it is godlike and in so far reliable, because of this activity of the whole complete soul, or rational ego, of the man which enters into an experience of knowledge.

The great philosopher Hegel recognized the same principle when he taught that intellect, feeling, moral sense and will all enter into a real personal act.

A remarkable expression of this same principle from the religious point of view is found in one of the great sermons of Frederick W. Robertson, entitled "Obedience the Key to Knowledge." The gist of the whole sermon is simply this: that unless a man has the *will* to *do* he will never have the *wit* to *know*. If a man abuses present light he will infallibly incur greater darkness.

Thomas Carlyle once wrote to his brother John in Naples, who was floundering in moral doubt: "John, do the duty which lies nearest thee; the next step will already have become plain."

It is of the very nature of the final religion that it cannot be forced on any one. It always makes its appeal to our power of moral choice on whatever remnant of light we may have. To think, therefore, of any mind as

even half-educated, or any school of opinion as at all in the same class with the school of Christ that is characterized by indifference to moral and spiritual issues, is pure charlatanry in the realm of education, no matter how vast may be its endowments or world-stunning its equipments.

Christ indeed never wrought out into detail any scheme or curriculum of university work as such, but all the best ideals possible were incipient in His teachings, and He was the master of the ages, and master because in the first place He was the master disciple of His heavenly Father. And any university which ignores or overlooks the principles of Christ as its foundation stone does so at its peril, and the peril of the generation of pupils that is misled by it. The motto of Harvard University, "For Christ and the Church," may well be pondered afresh in the life of present world conditions even by Harvard itself, and certainly by all its feebler imitators.

The teaching of the apostles of Christ also was all in line with the foregoing and in further explication of it. And after all, Christianity in its last and true analysis is the inspired and *apostolic interpretation of the*

*significance of Christ's person and work*, and not a mere collocation of the ethical sayings of Jesus. I mention two teachings of the apostles on this matter. The first is in the epistle of James, the Lord's half-brother and bishop of the church of Jerusalem, whose verdict also was so decisive in the famous council of Jerusalem respecting Jewish and Gentile Christians. James, in chapter 1 : 21-25, is dealing with the practical relation of all hearers to the divine truth that is brought to their attention and these are his words, somewhat paraphrased: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls." The hearer, however, is cautioned lest he shall be a mere "hearer of the word," for unless one promptly obeys the word when he hears it he is sure to do two things: first, to *reason himself astray*, and secondly, *instantly forget* the manner of man the word revealed him to be. And the conclusion of the whole matter is this: that unless the reader of the word stoops down to humbly peer into the word and search it as Mary and Peter did at the grave of Jesus, and so discovered the resurrection of Jesus—but only as they

stooped down and peered into the sepulchre, so only can a reader of the divine word gain a vital experience from a reverent obedience to that word.

Here is one of the ultimate laws of Christian experience. The witnessing authority of the Holy Scripture, as each point is inquired into, precedes any direct witness of the Holy Spirit in the school of Christ, hence the utter incongruity of thought on the part of all who talk loudly of the theology received through experience only and yet who in the same breath discard the authority of the Scriptures. Obedience to the written word properly understood, its spiritual meaning once discerned *as authoritative*, is absolutely essential to all intelligent and genuine Christian experience. The author of Hebrews rebukes weaklings in the church who still "need to be fed with milk," as still in the infantine stage of things. The author declares that by this time these Christians ought to be able to digest strong meat. They were supposed to be adepts in the school of Christ but they had grown "dull of hearing" and so they had become "unskillful" (or literally "without experience") in the word of righteousness. And so they

were yet babes. Their senses, by reason of use, they had failed to exercise and so to discern between good and evil. This was a pitiable state for Christians of the early church supposed to have been long in the school of Christ. And it is just as pitiable in this twentieth century that the churches and schools are filled with this infantine type of Christianity which is still scorning to obey the authority of God's word, is often higgling about it and even setting great portions of it aside as worthless in the interest of some imported rationalistic philosophy which talks about the impossibility of many things that Christ and His apostles both said and did. It is often only through a submission to authority, whether understood or not, through the yielding of intellectual pride that the higher wisdom of Christ in some paradox is discovered, and that the human judgment becomes of any worth and the apparently impossible in experience is realized.

The school of Christ is final and inexorable at this point. Again to quote Carlyle, "There is no remedy for mental doubt but moral action." Perhaps Christ's central law concerning inward illumination is all epito-

mized in His saying, "If any man willeth to do his will he shall know of the doctrine." When men say, "If I only knew the will of God more perfectly I would do it better," they are mistaken; they reverse the terms of Christ's law. It is only by resolute action on some truth already known that men's minds become clarified to see further truth. There is never more than one truth in sight at a time. That truth acted on, obeyed, or surrendered to, the form of the next truth will emerge out of the mist. There is no canon of criticism, no system of critical philosophy that is worth the name that can ever set aside this basic truth for all criticism.

It is the ignoring of this basic principle, or the contempt of it, that has brought in like a flood upon the modern world the myriad errors of academic philosophizing that have so destroyed confidence in the Bible, New Testament and old, Christ as well as Moses, the Gospel as well as the Law, that has precipitated the diabolic war now ravaging the nations, and which, unless God's spirit and providence shall soon intervene in a way that no modern time has witnessed, threatens the well-being of every mundane thing.

The truth is the period is passed, if it ever was, when the central elements in the philosophy of Christ can ever be proved in any adequate sense by mere deductions from a syllogism or processes of mental reasoning.

The man who proves Christianity is the man who lives it, rather than the man who thinks about it, no matter how cleverly he speculates.

It is for this reason that the child, whose whole composite nature responds loyally to the truth he sees, walks right inside the truth and incarnates it, where the proud, self-willed philosopher misses it altogether. Thus is the realization of God possible in the mystical realm, a realm which not otherwise yields up its secret. It is this which John's first epistle so emphasizes, an epistle in which the apostle thirty times over affirms that "we know," *e. g.*, "For we know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding, that we might know him that is true (or real), and we are in him that is real, even in his Son, Jesus Christ. This is the real God and eternal life."

This school of Christ is the profoundest

school the world ever knew or can know because it is the school of real, deep and profound, composite living of a life inwrought by the Spirit of God.

## IV

### THE CURE FOR AGNOSTICISM

**I**N an address to young ministers there is a peculiar pertinency in this theme. In every parish with which you will ever have to deal you will find a number of most interesting personages who, for some reason or other, have failed to connect with the Christian certitudes. The reasons for this may be varied, but the phenomenon you will face among both men and women. Many of these people are highly intellectual—often esthetic and cultivated, and wielding large influence. You will find yourselves deploring the states of mind into which they have fallen, and longing for their recovery—for, other things being equal, they would become a large asset to the church; and if won they would immensely enhance your influence as a minister of Jesus Christ.

In most parishes at least three types of agnostics may be found. (1) The out and out worldlings; they have been swept off their

feet by the lures and fascinations of those who as yet have no vision of the eternal or practical sense of the future world. (2) The cynics—people who have been injured, deceived and in part soured by their contact perhaps with a bad type of religionist and they have reacted from all former confidence in things religious, and (3) those who have reached mental conclusions through some process of false reasoning. Mental pride is one of the greatest stumbling-blocks to the realization of things divine and eternal.

I begin by saying, Never be misled into the idea that any of these types can be brought to vital faith and to inward spiritual realization through mere argument. The reasons for antipathy to God and revolt from Him are far deeper than mental or intellectual—in the end the *moral reason* must be reached and motive awakened which will constitute in them real candour, make them in some degree lovers of truth. Accordingly, the method employed by you must be largely indirect.

The problem, as between a true conception of God and what is now politely called agnosticism, is to ascertain some form of explanation of the world we live in which has

the fewest difficulties. This is at bottom a philosophical problem, and the process by which it is reached is through a philosophy which embraces far more than mere intellectualism. Two philosophies are possible. The one starts with the human soul, with self-consciousness, and if properly pursued leads straight to God, and to a theistic view of the universe; the other starts from a molecule of matter—outside the soul. In this latter process the soul is likely to be forgotten and through a kind of naturalistic evolution the soul is driven to some form of materialism, and this is always agnostic.

A few years ago, Mr. Thomas A. Edison proclaimed himself a materialist. But in that announcement Edison forgot that his own personal self-conscious ego is something unspeakably greater than any machine or all of the machines he ever devised, for he was obliged to assume the truth of the verdict of his own ego, in order to classify himself as representing any department of thought or science of things whatever.

Now in any process which we as finite beings employ we must assume something as hypothetical. This is the method of all science, and we must accept this basis or

nothing in all our processes of inquiry. Any possible result which we shall reach, therefore, will never amount to what in mathematics is called a demonstration. We are not absolute beings. We may, however, reach results relatively true always in a progressive measure and to be depended on for all the practical issues of this life and the life to come.

In my early student days I was greatly helped by Dr. George W. Northrup who, in discussing various views of the world and systems of thought, was accustomed to say, "Gentlemen, remember that you are not required as finite beings to have a view which is free from intellectual difficulties. All that you are required to have is a view which as one of several possible ones has the fewest difficulties—it is therefore always philosophical to accept and proceed upon the one which has the fewest." Endless confusions in thought in so far as they disturb our faith might be avoided if this great utterance were kept in mind.

We must not expect absolute demonstration respecting things in the moral and religious universe, because they are problems so deep,—often deeper than proof.

This universe is best explained by presupposing a purposeful thinker behind it all, that is, a supreme subject mind has conceived it and put it forth for his own manifestation and for our contemplation and joy.

When in Germany three years ago, I was taken one day by Professor Eucken to call on Professor Earnest Haeckel, who is the arch agnostic and materialist of Germany, although he for reasons had become of late rather discredited as a first class scientist. As we entered the room, he greeted me with the question, "Aren't you rather afraid to come into this den of lions? We here have the reputation of being dreadful infidels."

I replied, "I have no particular sense of fear and I wished to see the lions of Jena anyhow and so I am here."

Then came the leading question: "What do you think of this scheme of things in our universe?"

I replied, "Well, Professor, I am not here to enter into controversy with you, but rather simply to pay my respects. However, you have asked me a straight question and I will say at least one thing about it. I reckon there is a Thinker behind it all."

"Oh," said he, "perhaps."

“No,” I replied, “that is certain.”

“What makes you so confident?”

I replied, “Your own necessary basis as a scientist.”

“How so?” came the answer.

I queried, “When any man formulates a science on any subject whatsoever, say chemistry, are not order, numbers, combinations and various relations implied in all such rational thought?”

He was not prepared for this, but could not deny it.

I further pressed my advantage: “I presume you believe in a science of astronomy.”

“Certainly.”

“Is astronomy based on mathematics?” and, “Is mathematics a strictly psychological phenomenon?”

He was obliged to admit this.

“Who is the real astronomer? say Kepler, Copernicus or Newton? And did any of these create their mathematics or simply discover it in their own rational make-up and in the universe, simply thinking the thought and order of the universe over again, after its author?”

“That is a very good definition of an astronomer,” replied Haeckel.

“Well, then, if one cannot be an astronomer without falling back on an order already given in the universe, can the Author of this universe, whether you describe Him by a ‘He’ or an ‘It,’ be less than a mathematician—the supreme mathematician? And if so, I submit, He is a thinker.”

“Oh,” answered the Professor, instantly changing the subject. “Do you believe in immortality?”

The fact is he could go no further, being obliged to admit the data of rationality itself. In other words, the data of Theism are at the bottom of everything scientific.

A moment later, observing a picture on the wall of two mammoth apes, painted in oil and well framed, I inquired :

“Are these your ancestors?”

“Yes,” he replied, with a little chuckle.

“Where did they come from?”

“Oh,” he replied, “from the egg.”

“Indeed ; but who laid the egg?”

Again he changed the subject ; he could go no further. An experience like this was assuring to me, at least, whether it was of any value to Haeckel or not.

On coming away, Eucken, the idealistic philosopher, assured me that I could not

have contrived more wisely to have answered the chief of agnostics had I pondered my answer for years.

I. The agnostic may be helped by being reminded that *no view of the universe possible to finite minds is free from some intellectual difficulties*. He must not expect the proof of Christianity to be forced on him. Practical personal religion, that is, a personal realization of God, is more than a speculative question—a question for the mere mind to deal with in the realm of thought. The evidence for Christianity is always deeper than any argument for it, deeper than proof. It is grounded in intuitional experiences, which involve the combined action of all the elements in personality. There are factors in this that belong to the very being of rationality (which is more than a deliverance of the power to reason). These factors in rationality are born in us. Functions like conscience and freedom to choose are matters of consciousness. They need no proof. In fact, the proof of the experiences in which their employment results is an ever-growing proof. A very able thinker, the late Prof. Geo. Wm. Knox, of Union Theological Seminary, in his most important book, entitled "The Funda-

mental Beliefs of Christianity," has said that Christianity will never be completely and finally proved in the objective sense until the last Christian has been brought home to God and the product is glorified in the next life. The proof we have, however, is a reliable one and most dependable even though it is relative. From this point of view, I think I shall be understood when I assert that with the factors born in us as intuitional and such as are axiomatic, we may say that all normal souls are born with the fundamental data for God and spiritual things constitutional in themselves. God Himself in the creation of our rationality has made us for faith and not for doubt. We are born to see things as they are rather than as they are not. Thus we are born dogmatists in this exalted sense of the term, and we may be thankful—every agnostic ought also to be thankful—that such a bias towards truth and reality has been put into our very natures by the Creator from the start. There are evidences, proofs deeper than logic can afford. The first thing in all candour that an agnostic ought to do mentally is to take an inventory of "the stock in trade" with which God has set him up and endowed him in this universe, and

this will go far to resolve his agnostic unbelief.

Ex-President Patton of Princeton last summer at Northfield put the matter thus :

“Men sometimes say, ‘Granted that the arguments in favour of Christianity make the system as a whole probably true, but is it not barely possible that some other theory of things will do as well?’ Suppose that be so, what are you going to do about it? You cannot remain neutral in this realm. A man says to me, ‘I propose a trip to Europe and I want to know on what kind of a vessel I had better go.’ I reply, ‘Well, there is a vessel down at the wharf known as the *Mauretania*. It has a splendid record, a superb captain and a picked crew. If you embark on that ship there is every probability that you will have a safe voyage. But there is another vessel, a sort of leaky tub that has a drunken captain and a mutinous crew. I think the chances are doubtful of making a safe voyage on that vessel, but of course, if you want to do it you can take that ship.’ He replies, ‘Well, I will think it over.’ The next day he comes around and inquires, ‘Did I understand you that you would make an affidavit proving beyond a

doubt that that Cunard Steamer would go over the ocean all right, and that the other vessel would surely go to the bottom?' 'No, I didn't exactly say that, but I did say there was very great likelihood of it.' To this my friend replies, 'I have been thinking this over a good deal and I have concluded that if you could not prove that this vessel is going over safely beyond a doubt, and that the other is going to the bottom, I shall take the leaky vessel.' 'Oh, well,' I say, 'that is for you to decide. The risk is yours, not mine. If you want to go to sea on a raft or an egg-shell, go; but my conscience is clear after I have told you in all earnestness which is the better vessel on which to embark.'" I know of no better way of putting it. The common sense way is always to act on the line of chief probability. Butler's great work on the *Analogy* has taught us that we live in that kind of a universe which requires such action of rational and moral beings.

Most agnostics of our time have been led into mental confusion through their supposition that any datum of science external to themselves can ever of itself legitimately be made the basis for a philosophy. The realms of science and philosophy though never con-

tradiçtory are different, and their functions are different. The function of science is, as Prof. Borden P. Bowne has taught, to observe, register, classify and name phenomena. There is ample room for it, and no artificial limits are to be set to these phenomena as observed in the whole universe. The function of philosophy, however, is to account for and interpret the deep underlying causes of these phenomena. Science as such has not one word to say respecting ultimate causes. And philosophy has no warrant for shutting out of view any least phenomenon however microscopic or however multitudinous in the whole cosmos. But these lines are being trespassed upon evermore by men in confused habits of thought or by prejudices and prepossessions. Unwarranted dogmatism prevails in both realms.

There is room in philosophy for the use and interpretation of every fact of science; but no science, however comprehensive, can legitimately pass over into the realm of casual explanation and still remain scientific. It has exceeded its function. Philosophical data, however, underlie the possibilities of any and all science. Matter can be known only through mind. The mathematical

axioms all underlie the science of astronomy, of numbers, and the combinations of the material elements in any science of chemistry. That is to say, rational data, all given factors in rationality itself, are antecedent to any and every process of inductive science. Professor Howison in his "Limits of Evolution" speaks thus: "The break between physiological and logical Genesis;" (is entire). "There is a self-confessed inability of evolution as a philosophy to supply any final explanation of the primary fact upon which its own movement rests;" that is, evolution must depend upon a normal process of the human mind before it can take a single step in the way of causal explanation. Professor Howison goes on to say: "There is a boundless chasm between the unknowable and the explanatory," and he concludes: "Evolution itself (if a science) must rest upon the rational nature of every mind involving mental categories or relationships to find its proximate source and footing."

It will thus be seen that no evolutionary philosophy, which nowadays in one form or another so widely prevails and has made so many agnostics, is possible as a philosophy unless the most *fundamental data which lead*

to *theism* are presupposed. And if this be true, agnosticism has no rational foundation whatever.

II. The second element in the cure of the error of the agnostic is to remind him of the significance of his own *proper selfhood*; that is, of the rational ego of which Kant and all other competent philosophers made so much. This selfhood is a self-evident matter. Every normal soul is born with the consciousness of it. He never needs to prove it—indeed he cannot prove it; it is self-evidencing. Like the sun it shines in its own light. It is the first datum of rational being. A child is as certain of it as is a philosopher, only this selfhood is more than mere mentality—a box of brains. It involves also other elements; it has sensibility or feeling; it has moral sense or conscience. Still further it has imagination, and it preëminently has volitional power, or will. All this belongs to personality, the one thing in the universe most like God. This self-conscious, abiding self is the starting point of all thought on any subject. It is a composite unity, and it has also remarkable power of grasping as a whole and converting to its own uses everything of which it thinks. What we call

“nature,” however, as such, never has the power of rethinking itself as a whole and relating itself to other things—hence the impassable chasm between personality and physical nature. This self-conscious rational self, therefore, is the very instrument with which all persons work in every domain of thought. It is never proved by a process of logic. It is so born as to assume its own existence and its orderly functions. This spiritual self or ego furthermore entirely transcends the organ of thought—the physical brain. Thought uses brain and among men does not exist without it. Nevertheless it is unspeakably superior to the mechanism of the brain. Indeed in infancy that little something in the infant which we call the soul within the first two years of its infant life absolutely sets to work to modify the very anatomy of its own brain by deciding in which of the lobes of the brain, whether right or left, he shall locate the physical apparatus for the understanding or communication of words; accordingly every right-handed child trains the left lobe of his brain for speech, while the other lobe is left dormant, and the left-handed child trains or modifies the right lobe of his brain

for this marvellous power. But who decides whether the infant shall use most its right or left hand in the first two years of its infancy?—that settles the whole question, and the mysterious soul, even though unconsciously to itself, yet under the Creator's guidance, takes the whole matter in hand and thus shows its superiority to the brain mechanism.<sup>1</sup> Such is the greatness and the mystery of human selfhood or rationality. This rationality—something far more than mere mentality—is the deepest interpretative thing in us, and in our thinking it is to be preserved at all costs as the very base line of all our thought and inquiry. The agnostic, therefore, must not forget it or overlook it or minimize it if he would not derationalize himself.

Moreover, this self-conscious ego when it begins to act in its higher ranges discovers a certain relatedness to a supreme and absolute ego apart from himself and above himself in the image of which he is made. In this sense the soul often suddenly takes what a profound writer has called "the leap to God," or as Tennyson puts it in his "Higher Pantheism," another being who is "closer than

<sup>1</sup>See Thomson's "Brain and Personality."

breathing, and nearer than hands and feet," that is, this being so transcendent above us, yet *immanent* within us; we are enshrined in Him. To illustrate: when a wireless telegrapher at sea in the hour of peril communicates with other ships or with stations upon the shore, he does not, strictly speaking, send a message as we send a letter, but he becomes a party to something prearranged—apart from his own present action. He participates in a correspondence which has been previously set up between his transmitting apparatus and the corresponding apparatus in the receiving station at the distant points. There is an intelligence represented at both ends of the line. Through this correspondence, therefore, the operator communicates his thought to invisible minds he has never seen, and the ship is rescued. There is something akin to this in corresponding provisions existing between the eternal personal God and the soul that needs Him. Moreover the experiences of millions of souls through thousands of years has corroborated the hypothesis that communication between God and man works, and works well.

The primary theistic suggestion posits or assumes a hypothetical Deity; that He mani-

festes Himself in part at least through the phenomenal system, and that He ideally founds that objective unity and prearrangement of relations with which all our finite knowledge of every sort is congruous. The very nature of knowledge argues the correspondence between our own ego and the supreme causative ego of the universe. This truth, therefore—of the appetency of the human soul for God—is written in our very constitution; it is all incipient there even though we had no Bible at all. The human soul is made for God, as God is preadapted to His creatures. Accordingly we posit God as personal. Now while this does not compel anybody to be a theist, it at least saves us from the necessity of real agnostic doubt; it affords us a basis for a growing certainty respecting God's being. It does not afford us an absolute philosophy such as God has, but it does give us a philosophy in which man though finite is sensible of being related to the absolute, and so we have at least a clue to greater things, which, as we pursue it, leads evermore to better and higher things—thus we are not orphans in God's universe, even though we are but “children crying for a light.”

Now if some should say this is highly metaphysical, I reply that all rational beings, if rational at all, are born metaphysicians. The practical question being whether our metaphysics is valid or incompetent, and in need of training.

III. But the most vital thing to press on the attention of the agnostic is that religion presupposes *interrelationship between persons*. In the whole world of physical sciences many are misled because they seek for God, if indeed they seek for Him at all, on the basis of materialism only, but God is never found through material data, but through personal data.

To make this concrete, I refer to two highly scientific men who after years of agnostic wandering were at length brought back to faith when clearly realizing that religion presupposes relations between persons. The Reverend John T. Gulick of Honolulu, Hawaii, and Prof. John Romanes were peculiarly brought together on this matter. Gulick has devoted a long lifetime to mission work in China, Japan and the Hawaiian Islands. He has attained to uncommon eminence as a scientist through it all, and an evolutionist of the theistic type.

Romanes, as all the world knows, was a close follower of Darwin for twenty years and became a thorough materialist. Yet these two men were singularly brought into fellowship through the appreciation on the part of Romanes of certain scientific papers which Gulick had written. They corresponded for long, Gulick personally visited Romanes in England, and they became mutual friends and admirers. Gulick meanwhile urged no religious claims on Romanes.

At length one Christmas Day Romanes in England sat down and wrote to Gulick a confidential and heartfelt inquiry in some such form as this: "I have long wanted to ask you, my friend, how you and others like Lord Kelvin, Professor Tait and Clerk Maxwell could be scientists and yet hold to your Christian faith, a faith the loss of which has caused me deep distress for years." This was the question for which Gulick had long waited. He replied as follows: "There is no proof of theism in the Christian religion so strong as the fact of the person of Jesus Christ Himself. He is Christianity, and in some way brings God and man together. Again consider that there is nothing more certain than the personal relation between a

mother and her child ; they mutually appeal and respond to each other, but the relation is presupposed and constitutional. So if one would find God, he will never find Him through material data, that is the *lower trail* which you have been long, vainly pursuing for the knowledge of God, however valuable it may have been in the realm of physics. You need to strike the *higher trail*, and to do this, you must presuppose the personal interrelations between your own soul and God, considered at first as mere hypothesis. We all do this in science. All evolutionary science has proceeded on a hypothesis—never yet exactly proven, although we think progressively proven, only admitting an enabling God behind it. So, if you would find God, you must presuppose Him on the general testimony of your own rational being, of revelation and Christian history. Put it to the test, by actual experimentation and along this higher trail you will find the God you had lost.” Romanes welcomed the suggestion as well as other helpful hints given him by eminent English friends like Canon Gore, and so returned to faith, and at length passed away leaning on its matchless consolations.

I give another testimony of similar sort.

Prof. Henry Deveaux of Bordeaux University, France, has been from youth a devoted student of natural science, always candid, morally upright and sincere. He yet for long failed to find the evidence he sought for the truth of God and the immortality of the soul. He, too, like Romanes and many another scientist, was on the *lower trail*. He knew not yet—the higher. At length his Christian father died, and as the sons bore him to his burial, the son Henry more deeply inquired, “Is this the end of my father—shall I never more see him?” and the thought became intolerable. At length he sought companionship in the Young Men’s Christian Association of Paris. It was proposed to send two French representatives to one of the student conferences in Moody’s time at Northfield. Deveaux, although without knowledge of the English language and rather shrinking from the proposal, at length came with the distinguished Theodore Monod of Paris as his companion and interpreter. On landing in New York they were made the guests in this country of a well-to-do philanthropic man who sent them to Northfield. They were met at the station by Mr. Moody himself, and a still deeper im-

pression was made on Deveaux by the striking personality and whole-hearted friendliness of Mr. Moody, who drove them to their lodgings. Day by day they attended the conference, Monod writing on cards in French the gist of the addresses for Deveaux, but no change came to Deveaux until the last day but one prior to the close of the conference. Up to this time he realized that he had mentally inquired after God and his moral sense told him that when he found God he should find Him holy, the final arbiter of this universe, and he was in great distress because he could get no further, although he had strongly hoped in the atmosphere of Moody and Northfield he might find the data for God. At length in sheer desperation he entered his chamber, sat down at the table and wrote out a brief covenant in which by an act of will he gave over his entire being in complete surrender and abandon to the *hypothetical Christ* of the New Testament whom the apostles and the whole Church ever since have affirmed to be alive. He then fell flat upon his face upon the floor and read aloud this devotement of himself to Christ, and he collapsed. All was dark for a moment and then the light of

Christ instantly broke upon him, and he was in a new world. He also discovered in that moment the soul's immortality, and exclaimed, "My father also is alive and I shall one day see him!" Thus "life and immortality" in one and the same moment were "brought to light" through that surrender of will. For the first time in Deveaux's life the whole composite soul had acted as a unity Godward. He shortly after returned to France and from that day to this has been the foremost interpreter of the harmony between science and revelation, and has participated with Dr. Reuben Sallens of Paris in Christian conferences from year to year in many important centers in France and Switzerland. Deveaux gave an entire evening to me while I was in Morges, Switzerland, in 1913, giving to myself and others the details of his escape from materialistic agnosticism into Christian faith.

In order to help the agnostic these three points at which he misses the way should be clearly in view.

## THE CLUE TO CERTAINTY IN RELIGION

**T**HERE was a time in my religious thinking when I fear I had the idea that I was required to set out before an unbeliever's mind practically a whole system of theology in order to convert him. But I long since dismissed that idea : and the longer I live and labour the clearer I become that about the best thing to do, the only effective thing, is to make some one point clear, which will serve as a clue to a perplexed inquirer to clearer things. It is not only true that we ourselves cannot expect to impart too much truth to a man at once, but it is equally true that most of our hearers or pupils can receive only a little at a time. It is doubtful if most listeners to sermons carry away with them more than some one point impressed upon them.

There is also one important matter, which we are prone to overlook in our endeavours to help others into the light : and that is,

the ever present, willing power of the Divine Spirit who is far more eager to help men to the truth than we are. I do not hesitate to say that the Holy Spirit always stands outside the soul who is pondering truth, pressing more than "fifteen pounds to the square inch," to get into the human heart while it is hesitating to take the single step which would bring divine illumination.

It is for this reason that Christianity always puts a premium on the man who makes the most of the very minimum of his light. The world is full of people, waiting for a maximum of light—a maximum which no man ever finds. There is never more than one truth in sight at a time; and if the human soul were loyal enough to go by that light, his path would begin to shine, and shine more and more till the perfect day.

The great Blaise Pascal of France, who died in middle life, in addition to his many writings had planned a discussion of the philosophy of the Christian religion. He has left us but a few pages interpretative of what that philosophy would have been, but the sketch is invaluable. He points out that the very nature of the Christian religion, the final religion, is such that it needs

for our good to be partly hidden and partly revealed. Were Christianity so plainly revealed that it would compel acceptance, it would work a moral injury to man: it would injure the will and the moral nature, while only accommodating the intellect. But he adds, "There is always truth enough in view for the truth-lover and darkness enough for the non-lover of truth, while leaving all such also without excuse. God is therefore always a *Deus Absconditus* to one who trifles with Him or with His truth. It is well for us that this is so. God's great problem in dealing with a race circumstanced like ours is to retrain the moral and volitional nature. If this is to be done, man must learn to take one step after another, in a progressive course, and so relatively he will ever rise from one degree of certainty to another.

This principle also holds in other realms than that of religion. No person who is not loyal to a clue will ever make progress in mathematics: neither will he do so in science. The great scientists are those who have at first caught a gleam respecting some "working hypothesis," and building on that hypothesis they have gone on from the

simple to the complex in verification of data hitherto gained or in correction of them.

A really wise teacher proceeds upon a similar basis with his pupil. What wise teacher in mathematics, for example, will sit down with a pupil and work out problem after problem for him? This process would be to weaken the teaching gift and it would do great injury to the pupil. However, on occasions, after a pupil has undergone the sweat of a contest with some difficult proposition, say in algebra or trigonometry, and comes to the teacher in his despair, the teacher may afford a hint or give him a point that has been overlooked by the pupil, who goes away again perhaps to burn the midnight oil or sleep over his problem. The next morning he awakes with a cry "Eureka!" and he goes to the teacher with a flush of victory. He has the joy of discovery, the exhilaration of an inventor who has mastered a hitherto hidden secret. Such a pupil is on the way to greatness in his line. It is so in religion. For this reason the merely speculative in the realm of religious truth accomplishes little. The clue, previously had, must be acted upon before more truth can be realized. It was

the complaint of Jesus that men were ever rejecting the light which had come into the world "because their deeds were evil." Accordingly, in John 3:21, He puts the profoundest of spiritual laws in a few words: "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they have been wrought of God." Observe that this "doing of the truth" is a very different thing from an attempt to keep a law in legalistic fashion. To do the truth is to carry a faith in the truth into conduct. This always develops in increasing light; and as one walks in that light a divine operation is mysteriously wrought in the soul, generally below consciousness. The whole teaching of James in his epistle respecting salvation by works is not contradictory to Paul's emphasis on justification by faith, because the works of which James speaks are *works of faith*, and not works of law. Faith is therefore always in moral attitude of the whole combined personality towards some ideal seen; and this pursued leads to ever-increasing light.

Sometimes sceptics with whom we meet expect too much of us Christians in the realm of divine mysteries. So long as we

are finite we shall always be facing new mysteries. Every mystery cleared up simply widens the area of the mysterious. But it makes all difference whether we are passing from one chamber of life to another or whether we lose ourselves in some dark labyrinth with not a gleam to comfort.

Some years ago an agnostic acquaintance of mine with his wife, who was a parishioner of mine, asked me to dine with them. After the meal was over and we were comfortably seated in the parlour he surprised me with this question: "What do you do with all those mysterious things you find in the Bible?"

I replied, "I leave most of them where I find them."

"What! don't you pretend to explain all of those mysterious things?"

I replied, "Far from it. The Bible, like its Author, is infinitely deep; and those mysteries are there not that we are expected to understand and exhaust them all, but to lure us on from height to height in our endless exploration. If I could exhaust all of those mysteries I should cheapen my future heaven. I would soon need another God and a greater one, and call 'Next.' I

should need a series of Gods, ad infinitum. When a man ceases to wonder he ceases to grow. His possibilities of happiness are gone. He is finished. So it is no stumbling-block to me that I cannot understand the whole content of divine revelation."

But turning upon him I said further, "It is now my turn to ask questions. What do *you* do with all of those mysterious things that *you* find in *your* Bible? Those questions are yours as well as mine. The fact that I am a preacher makes no difference with the case."

"Oh," he replied, "they are all Greek to me; I can make nothing whatever out of them."

I anticipated that answer. And I proceeded to say: "But, my friend, I have one advantage over you; I have the *clue* to the progressive solution of those mysteries and you have not; there are many simple and elementary things in the Bible. I long ago began with those and I have found the pathway shining more and more with celestial light; and this is exactly what the Book itself promises. The case is like this: suppose you and I were on a summer expedition, through a great Canadian forest. After a

day or two the skies become overcast. No light of the sun appears, and we, alas! are without compass, and we haven't the native instinct of the Indians. Suddenly you inquire, 'Where are we, anyhow? I don't know north from south. We are lost.'

"But I reply, 'You may be lost but I am not. I have been this way before. We will therefore settle down, build a camp-fire and make ourselves comfortable for the night, and to-morrow morning if you will follow me I will proceed to take you out of this wilderness, if it takes a week. Three minutes ago we passed a trail which I am familiar with. I can easily find that, so compose yourself.' Which of us two would be better off in a case like that?"

Of course he admitted that to know the *trail* is unspeakably better than *stark bewilderment*.

For the most part men and women all about us in things spiritual are bewildered. It is ours to know the trail, to afford the clue and so help them to better things.

This method on our part is also akin to the laboratory method in the inductive sciences, for religion in the last analysis is just as scientific as physics. There are facts

of soul as well as facts of matter and molecules which, if given practical treatment, will bring us ever-increasing results for good. Why nowadays do all well-equipped colleges find it important to have extensive laboratories in chemistry, physics, biology, etc.? It is that the students may have the opportunity of passing from the abstract to the concrete. Accordingly, set to work in the laboratory, the pupil handles the various elements to be studied. He makes his own combinations. He works out his own experimentation, so that step by step he proceeds on practical experiential lines to work out the theorems of his text-book. This course pursued for months or years, the student becomes what is called "*an expert.*" That is, he is one practiced or experienced in the realm of his studies. The theorems as wrought out have become a part of his personal history. He comes close to nature; he catches nature in the act of her wonderful alchemies; and in the end if all of the text-books of his particular department were burned, he would at once rise up and create new text-books out of his own personal memory and life history. That was what Paul meant by "my gospel"—the gospel that he

had experienced and practiced until he had become expert in it.

Years ago my mind was attracted by a remarkable passage in a Messianic portion of Isaiah as recorded in chapter fifty. We read: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." But I inquired, "In what sense could the Messiah be said to be '*learned*'?" We do not think of Him as an academician or a scholastic. But going down into the Hebrew root of the word, I found it meant "the practiced," "the experienced," and hence mastery. And so when I read the rest of the passage: "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned—the practiced," I saw a richer meaning in the ancient word. If I am to hear to the highest advantage I must be in the habit of daily practicing in concrete form the will of Christ, the word of God, and so become spiritually expert.

In beginning, therefore, with any type of mind, more or less sceptical or confused, it is of utmost consequence that we find some point of beginning, some point of contact, some common ground from which we can

induce the soul to take one honest step forward upon the hypothesis, really already half-believed. But that step one must take resolutely, firmly, even in the dark if he is shut up to it. For example, there came to me years ago, during my pastorate in St. Paul, one night, a sincere-minded inquirer. He admitted he was in the greatest spiritual darkness. For the first time in five years he had come to hear me preach, the Sunday night before, on the Syro-Phœnician woman who cried after Jesus for the healing of her daughter. It impressed the man and he reasoned: "Perhaps this man could help me." Seated in my study I asked him to tell me in a few words his religious history, which would afford me some point of approach. He explained that he was reared the son of a German minister in Prussia, but years ago he concluded that his father's religion was too rigorous for him. He left home and came to America; and, said he, "I have drifted so far away that I have become frightened at my general unbelief."

I inquired: "But have you no faith whatever left?"

"Oh," he replied, "I still believe some things."

“ Well, please tell me some one thing. No matter about the many things that you do not believe. Please fix on some one thing you do believe : tell me that.”

He thought a moment and answered : “ I still believe in God.”

“ What ! A personal God to whom you are responsible and who will be your judge ? ”

“ Yes, I believe in Him.”

“ But,” I inquired, “ how much do you believe in Him ? I want to test your belief. Do you believe enough in God to act on your belief ? ”

“ A man ought to,” came the reply.

“ Well, then, I am going to ask you to speak to your God as you talk to me.”

“ What, do you wish me to pray ? I can't make a prayer .”

“ I am not asking you to make a prayer ; made prayers are empty anyhow, but just talk to God ; that is, follow your clue. You admit that you believe in Him.”

“ But I cannot pray.”

“ Well,” I said, “ let us kneel down. I will first speak to my God and then you must speak to the remnant of a God you have left, for you and I do not need to have

precisely the same mental conception of God in order to reach Him. Do your own praying; start from where you are and move on to where you are not."

I prayed and when I had finished I said, "Now it is your turn. Forget all about me and just speak to God in your own way."

He struggled a moment and finally broke forth: "Oh, my God!" and then the flood-gates burst and a volume of confession of sin and wandering flowed forth. Suddenly he sprang to his feet and exclaimed, "Oh, sir, I feel greatly changed. Will you lend me a Bible for to-day? I am ashamed to say that I don't own one but I will buy one tomorrow and bring it to you for the entry of a record of what has occurred to-night."

Here was a case of a man who took one step towards the light that he confessed lingered in him; and what is more here was the Spirit of God waiting to break in upon his soul with things unutterably glorious respecting the fullness of His grace to all such.

The principle in all of the foregoing is that embodied in Tennyson's poem entitled "The Gleam." That poem is believed to embody the method and stages whereby the great Laureate found his way out of early

scepticism, past early criticisms and over stunning afflictions into the true light of Christian faith. The principle of following the gleam fits all cases.

It is amazing how considerate the Spirit of God is to the feeblest step taken in the direction of the light. Years ago I heard the well-known S. H. Hadley, successor to Jerry McAuley in the Water Street Mission, New York, tell this story of his salvation.

At the time he was about in the last ditch after a long period of immoral and criminal dissipation that might easily have brought him to a long period in the penitentiary; he found himself one night in a low dive of a saloon sitting on the top of a whiskey barrel so dazed with drink that he scarcely knew where he was. All at once there strangely came floating into his brain the strain of an old hymn that he used to hear his mother sing: "In the cross of Christ I glory." As it riveted his bleared attention for a moment he found himself saying: "I will go to the Cross, for heaven knows I need it," and as he climbed down off the liquor barrel to start on his vague quest he stumbled and fell full length upon the floor. "But," exclaimed he, "glory be to God I fell towards

the Cross, and Jesus picked me up. Regaining my feet, I went up to the counter and called some witnesses around me, and said: 'Men, I am done with this business of the drink forever. Take me to some lockup and have me confined until I sober up, and then I'll come back and tell you all more about it.'" That one step from the liquor barrel to the Cross was the beginning of days to S. H. Hadley, albeit that step took the form of a fall upon the floor. It was, however, a response to the gleam. It was a pursuance of a clue. It was an entrance on the trail that leads to the light that is brighter than day.

In Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" there is a very realistic picture of the meeting of Pilgrim with Evangelist. Evangelist is trying to point him to a little wicket gate on the horizon-line, and Evangelist inquires, paraphrasing the account somewhat: "Do you see that gate away yonder?" Pilgrim strains his eyes but he sees no gate. "Do you see that light which glows about it?" "No, I see no light." "Well, look again; can't you see a difference between the surrounding darkness and that bit of twilight yonder?"

Straining his eyes again Pilgrim finally said, "I think I do see a difference."

"Well (in spirit)," says Evangelist, "you go for the faint dawn you see yonder."

Pilgrim headed for it and was soon within the wicket gate.

The Magi, in their typical search for the particular infant of old born in Judea of old about that time, had nothing to start them on the humanly impossible search but starlight. But loyal to that gleam, whatever it was, they found their way to Bethlehem's manger, found their King and Judah's, and returned to their far eastern home satisfied.

There isn't an agnostic, a sceptic or a darkened soul on earth but might be helped out of his darkness and into the day if we but had the divine skill to help him discover the exact point where a gleam remains, and could induce him to take one earnest, whole-hearted step in faith towards the goal. Tremendous is the import of those words of Jesus, "While ye have the light, believe on the light—*i. e.*, treat the light as a reality; act on the light—that ye may become the sons of light." "I am come a light into the world, that he that followeth me should not walk in darkness but should have the light of life."

## VI

### THE PARADOXICAL ELEMENT IN CHRISTIANITY

**A** PARADOX is an apparent contradiction—a contradiction in terms, but not in deep reality. Whenever in Scripture we find language apparently self-contradictory or in apparent conflict to what is elsewhere said we may depend there is some great harmony deep down below the surface yearning for realization. For example, when we hear Jacob after his night at the Jabbok renaming the place of his interview “Peniel”—“face of God”—we hear him say, “I have called this place ‘the face of God,’ because I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved.” But the Bible elsewhere says, “No man can see God face to face and live.” But here is a man who seems to contradict that. Ah, yes! but it is the spiritually altered man after a momentous crisis in his soul, and not the natural man, who has thus looked into the face of

God and survived. In other words the point of view from which the divine writer speaks has to be kept in mind.

In the paradoxical two realms are always presupposed, the temporal and the eternal, the natural and the spiritual. That is to say, the twofold nature of man is involved and hence relation to this world and the next are implied. A friend of the writer of ripe years and profound reflection has a way of saying "that the paradox is a necessary characteristic of divine revelation." That is, in all revelation there is a call to man to come up higher or to go down deeper into divine truths. It is for this reason that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Again a process of mere intellect is unequal to the paradox for the reason that man is more than intellect, and the whole soul is involved in the terms used or implied. In other words, it is personality only that is great enough for the paradoxical. Personality is the one thing in the universe that can change a thousand times and still preserve its identity. The matter involves the rela-

tions of things, and relations of personality to the universe are manifold, and they run out on higher or lower levels, as the case may be. It is for this reason that the law of so-called sacrifice is one of the sublimest functions of personality. Sacrifice is not waste. It is simply exchanging a lower personal value for a higher one, as Christ did in assuming the cross in behalf of the race, or as a philanthropist does in behalf of a cause, say of the relief of the needy, or the elevation of the downtrodden. One of the great books of the past twenty-five years is that by Prof. J. W. Buckham, of Pacific Seminary, Berkeley, Cal., entitled "Personality and the Christian Ideal." The title implies, and the book discusses, a continuous process of rising from a lower to a higher form of personality according to the Christly type. A thoughtful writer has described the German philosopher Eucken as making so much of this same principle which might be termed growth from individualism into personality in these terms: "Eucken's aim is to rescue from a self-centered individualism into a God-centered personality." Eucken himself in one of his great essays on "The Modern Man and

Religion" names as one of the first ends of religion: to "limit the scope of the individual and place him within great relationships and to subject him to strict principles." All this implies that man's relations to reality in this universe stand as it were in a series of hierarchical forms; and each in its place has its peculiar claims. That is to say man is a composite being and himself a profound paradox.

This is one of the reasons why truth as such is a matter that must be tested by something far deeper than intellect, that is by life, life in many and ever rising forms.

Hence it will be seen that if Christ is a teacher really come from God, and especially if He is *par excellence* that teacher, He must use paradox in the forms of His teaching. First of all He Himself is the supreme paradox. He is the revelation of everything in God and man, ranging from the most majestic to the most simple and tender. For a remarkable discussion of the paradox of Jesus, see an opening chapter in a recent book by Prof. W. C. Wilkinson, D. D., entitled "Concerning Jesus Christ."

As a matter of fact, therefore, paradox abounds in the teaching of Jesus as well as

in all the great prophecies concerning Him and His religion. If one could see the profound unity implied in the truly religious life, let him group and read together four great passages found in the Scriptures illustrating the ability of the perverse heart to sense divine truth only when it acts morally, as the parabolic form of teaching presupposes. The references are as follows: Isaiah 6:9, 10; Matthew 13:14, 15; Acts 28:25-28 and Romans 11:8, 9. The reference in Isaiah is to the year that King Uzziah died, when the prophet was commissioned to go and declare the divine message to recreant and unbelieving Israel. It is stated in this form: "Go and tell the people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." That is to say the prophet is to utter his message and give the people a chance to believe and repent even though it was foreseen their perverse heart would not receive the message, albeit a remnant of them would, and so the holy seed would be preserved. The next

reference is to the words used by Christ Himself in Matthew 13:14, 15, in connection with the speaking of His parables to the Pharisees of His time, in which He reaffirms the same identical result of blinded eyes, dulled ears, and hardened hearts that was to accompany the declaration of the divine message. This message required a spirit of moral susceptibility to act on a minimum of light as the one key to the understanding of the whole message; and hence Christ said, "Whosoever hath—hath *moral susceptibility* implied—he shall have more: but whosoever hath not—hath *not that moral susceptibility* requisite—from him shall be taken away even that he hath." There have always been those who have criticized this principle in the kind of probation God has established for mankind. One critic, *e. g.*, says that the words of Christ used by the evangelist which accompany the parables "seem to say that Christ adopted the parabolic method *in order to hide* the truths of the kingdom from unspiritual minds; and such a purpose would be entirely at variance with the whole spirit of His ministry," certainly a very sweeping inference, respecting which I shall shortly have more to say. The next classic allusion re-

specting the judicial blinding of eyes is found in connection with Paul's ministry at Rome recorded in Acts 28 : 25-28. It marked the moment when Paul turned away from longer preaching to the Jews and gave himself more explicitly to his ministry to the Gentiles. This fateful decision for the Jews throws us back to the original passage in Isaiah I just quoted. The issue occurred "after that Paul had spoken *one word*"—but what a word! "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see and not perceive; for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have been closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and should be converted and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and that they will hear it."

The fourth important reference to the same principle is in Paul's great discussion respecting the present casting away of Israel, pending her ultimate restoration, recorded in Romans 11 : 8-10. The writer says, "Ac-

ording as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear unto this day. And David said, Let their table be made a snare and a trap, and a stumbling-block and a recompense unto them; let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway."

Now these four great allusions in the Bible from Isaiah to Paul bring forward a matter of the most momentous consequence. They are all intended to show how absolutely impossible it is to understand God and the moral universe except through loyalty to some ideal already known. These teachings are not a declaration of arbitrariness on the part of God, but a statement of the law of sequences in the moral order under which free human beings have been created and have their probation in this life. The dreadful sequence that came to Israel of old, that came to the Pharisees in Christ's time, and that has characterized the later apostasies of the Jews and of men generally of all times, is a *sequence* that might have been avoided, for just as certainly as the sequence of the judicial blindness came upon the obdurate, so

also the alternate sequence of possible blessing to the believer was implied. So after all, these passages all teach that the Gospel once offered always proves either "a savour of life unto life or of death unto death," from the days of Cain and Abel down. The preaching of every evangelical sermon involves the possibility of both sequences. Offers of grace must inevitably work out in one of two directions either to melt or to harden. This is not primarily an intellectual or sentimental matter: it is a moral matter, the only form of action that can resolve the paradox. God's dealing with Pharaoh was on precisely the same principles as those in which He deals with all free beings under the divine moral order. The matter which God forced upon Pharaoh was the necessity of choosing between showing mercy to Israel or hardening his heart towards them. Pharaoh having refused to show mercy "his heart became hardened," he "hardened his own heart," as the account itself declares. "God hardened" it, only in the sense of linking the law of sequences to free moral action. This resulted in judicial blindness. It will thus be seen how immensely important is the matter of moral attitude and moral

action carried out in life in order to understand the deeper things of God, involved in the paradoxes. These are the deepest things in Christianity, the most central, because they bring a man up to the question whether he will or not be godlike. If so all is well: if not the second death ensues. It is a serious thing to live at all, and a glorious thing to live only on the same principles on which the Godhead lives His life.

Now in turning to the teachings of Jesus as a whole—those teachings which constitute Him the master of all the masters—we shall be amazed to find a large part of His definite lessons are in the form of paradox. For example, the Sermon on the Mount opens with a list of ten beatitudes. The most of them are paradoxes, truth stated in enigmatic form. Some people think the Sermon on the Mount is a matter easy of performance, but how different is the case when they try it. Every one of these beatitudes referred to is prefaced with the word “blessed.” This blessedness is spoken on the supposition that each beatitude is to become a thing *experienced*, and not merely thought about. “Blessed are the poor in spirit”—*i. e.*, the *destitute in their spirits*—

“for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”  
 “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” But has the heart eyes? Certainly! Men see out of their moral conditions the deeper things of God.

All those remarkable parables, to which allusion has above been made, presuppose the same form of moral action which alone resolves the paradox. That is, they require moral action in order to the clarification of mental vision; and hence Jesus said to His disciples, “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries—know as an open secret, because your hearts are right—but unto them in parables,” or enigmas. A parable is a *hinted* truth, a hint which only the spiritually discerning, the morally initiated, ever take.

The teachings of the apostles, particularly of Paul, are often in paradoxical form because they are so deep. Their meanings never lie on the surface, but they reward inquiry and especially conformity to moral conditions. When Paul came to Corinth “determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” he was emphasizing the power and the wisdom of God’s coming to mankind in the form of a *humiliated* Messiah, one dying a felon’s death. This humiliated

Messiah was "a stumbling-block to the Jew, and foolishness to the Greek," "but unto us which are saved the wisdom of God and the power of God." Paul's characteristic experiences were all on the paradoxical plane. Hear him say: "As dying and behold we live, as poor yet making many rich, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing," as "the prisoner of Christ," "the prisoner of hope," and yet the freest man in Cæsar's empire. His thorn in the flesh he came to glory in as he did also in all his stripes, his imprisonments, his weaknesses and infirmities because through them he found the strength of the divine grace abounding unto him. No wonder that Deissmann, the great New Testament expounder, says in his masterly work on Paul that "Paul was a bundle of paradoxes." He was the most many-sided man under all the conditions that beset him, Christ only excepted, that ever came in the stream of time.

The great Lord Bacon, who wrote and discoursed on every great subject, secular and religious, moral and spiritual, must of course have a chapter, as he does, upon "The Paradoxes of Christianity." The truth is there is no final wisdom apart from the paradox.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the superficial religious critics of our time who have done so much to undermine divine revelation and to vex the Church of God eschew the paradox. They have (especially in espousing the Nietzsche denial of the paradoxes of Jesus) brought untold disaster on Europe ; and they now threaten every precious thing in our homeland ; they overturn ancient foundations, prostitute great endowments and falsify the testimony of the Church of God the world over. They give scant attention to the paradoxical teachings of the New Testament, if they do not fight wholly shy of them ; they admit they cannot mentally resolve them, and having put out their own moral eyes, of course there is no vision left which they can impart to others. Their schools then become mainly schools of opinion. The divine life in their own souls being itself suppressed, they of course produce a progeny of agnostic weaklings further to afflict the Church of God.

The vaunting modernist Gentile world in so far as it ignores the paradoxical, or becomes in spirit or will disloyal to spiritual life once received, is headed in the same direction as ancient Israel : the veil already is

covering its face; and unless it repents it will pass into the same judicial darkness. "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee."

I wish now to center attention upon one striking instance in the New Testament, the meaning of which does not lie on the surface, but involving one of the profoundest life paradoxes. It is the account of the rich young ruler. This man was richly endowed; he had morality, official station in life and also fortune, and he was young. He came to Christ with a patronizing question: "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Christ at once turned the point of his patronizing attitude by asking, "Why callest thou me good?" There is one good and that is God. What you need is the *good One*; and you can have Him only as Master, never as subject. You can never inherit eternal life by doing some "good thing," for the reason that you are a personal being and you need the good God, the being in whom all personality is grounded, and in subjection to whom it finds its highest freedom. The ruler's proposition was a large one; he wanted eternal life and he wanted to inherit it; he

claimed to have kept the commandments mentioned by Christ, and then proudly asked, "What lack I yet?" Christ showed him that he lacked everything that was of primary importance and that could ever entitle him to eternal life. The exactions Christ made in His reply seem at first very severe. "If thou wilt be perfect (and that is your proposal) go sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." That is, Christ invited him to adopt his own personal program of life and being and so become truly a son of God.

But the rich young man could not endure this test. We are told he had great possessions—great acquisitions, properties he had acquired by his own mastery over material things, and probably over the markets of his time. This habit of mind always creates in men an undue arrogance; it gives them a sense of mastery, almost of sovereignty over the universe, and they relatively forget God's rule over them. What Christ now showed him was that his fundamental life need was that of the proper captain of his own soul. The ruler had forgotten that he needed a master, and he had become oblivious of the

fact that he was already mastered by his money, by material things. The truth is all finite beings, whether they know it or not, are always dominated by something: money, pleasure, love of fame, lust, or other things. All finite beings are by their very nature dependent beings. The utmost they can have is a choice of masters. There can be only one independent Being in this universe. Hence Christ was setting up before this ruler no hard, abnormal thing. He was simply asking him to become normal and to join the Christ Himself in a program of life the truest conceivable. But failing to respond to this test, the ruler "went away sorrowful." And there the curtain falls as he passes into the night. He lacked the proper master and so he lost all.

Had the ruler accepted the terms of Christ he would have found, as we shall shortly see from what follows a little later down in the narrative, that Christ was seeking to enrich him rather than impoverish him. As the ruler departed Jesus pathetically looked upon him and said to the disciples, "How hardly shall they that have riches—any kind of riches that usurps God's place in the soul—enter into the kingdom of heaven." The

disciples, shortly recovering from the shock of the failure of the ruler to connect with Christ, replied, "Lord, we have left all and have followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Then came the great reply of Christ: "There is no man that hath left houses or lands or father or mother or wife or children for my sake and the gospel's but shall receive an hundredfold in this time—that is an enormous per cent. of increase—and in the world to come life everlasting." That is to say, Christ here uses in true oriental phrase a round number implying indefinite returns on the investment put out in His name. Such a return which far and away outdoes all ordinary investments accrued as a loss to the rich ruler for his moral obtuseness. There is no market in the world that pays like that which Christ affords to him who accepts this proper lordship.

But I hear one say: "This is a Bible incident. God doesn't reward on that scale those who follow Him in modern times in the way He proposed to this young ruler." Well, let us see; I have an acquaintance in East London by the name of Frederick Charrington who has for many years been at the head of the great "Mile End Mission," one of the

greatest rescue homes for inebriates and the "devil's castaways" I have ever known. Four years ago last summer I was invited to dine one Sunday with Charrington, and in the afternoon to join his party that, preceded by a band of music and accompanied by a number of workers, goes on an afternoon march of advertisement and invitation to the thousands of wretched beings who populate East London. It was a rare experience as we marched along through the congested districts. The band and the waving banners which preceded us attracted the children and the curious by thousands at every prominent intersection of streets. At one of these intersections the band stopped playing and our party halted and Mr. Charrington, addressing me, said :

"Do you see that sign over that prominent saloon? That is one of my father's signs—'Charrington's Ale'—for my father has been for a lifetime one of the foremost brewers in East London, and it is the product of that establishment that has helped to work much of this misery which you see on all sides." And then he added, "Twenty-five years ago (or thereabouts) I stood one day where we are now standing, and I saw a

poor woman in rags, with two children tugging at her gown and hiding behind her in a frightened way, stand at the door of that saloon. The woman beckoned to her besotted husband who was inside to come out, and in God's name to give her a few pence that she might buy bread for those starving children. The brutal man emerged, but instead of giving money for her need, he struck her a fearful blow between the eyes that felled her like an ox at the shambles to the earth." Said Charrington, "That blow knocked all of the liquor business out of me forever, although I was not a Christian. Shortly after I went home, and at the dinner table I told my father the incident, and added, 'I forever repudiate all my part and interest in the brewing business.' My father answered, 'You are a fool; you can't afford that; there are millions in this business for you.' 'I can't help it,'" replied Charrington; "'my mind is made up.'" He made good his word, shortly after was converted and began with the aid of a few friends outside his own family this foremost rescue work in all London. He finally built an enormous hall, and established besides a great rescue home just below the mouth of the Thames on an island

in the open sea. And he has never lacked for friends or funds. Some time ago a literary friend of Charrington's who had been writing his life proposed that it be entitled "The Great Renunciation." To this Charrington replied: "Never! call it 'The Great Acceptance,' if you are ever to publish my life," and he added, "I did not 'go away sorrowful' in that great decision of my early years." The calendar of the saints is full of names in all lands and of all ages of those who, unlike the rich young ruler, have accepted the Lord Himself as the captain of their soul, and they have received the ten thousand per cent. even in this life,—houses and lands and relatives and children and every other good thing,—and to crown it all, the life everlasting. But the condition of all this is that men have the vision and the faith to discern the reality at the basis of a paradox which requires that if a man will save his life and give it "a living birth," he must be content to lose it in the estimation of the vain, empty and Godless world.

But alas! how many miss their golden opportunity and fail of the divine exchange. During my pastorate in Indianapolis years ago a young, well-known man came back to

that city from Colorado, a victim of tuberculosis, that his body might be laid away in Crown Hill Cemetery. He was a young man less than thirty years of age. Shortly before the end, he one day invited one of his former friends, Stone by name, to take him out in an easy phaeton for the air and that he might ride to the spot to see the place of his sepulture. As they rode along this brilliant young man conversed with his friend Stone as follows: "Stone, you have known me since I came to this city, almost a youth, and began to speculate in real estate. You recall how I prospered. Within a few years I made a snug fortune of a hundred thousand dollars, the securities for which are on deposit now in a leading bank of this city; but, Stone, I have made a failure of life. I once thought I was a great success, but I was under an illusion. Stone, let me tell you how I feel. I feel as if the eternal God in my youth put into my hand a single candle to light me along the path of life. I lighted it and burned it all out for myself and for myself only. I burned it all down until there was nothing left but the snuff in the socket of the candlestick. There is only one redeeming element in the situation.

Stone, the other day I took that snuff and offered it to God. It's the meanest thing I ever did. But, Stone, would you believe it, *God took it!* worthless as it was, and gave me instead thereof His own divine and eternal Self. That's the whole story of my life. Tell it to others when I am gone."

Here again was a paradox of a worthless thing accompanied with a breaking heart given over to and accepted by God. It is so strange a thing that multitudes will say "it is impossible!" And right over against that paradox is another one that was possible to that man in his youth, as it is possible to every other youthful soul on earth. That life once before him might have been surrendered to the one only competent master of the soul and of a true human career. Had it been it would have been indefinitely rewarded with all the highest values of earth and the glories of the New Jerusalem for its eternal home besides.

## VII

### THE COSMIC IMPORT OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST

**T**HERE are three possible kinds into which the nature of our universe or system of things may fall: the deterministic, the legalistic and the evangelical.

The first implies, of course, a thoroughgoing fatalism; it conceives of matter as eternal and self-existent, and all the apparently personal forms in which it issues, *e. g.*, in the being of men as irresponsible, without power of initiative or freedom in any direction. Such a universe is orphaned. The legalistic recognizes a proper moral universe with personalities human and divine, but all human attainment in it is on a basis of pure merit or demerit under hard and fast legal standards. Such a universe, if it were composed of pure individual units each created separately, as we suppose angels to have been, and without a common solidarity and heredity, such as mankind has, might have much to commend it. But

it is without comfort to a race that corporately has fallen into sin and evil.

There remains the third possible view: that our universe is evangelical. It was brought into being by a Creator who would have a race of beings made in His image and reflecting that image. The aim of this creation was to find a basis for the self-manifestation of the divine Creator. The goal of all was worthy of a redeeming Creator and of such vast beneficence as would in the end justify all the pain and loss incurred in its creation.

Although, as must always be the case to mere finite understanding, mental difficulties will arise respecting any one of these three views, yet on the whole the evangelical view has much fewer difficulties than either of the other two, and so we accept it as the most commendable to reason, and proceed to make clear its inherent conceptions. The whole matter is organically related to the New Testament conception of the cross of Christ truly regarded. Moreover, if the evangelical view of the universe be the true one we have an enormous advantage for the preaching of the Gospel of the Grace of God.

In any discussion of the ways of God with

men, it is of first importance that we correctly present our God. In some discussions of our great question there is often a misplaced emphasis representing, *e. g.*, that God the Father and Christ the Son are in complete antithesis to each other—as if there were two Deities, whereas these persons of the Trinity coexist (together with the Holy Spirit) in entire solidarity.

Sometimes the atonement has been represented as exclusively the work of Christ as apart from the Father, whereas the Scriptures teach that the atonement is eternal and cosmic in the being of God, although it was historically finished and expressed in Christ late in time. There are six passages of New Testament Scripture which emphatically affirm this: that the atonement itself is eternal in God and the universe, although historically manifested in the work of Christ on Calvary. I simply give the references without quoting: Ephesians 3:5; Colossians 1:26; 2 Timothy 1:9, 10; Titus 1:2; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8.

Sometimes it is represented that the propitiation necessary to the salvation of a sinful world was a propitiation offered by Christ to God, as if Christ was a third, outside party

as related to the Deity, whereas the propitiation was a self-propitiation of the whole triune God in Christ, God on one side of His being providing what on another side of that same being He exacted.

Would it not help us to conceive that as related to the sin question in our universe there are two poles of moral action in God's one and indivisible being? The one pole is the moral aspect of His spotless holiness which must flame with indignation against sin. The other pole is the divine love which morally compels Him to yearn for the salvation of the same sinner His holiness condemns. In other words, our human sin created a potential conflict (or antinomy) as between these two moral poles of God's being. The question therefore arose, How can God exercise these two morally necessary qualities in His divine nature consistently with each other and yet so as to save the guilty sinner? The answer to this is in one word: In purpose even before creating the world, God must through voluntary suffering have put Himself under the whole human race in order to justify such creation. To come right to the heart of the problem: this is what God did "from the foundation

of the world." The fundamental reconciliation or atonement therefore was cosmic and timeless; it was something wrought in the being of Deity Himself, although it needed to have "in the fullness of time" such a historical dénouement and manifestation as occurred in the Christ of Calvary's cross.

I am here not presenting a new doctrine of the atonement but carrying the whole matter back into the nature and activity of the whole Deity, rather than leaving the matter as an event isolated in time and belonging to the second person of the Trinity only. The reconciliation therefore was not something devised by Christ to *save the sinner from God*, but by God in Christ to *bring the sinner home to God*.

From this point of view it will easily be inferred that our entire universe conceived as a product of the self-manifestation of God was and is from the beginning evangelical. The final throne of this universe is a throne of grace—not a throne of arbitrary power—but a "throne of grace," grace being the synthesis of the two moral polarities of God's holiness and love in relation to the sin question. The world therefore was created through Christ Jesus and for Him; it exists

under the ægis of a grace-system. The thing which is sovereign in God is not any one of His so-called attributes as dominant over all the others, but it is *grace*—that composite two-fold expression of God towards sinful man. The whole movement of God in human history was in order “that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.” The whole meaning of the New Testament expression of the significance of Christ’s coming and work was to set forth what was constitutional in His Father. Deity was always an atoning Deity. He was not made so through the mere historical work of Christ; that was to set forth what was eternal in God’s nature. As St. Paul says in his epistle to Titus, chapter 1, verses 2 and 3, “in hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie *promised* (and if so provided), *before times eternal*, but *in his own seasons manifested* in the message wherewith I was intrusted.” Creation itself had from the beginning redemption in reserve.

It is an old mediæval error that God, because He is the Infinitely Blessed, cannot suffer. Of course there is a paradox here, but the holiest and most loving persons in

this universe suffer most, provided they are morally sensitive and sympathetic, and God is infinitely sympathetic with His creation. Every being that comes into the world, therefore, is started with that advantage. Man is from the start a potentially redeemed being. Redemption was in God's purpose anterior to creation. Then our universe is, and was ever intended to be, an evangelical universe, a universe indeed which sin and Satan invaded but could not wrest from God. If we always had this in view all our Christian work would be simplified. It would be a matter of mere coöperation with God in a work already potentially accomplished. On the contrary, we often struggle and agonize as if we had to make God willing to save the world. As one has said, we seem to be saying: "Poor God! as if He had nobody to help Him but me." How absolutely contrary is the real situation.

Our theme leads direct to the determination of the meaning of "the cross" as it is used in Pauline thought. It is little short of a tragedy that this term has been long confused with the event of the crucifixion at the hands of evil men. That crucifixion was human sin at its maximum, the deepest

crime of the ages. The Apostle Peter himself on the day of Pentecost charged the perpetrators of that event with having "killed the Prince of Life," "the Lord of Glory." Those murderers were really guilty of deicide, and when they realized it they cried out in despair: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They might and ought to have perished on the spot but that the Apostle went on to say that something invisible to them had occurred, simultaneously with the crucifixion, which made it possible, on condition they would repent, that they might be saved from even such a crime. That invisible something was that God from His own voluntariness had deliberately given Himself up in Christ to effect an atonement for the very crucifiers. And that atonement was something standing morally at the very antipodes of their crime. Dr. Dale, in his great book on the atonement, says that what occurred in the divine action on that cross represents "the sublimest moment in the moral history of God." That this distinction should have been so much overlooked has long proved one of the most serious handicaps to the Christian religion. We have to thank Rome for this error. Its

whole aim has been to impress the sensibilities with the pathos and tragedy of the crucifixion. There is such a pathos in it. The Ober-Ammergau Passion Play, although so impressive, is after all but an apotheosis of the tragedy. Its effect on the conscience is not normal, unless the observer reads the atonement into the play. While the atonement was accompanied by tragic phenomena which God can overrule, yet the tragedy is not the atonement. The atonement itself when understood is always adapted to move the conscience and to create reaction against sin.

Among all those who stood about the cross at the crucifixion—Josephus says about 200,000 people—only one person out of six classes that spoke to Christ as He hung upon the tree saw the atonement.

There were six classes that spoke. The first was the ribald crowd that passing by railed on Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha, thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself and come down from the cross." The second class was made up of the chief priests, the scribes and elders; they, mocking Him, said, "He saved others, himself he cannot

save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross and we will believe on him." The third class were the soldiers who also mocked Him and said, "If thou be the king of the Jews save thyself." The fourth class were those who, when He cried out, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," thought He was calling for Elias, and they said, "Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him." The fifth class was the railing malefactor, who said, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us."

Now note that all these five classes united in the same appeal to Jesus, "Save thyself;" that is, "If you would prove yourself to be the king of the Jews and Saviour of the world." But glorious to relate, there was one person that stood over against all these others who did not say, "Save thyself." What he really said was "Save *me*, for thou art in reality allowing the temple of thy body to be destroyed and after three days thou wilt rebuild it in resurrection power. Thy cross is *not finality*, for a whole kingdom lies away beyond it, a kingdom conditioned on thine atoning death." And he said in the most remarkable prayer contained in the New Testament, "Jesus (or

Lord), remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”

He alone in that hour knew, as no apostle knew, not even Mary, the Lord's mother, that the crucifixion was not finality, that the resurrection lay beyond it, the very coronation of the atoning death. He alone used the saving name “Jesus” (R. V.), “remember or save me.” And the adverb “when” which he used was proof positive that, as illumined from the other world, he looked clear over the horrid tragedy which evil men were perpetrating, and saw the kingdom and the enthroned King, and begged that he might become His subject when this kingdom was established. The Lord gave His sanction to this prayer of the model penitent in His emphatic assertion, “Verily, verily,—Amen, Amen,—I say unto thee this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” So Christ took along with Him to the heavenly world this first believer in the atonement after He Himself had sent away his spirit to the Father. He thus set His seal upon the faith of this ideal penitent, because there was born in him the first clear-cut conception of the atonement that conditioned heaven.

The term “the cross,” as characteristically

used by Paul, carries with it meanings that need to be clearly discerned. Meanings which were slowly acquired by the early Church. When Christ died upon the cross the disciples thought that was the end; His career was finished, and they despaired of any posthumous power from it except as a tragic memory. The very women whose intuition was so keen went to the sepulcher after His burial with anointing spices in the form of embalmment. None of the apostles believed in the resurrection when it occurred until they were forced to it by repeated appearances and overwhelming proofs. They then began to see that the death of Christ was an event which issued in resurrection. It was therefore an entirely unique form of dying. It was voluntary dying and a voluntary living again. The central text on the atonement as Christ Himself set it forth is in John 10:17, 18: "Therefore doth the Father love me because I lay down my life that I *might take it again*; no man taketh my life from me but *I lay it down of myself*. I have the power (or right) to *lay it down* and I have the power (or right) to *take it again*: this commandment have I received from my Father." That was the atoning

death—a composite thing—death, plus the resurrection. The voluntariness in that death and resurrection making it a movement wholly divine despite the crucifiers; this was the atoning death. It was of such a death as this that the illumined Peter in his great sermon at Pentecost said in a burst of triumphant realization, “It was not possible that he—the sinless Christ, the Messiah—should be holden of death.” In other words, the phrase, “the death of Christ,” as the Church after Pentecost became enlightened used it, took on an entirely changed meaning. It was always looked at in the light of the resurrection. It was therefore not something merely endured as a tragic calamity, but it was a moral and spiritual achievement—an *accomplishment*—as was implied in the conversation between Moses and Elias and Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. How reads the account? “There appeared Moses and Elias and spake with Jesus concerning”—not His death—but His “Exodus” (the Greek word), a death that while it looked like mortal dying, ended rather in a victorious crossing, as of the Red Sea. Accordingly it was an “exodus which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”

And so in the ripe New Testament thought, the death of Christ was always seen to be something which eventuated in the resurrection of the Lord, and the resurrection was always regarded as an event which presupposed an atoning death, and not merely mortal dying. The cross of Christ, therefore, was a term which stood for the voluntary self-giving of Christ in death as seen in the light of the resurrection ; and so the terms " death " and " cross " in important connections came to be used ironically. The cross thus was not the end of Christ's career, but in an important sense the beginning of it. " And I, if I be lifted up from the earth "—literally, If I be uplifted out of the earth onto resurrection ground—" will draw all unto myself"—that is, I will become the new moral magnet, the higher nucleating center of the new creation of mankind, " the first-fruits of them that slept," " the first begotten from the dead." Such was the atoning death—the death implied in the cross of Christ.

The New Testament term " cross," with its newly acquired meaning in the generation following the ascension of our Lord, was used therefore as a watchword of the New Testament Church. It by no means implied

any such thought as that the Roman crime which had been perpetrated on Jesus was for one moment to be construed as the moral basis for man's forgiveness and new creation—a thought wholly repugnant to the moral sense of mankind. But if God was to forgive, He must do it on such conditions as would not legitimize or license any continuance in sin. It would have been a scandal in the moral universe before all worlds if God had treated lightly the matter of sin itself or any movement on His part to release the sinner too easily from the consequences of his sin. Therefore moral cost must be endured somewhere.

Years ago, in a notable school on Beacon Street in Boston, the head master, Dr. A. Bronson Alcott, although Unitarian in faith, promulgated the principle that for certain transgressions in the school the master rather than the culprit should receive the penal feruling. The sagacious Alcott thought it important that fractious pupils should be brought to see that "wrong-doing and pain belong together." When after the first transgression in the school the culprit pupil was brought forward and commanded to strike with the ferule the outstretched hand of the

venerable Alcott, one blow sufficed, for the whole school broke down together before the benevolent-minded master. Besides, they saw judgment becoming grace in the spectacle before them.

In Bible thought, it was God Himself who took all the cost of man's salvation upon Himself and so by virtue of the realization of that fact man was so made to feel the moral bearing of his transgression upon God, His supreme moral authority, that that realization breaks man's heart with penitence and mortgages his soul and life to a new moral response to God.

Such a result the cross of Christ, properly understood, is adapted to secure; and it does it because that cross expresses some form of holy yet loving divine action, and not the mere crime of evil men, as some have falsely supposed.

In a college visited last year, I was appealed to by the president and faculty to bring out the real dynamic contained in Christianity that might prove moving to the student body for higher Christian living. It was represented to me that certain low standards, such as commonly beset student bodies, prevail; I need not particularize respecting these stu-

dent shortcomings, for they were such as beset more or less most companies of undergraduates in present day colleges. In my first lecture next morning I began by putting three questions to my student audience, not of course to be answered to me but to their own consciences: (1) "Were there some or many of this body who were sensible of a distinct lapse in spiritual living since the day of their conversion?" (2) "Were there those who recognized and sometimes acknowledged that they were habitually dominated by some inward principle of evil?" (3) "Were there some or many, even of intending ministers, who were conscious of a great lack of real power to impress their fellows with their need of an experience of Christ?" In other words, had they ceased to become soul-winners? In case these phenomena characterize any of us so that the standard of Christian living is let down, it is because we have a religion without dynamic. It fails at points where power is most needed. I then proceeded to point out that the central energy of the Christian religion is in Christ's cross truly understood and applied.

At one stage in his spiritual realization, the Apostle Paul came to the point where he

sensed the need of this dynamic. In the seventh of Romans, in which he discusses the several forms of law that concerned him as a moral being, he states that he had discovered a law of sin and death—a sort of downward drag—working in his “members,” so that he felt like a living man bound to a corpse, and he cried out, “Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” For a moment he seems in despair, and then as he discovers a higher law which overcomes this downward pull, namely, “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” he triumphantly exclaims, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

This helps us more clearly to see into the depths of Paul's experience when he says in Galatians, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” By this cross two things had been secured to him: first, the world had been crucified unto him and he had been crucified unto the world. Two dynamic forces had laid hold of him. We know what Paul was before: “breathing out threatenings and slaughter” against Christ and His followers, halting them everywhere and casting them into prison. He even held the garments of the

mob that stoned Stephen, Christ's first martyr. But when Paul awoke to realize that it was a world-philosophy, a selfish, satanic philosophy which moved the rejectors of Christ to drive Him off the earth by a felon's death, he was moved to break with that philosophy forever ; he would have no more to do with it. That was the first operation of the moral dynamic which belongs to the cross which so wrought to reconstruct Paul.

The second element was this : the moment Paul repudiated this world-philosophy and all its claims upon him, the Holy Spirit of God entered into the moral vacuum thus formed in his soul, and created the Christ Himself within him, so that Paul, subjectively speaking, became crucified to the world. There was thus a double crucifixion in the experience of this persecutor of Tarsus. He was fundamentally made new. He was dead to the old and alive to the new. He would therefore no longer " tread under foot the only begotten Son of God." He would not " count the blood of the covenant where-with Christ was set apart an unholy thing "—even a common thing. He repudiated forever his sacrilegious type of living and he

became set apart unto Christ and His service in one final act. Such was the dynamic Paul found in the cross.

I submit that if the sinful human race was to be forgiven and renewed in character, it was necessary that some tremendous and vital dynamic should be brought to bear upon that race "dead in trespasses and sins." There were two elements needing to be embraced in that dynamic. If God was to forgive He must in the first place do it on such conditions as would not legitimize or license continuance in sin. It would have been a scandal in the moral universe in all worlds if God had treated lightly the matter of sin itself, or in a movement on His part to release the sinner too easily from the consequences of his sin, without moral cost endured somewhere. In Bible thought it was God Himself who took all this cost upon Himself and so by virtue of the realization of that fact man was so made to feel the moral bearing of his transgression upon God, His supreme moral Authority, that that realization was adapted to commit his soul and life to a new moral response to God and service to Him.

The second element needed to enable God

wisely and righteously to forgive is this: He must do it in such a way as to secure a moral reaction in the soul against sin—some form of absolute revolt from his previous habit and life tendencies. This the cross of Christ, properly understood, is adapted to secure. But if so, that cross must express some form of a holy, divine action, not the mere crime of evil men, as some have falsely supposed. But the atoning death on the part of God in Christ must be a death adapted to awaken the human conscience as it was never before awakened and to purge it from its old legal and "dead works," so that the conscience itself would become renewed and refounded in the perception of God as an eternally redeeming Deity. Here is a matter rarely half appreciated.

The natural conscience of man renewed is grounded in the perception of God as a Creator, and at most as a mere preserver, but later when the soul comes to the supreme crisis of its life and begins to see God in a new light; that far back of and anterior to His creation God is also a redeeming God, of whom Christ in history is but the manifestation, the conscience—the very seat of moral being—by the aid of the divine Spirit

becomes refounded or recreated ; and so it comes about that the conscience which before merely accused and condemned the violator of God's law now excuses the penitent sinner, so that he has hope at length of standing unabashed before the final judgment throne, a throne not of arbitrary power, but a "throne of grace," of "redeeming love," the very "judgment seat of Christ."

It will be remembered that when the revered President Garfield fell a victim to the assassin's bullet, the authorities of the Pennsylvania Railway felt moved to mark the spot in the waiting-room of their station at Washington in some significant way ; they removed from the floor a piece of tile which had been stained with the martyred President's blood and inserted in place thereof a bright brass star, and on the wall in the room opposite and above it, placed a marble tablet describing the significance of the star. Of course, the star was a symbol of the precious life blood of the worthy President. But that symbol had a sanctity that knowing and appreciative men always respected. No loyal American citizen who appreciated its import would ever tread upon that star. The act would have been sacrilegious. The

coloured people used to gather at times about that star until the room became impassable to travellers, and so the star was removed. So morbid was the veneration for the symbol.

Since the event of the coming of God's only begotten Son into this world and voluntary laying down His life for it, the whole earth, everything in it and all persons that walk upon it, have been in the divine purpose redeemed unto God. They are doubly God's possession ; not only by rights of creation but especially by rights of redemption. Men are not their own.

Would it be too much for us to imagine that an event of so august significance would only be truly symbolized if we imagined every square foot of earth to be set with a star in memory of the redeeming act, so that every human being on earth is compelled to meet that issue? He is placed upon earth thus set with stars. He can neither move forward nor backward, to the right or left, without treading on stars.

At what enormous advantage this places every one of us for purposes of redeemed living. If we perish now we do so without excuse, for God has preëmpted all the ground on which we stand, and ourselves also, by

His own act through the work of His cross to be His forever. Thus placed, we are shut up to two alternatives of free choice. We can either choose to think lightly of this standing ground thus set with redemptive emblems; we can tramp about profanely, ungratefully, irreverently, upon these stars. But what sacrilege were that—the very worst sacrilege. What man in his senses who has an ounce of reverence left in his nature would knowingly do this? “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

But thank God! there is another alternative for each and every one of us. We may say to ourselves, “Inasmuch as I am even without my own desire thus placed on redemption ground, I can claim it with a grateful heart, and I will so claim it; so I choose to respond to the intent and meaning of the divine grace; and if I must walk the earth thus set with stars I will do so reverently, gratefully, believingly, loyally, rejoicing in the divine and saving standing ground thus accorded me.” That is faith, the very opposite of the sacrilegious attitude and life. Hence it is that the cross of Christ properly understood becomes the very touchstone of character; and our attitude towards it will

determine our final destiny in the great day.

We forget that the term "the cross," as it appears in the New Testament, was never written by an inspired writer until at least an entire generation had elapsed after Christ was crucified. Under the Spirit of God it had come therefore to take on a new meaning far below the surface, a meaning which not one of those on Mount Calvary—not even the apostles—saw in the tragic hour when the heavens became darkened and the Christ was dismissing His Spirit.

It is this meaning of the cross, as watchword, that the present day Church needs to grasp and preach as it never has preached, and must preach if we are to see a new reformation profounder than that of Martin Luther. Men on every hand are saying in the light of the false implications of our emphasis on the crucifixion event, "I don't like your God. He is an unethical God, an immoral God. You represent Him first of all as an impassible being, a God cold, immobile, far distant, onlooking being, and by a freezing edict making a victim of Jesus Christ, the innocent, as if He were a third outside party entirely extraneous to Himself."

The real truth rather is that God tho all loving, the infinitely compassionate, of whom Christ is but His self-expression or revelation, became His own victim. It is God Himself the whole Deity that is vicarious, that is suffering, that is redeeming. This atonement is at the very heart of the universe. It was from before the creation of the world; the only Deity this world ever had is ever an atoning Deity. In the depths of His triune being there is a "Lamb slain"—in the infinite conscience of the Deity itself—"from the foundation of the world." He is the basis of everything and of all movements in the created universe. The supreme court of this universe is itself vicarious and atoning. If it was concretely, visually and historically manifested in Christ we should be grateful for it, but there was a cross set up in the universe of God from the very foundation of things long before it became visual on Calvary's mount.

Then, men also say: "You evangelicals also preach a tri-theism. You even also seem to represent that God and Christ are two different kinds of Deity. You seem to have one God to damn the world and another one to save it from the God who damns it."

Nay, nay, it is not one distinct, outside person that saves the world from another person; it is the same triune God who dooms us that also saves us; He puts Himself under us to save and bring us home to God. It is the whole God in Christ in both transactions. And it is the synthesis of these two measureless things, holiness in God and also His love, which constitutes that saving Grace which we have so imperfectly tried to preach.

Our whole universe is evangelical. It would never have existed except on that basis. The atonement, therefore, like its Christ, is cosmic, eternal and preëxistent—prevenient, if you please.

The atonement is no afterthought, no piece of patchwork, no fragmentary thing, but integral to the universe. This does not mean universalism, not even restorationism, but it lays the universal groundwork for the whole race. The whole universe is potentially redeemed, even the heaven and the earth, but so far as man is concerned everything turns in destiny for him, on whether or not he penitently and believingly responds to that grace or whether he repudiates it, tramples it underfoot and proudly says, "I will have none of it."

## VIII

### THE ULTIMACY OF THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

**T**HERE are many great things in the world. There is one that is greatest, and that is what we call the Missionary Enterprise. The race of man was created in order to be new-created or redeemed. Our universe is a process of the self-manifestation of God to creatures made in His image and who, stage by stage in human history, become increasingly able to take it in. By the "Missionary Enterprise" is meant the race on its way to new-creation. In other words, missions are the self-extension of the Church through the Holy Spirit to the whole earth. This aim is to be supreme above all aims; it is also timeless, embracing all the dispensations.

In a time like this, however, when international relationships are so broken up and the very foundations of international law are questioned, we are compelled to think care-

fully and to use discriminating terms. For myself whatever goes and however the processes change, I believe the aims and ends of missions will remain.

The word "end" is used in the New Testament in a variety of senses. Sometimes it means a conclusion of a period or epoch which implies the end of an old and the beginning of a new period, not necessarily "the end of the world." Several different uses of this word may be found in Matthew 24. The word, however, which has long commanded chief attention on my part, is a word compounded of a noun and a preposition (*συντελεια*) meaning consummation. Christ in this chapter is not primarily affording us a program that can be humanly traced. He is rather discoursing on the nature or genius of the kingdom. The whole discourse starts with the compound word I have mentioned.

The disciples had inquired, "Lord, when shall these (last) things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and the consummation of the age?" Christ then takes up the question and indicates the various forms in which His kingdom will shape up in its divine progress.

In the forty-ninth chapter of the prophecy

of Isaiah there is a remarkable prophetic unfolding of the program of missions as a whole, embracing both Israel and the entire Gentile world. In a pessimistic mood the prophet had been saying in view of the repeated apostasies of Israel, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain," but here he checks himself with a new hope, for he has a new hope, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord;" and the prophet hears God further saying (v. 6), "It is too light a thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." There is no more comprehensive passage in the Bible respecting the ultimate triumph of Christian missions, no matter how many apparent interruptions may occur.

I now wish to give some adequate answer to the question how we may be sure amid the many changes of the ages that this great goal will be realized. There is often something gained by looking backward and tracing past history; such a survey predisposes

us to a new confidence in the history yet to be made.

I call attention then to several distinct stages in the past unfoldings of Christian work in the world since Christ came which will throw light on the future.

I mention first the fact that Christ's own personal ministry was itself but preliminary to something vastly larger. He said plainly to the Syro-Phœnician woman who cried after Him, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Of course He was, broadly speaking, sent unto the world to be the Saviour of the whole of the world, but not in His own immediate time and by a ministration that was to extend itself through generations that would follow Him, but His program admitted of that formal limitation.

There was one phenomenal event, shortly before Jesus came to His cross, that establishes this. The event in which certain Greeks or precursors of the Gentile world came up to one of the feasts at Jerusalem desiring to see Jesus. But Jesus entirely denied Himself to these Greek inquirers. Christ's program required it. A Christ in the flesh, king of the Jews, could be no

proper object of faith to the Gentiles for the reason that at a later stage the Gentiles might have Him as their risen Christ and Lord in the Spirit in a dynamic form, which the Jews as a whole failed to receive. When therefore this approach of the Greeks, mediated through Philip and Andrew, was made, Christ replied, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." "I must go to the cross."

What could this language have meant? Surely not that Christ was repellent of the Gentile world, for the whole of which He was to lay down His life. Nay, but the atonement itself must first dispensationally be completed before the Gospel itself in its outward application could become Catholicized, or made universal to the race.

What I beg you here particularly to note is that a complete formal break must be made in the *method* of Christ's application of His Gospel to the world. But the break was in form only and not in dynamic. The verses that follow in John 12:25-32 indicate that the ultimate purpose is that the Gospel should be carried to the world through

Christ's successors according to the purpose of God the Father as well as Christ the Son, for when Christ a few moments later addressed the Father in the words, "Father glorify thy name," indicating Christ's willingness to welcome even Calvary, then came a voice from heaven saying, "I have both glorified it (in you) and will glorify it again" (or repeatedly, in your disciples, who after your resurrection will extend your grace to all mankind) and "this voice," Christ distinctly said, "came not because of me but for your sakes"—My disciples' sakes, in whom I will extend Myself to the ends of the earth.

There was still another period distinctly marked off from that of Christ's personal ministry and that great era of world evangelization which followed; that was the period of the forty days between Christ's resurrection and His final ascension. It was important that the early Church as well as the Church of all time should be assured of the resurrection. Without the resurrection there would have been no atonement sufficient to save anybody. And many other elements of power would have been lacking essential to the energy of a world movement. If Christ had not convinced the Church that

He was alive again He would have won no followers after Calvary. He would have failed to convince the Church that He was God in the flesh. The sinlessness of His career would have been shown to have taken no effect on either mind or matter in so far as sin had blighted and cursed both, for Christ's resurrection was the evidence of a positive achievement wrought by a sinless atoning and divine human agent over the whole empire of sin. Christ's resurrection, therefore, although it resulted in an empty grave, was far more than the revival of a corpse. It was an absolute triumph over sin. Christ's death and resurrection was a form of death entirely unique. "It was not possible," said the Apostle Peter in his great sermon at Pentecost, "that he should be holden of death." His death plus His resurrection was a death that potentially destroyed death because it was the death-blow to sin for the whole believing human race. Christ was "the first-begotten from the dead," "the first-fruits of them that slept," the one "that liveth and was dead and behold he is alive forevermore and has the keys of death and of Hades."

Now the early Church had to be assured

of this. They were at first altogether averse to believing it and the evidence was needed to be enforced upon them. This evidence was afforded in ten historic appearances of the most signal sort. In one case to about five hundred brethren at once and finally to Saul on the way to Damascus in a vision so overwhelming that it spiritually reconstructed him and led to the creation of the civilization of all western Christendom.

Moreover, it would seem that in order that the early Church might be prepared for its subsequent task of evangelizing the world, it needed to discover its Christ as hovering through the whole period of the forty days between two worlds, now appearing and then disappearing as evidence to the Church that He was equally related to the two worlds and the Lord of them.

And now we come to the most striking fact connected with this whole period, viz., that "the great commission," as we properly call it, to evangelize the world, was not uttered until near the end of this period. Prior to this, Christ had taught all sorts of duties: How to pray, how to give alms, the beatitudes, all the parables, the entire Sermon on the Mount and much besides, but this

single, solitary command to missionize the Gentile world He held in reserve. It was the utterance, let us never forget, of the risen Lord Jesus. He was Himself not officially qualified as the New Head of the Race until now; the dispensational hour had not arrived until now; the apostles themselves could not have received the commission until the hour was ripe. And they would have been without courage to undertake it; but now, when the climacteric hour of our Lord's probation as the second Adam was reached; now that the atonement was achieved and on the hill in Galilee—"Galilee of the Gentiles"—He could fitly speak the imperial command, "All power hath been given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age."

Because of the setting of this great commission and as uttered by the risen Lord, just when and where it was, I have been wont to call this business of world missions "*the resurrection errand of the Church.*"

Then came Pentecost—the day of days, the day when the Church was born. What a day that was! The day when the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Holy Trinity, came to His own, so far as man was concerned ; the day when the holy breath of the risen Lord came like a mighty rushing wind and dispelled the night. The day when the tongues of fire came and, distributing themselves, sat, a complete tongue upon the head of each person of the elect number of over one hundred and twenty within the upper room ; the day when all the jangled confusions passed into one clear harmony and “ All were with one accord in one place ” ; the day when the spokesman of the twelve, the Apostle Peter, on one occasion at least, spoke forth “ the words of truth and soberness,” emboldened as never before, and in tongues understood by all, illumining the prophets whom he quoted, searching with his interpretation all his listeners, carrying home the doctrine of the resurrection, comforting the penitent and welcoming three thousand rejoicing converts to baptism in a single day.

This was the day when all Judaistic bonds were broken, the swaddling bands thrown

aside, and the Church for all peoples, Parthians, Medes and Elamites, Mesopotamians and Cappadocians, Phrygians and Pamphyl-ians, Libyans and Cyrenians, Cretans and Arabians, entered on its all-conquering and universal career. This day of Pentecost was the day when dispensationally the whole Church of God, if not the entire world, was given a status within what the electrician would call "the field of force," wherein things now became possible to the Christian worker never before thought of.

To make clear my meaning, imagine ourselves in one of the electrical rooms of a laboratory of physics. Here before me is a plain oak table on the top of which lies a mass of loose horseshoe nails. In a corner of the laboratory is a powerful dynamo from which two wires extend to a point under the center of the table before me. So long as the electrical current is not turned on, that heap of nails lies lifeless and without affecting each other. But now let me turn on the current and immediately the two poles of the currents underneath the table establish what is known in science as the "field of magnetic force." This field extends for several feet in all directions about the table

so long as the current is on. I can now take those nails and mould them up collectively into various forms, as of a sphere, a cube or an arch, and they will cling to each other and stay where I put them as if they were soldered together. Not one of them can escape the magnetic power; they appear like things of life and the life is one life. All of this is possible so long as "the field of force" empowered by the dynamo remains intact. Let now that current of invisible but potent fluid be turned off, and the figures built up before me would immediately collapse into a pile of lifeless, dead nails. Now what the dynamo does for those nails, that the atonement of the Lord Jesus plus His resurrection power and His ascension, resulting in the gift of the Holy Spirit from Pentecost on, did for the Church of God, now composed of both Jews and Gentiles.

At the right hand of the Father He sits, the enthroned personal dynamo for the whole world. Now the Church can work in this "field of force" what before was impossible. Converts by multiplied thousands come. No longer may peoples be classed into creatures, clean and unclean. The spiritually lame can be empowered, the sick

be healed, even the dead be raised and whole provinces and nations, beginning with pagan Rome, can be reckoned in the empire of the Church, for a new era has been ushered in.

Out of Pentecost another dispensational event was born, the most momentous for the whole non-Jewish world. That was the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, the most bitter and learned of all the early persecutors. He fairly "snorted out threatenings and slaughters" against the Christians. He held the garments of them that stoned the saintly Stephen, Christ's first martyr.

Armed to the teeth he starts on an extraordinary crusade to Damascus, a northern rendezvous of Christians, but is met by the risen Lord Himself and brought to the light. In a moment he is disarmed and shortly thereafter meets Ananias, is baptized and departs into Arabia for the three constructive years of high instruction in the school of Christ and then returns to Jerusalem to enter on his wondrous apostleship to the Gentiles, the supreme apostleship.

Next to the fact of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and his call to be the apostle to the Gentile world was the most epoch-making event in

modern history. There are those who superciliously maintain that Paul perverted the religion of Jesus. To hear or read them one would think Paul was "the evil genius of Christianity." But they err greatly.

Paul was rather in his great epistles the real interpreter and expounder of what the person and work of Christ signified. His message was but an extension and enforcement of Christ's own. There is in Paul's messages nothing foreign to Christ's. We can find generally in Christ's teaching all that Paul unfolded even on the atonement, including His resurrection. Christ, however, had to achieve the atonement. He was to become in His own person that atonement before it could be expounded and philosophized upon, as Paul was especially commissioned to do.

Paul, moreover, rather than the volatile and effusive Peter, was set apart as the archetypal missionary and leader of the whole Apostolic College in its world-wide gospel propaganda. While Peter, John and James each had their important parts to contribute, it was Paul who was, *par excellence*, the interpreter of Christ's person, work and message to the heathen race. His gospel, he al-

ways contended, was not his own but Christ's. He declared he "received it not of man, nor from man, but by revelation of Jesus Christ," and he solemnly adjured that though even he or an angel from heaven preached any other gospel, he might expect to be accursed from Christ in the great day.

One other thing must be said even of the ministry of the chief of all of the apostles and of those who have entered into their type of ministry until the present day. That ministry is a form of "testimony" or "witness" to a great gospel rather than any general and effective conquest of our modern world. I am afraid that this word "witness" has been often narrowly construed to the needless weakening of the cause.

Nevertheless, the equivalent of all that has been achieved on gospel lines from Pentecost till now must be measured in terms of the concept "witness." It was so even of Christ, who in Revelation is called "the faithful and true witness." It was so of Paul, who declared that the measure of his ministry was the fulfillment of his life course and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, that he "might testify the gospel of the grace of God."

The human ambition is to be the whole court, judge, jury, witness, sheriff and executioner. So ambitious are men to force the kingdom, to compel what they call conquest. But not so; we are after all but "witnesses." Our "yea is to be yea and our nay, nay." All the rest we must trust to powers above and beyond. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us."

In short we are now brought to the point where we must recognize that there are yet to be brought into play upon this problem "powers of the world to come" not yet applied in any such way as they must be to bring in the kingdom. Here is the place for the historical and dispensational cataclysms, such as the present war, which cause us to feel that back of all the phenomena in themselves so appalling there are forces at work, which no gradual and evolutionary process in the world could have brought about. What may yet ensue none of us can predict as to the forms things will assume. But we may depend on it, the kingdom will surely come. Whatever goes to the wall, missions will not fail. "He shall not fail nor be

discouraged till he hath set judgment in the earth and the isles shall wait for his law."

But growing directly out of all that I have above said respecting the historical, stage-by-stage preparation for the world-wide diffusion of the Gospel, we must prominently emphasize the intrinsic nature of the work of missions. This work involves first of all a message—a message of the most specific sort, that is, the message of an atoning God, bent on redeeming the world through His own suffering, vicarious relation to it. This all became concrete and visual in the work of Christ. This, on God's part, was a last resort: if this be rejected "there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." So the message of the missionary in itself is an ultimate thing.

But more than this, the missionary himself, in the spirit and passion of his work, is to be but an extended incarnation of this message. True, the atoning work of Christ "is finished" by Christ Himself, but the missionary *en rapport* with his Lord is to "fill up that which is behind of the sufferings

of Christ for the body's sake, which is His Church," in all lands and in all periods. He is not to seek self-immolation or a life of suffering for its own sake, but he is to be so given to his Master's work that he will suffer anything incidental to its performance. In this profound sense he is to be a cross bearer, a witness—that is, a veritable "martyr," counting not his own life dear unto himself. That is, no man can be a true missionary in the deepest sense who does not accept this ultimate contingency. In other words, the missionary must *live* the atonement as did Paul and Judson and Livingstone and Moffat, John G. Paton, Chalmers of New Guinea, and Horace Tracy Pitkin of China. It requires a profound faith in the vicarious atonement to hold men to these types of vicarious living. It is for this reason that evangelicals have always been the foremost missionaries, almost exclusively so. Deniers of the atonement or doubters thereof find no dynamic for the kind of divine heroism that moved Moffat to bare his breast to some savage Africans that they might the more conveniently drive their spears to his heart, rather than turn traitor to his cause and desert the field. It required atoning living

on the part of John G. Paton to face the very poisoned arrows and rifles of New Hebrides cannibals, rather than leave them in doubt of his quenchless, deathless love for them. Nothing but the divine type of altruistic love held young Pitkin to make his last stand against the Chinese boxers, waiting outside the gate to behead him, and in his last message to his wife in America to express the desire that when their infant son reached his majority he should come out to China and succeed his father in bearing the same cross in behalf of the poor ignorant and blinded Chinese. Such expressions of man's love for man, like that of their Lord, are an ultimate in this world, and will be to the end of time, simply because the cross of Christ itself is ultimate: God Himself can go no further.

The greatest temptation that now threatens the missionary enterprise is that form of appeal which would make it so easy as to avoid the slow stages of the cross. Cheap programs, easy conquests, short-time periods for its achievement, economic considerations, pooling of issues among the societies, the tendency to commercialize and secularize the work after the manner of worldly business

and reduce to mere philanthropies, are most seductive and likely also to mislead. Even the martyrs of Christ may be enticed from their high calling to lower conceptions of their task.

When missions become so popular that they easily divert from the ideals of the atoning Christ to any form of undertaking, however humanitarian it may be, it is a stage of great peril. The tendency to exploit evangelical Christian missions in the interest of any end whatever, less than that which Christ proposes, and which animated His spiritual-minded and self-effacing followers from Paul to Carey, Morrison, Calvert, Bingham and Hudson Taylor, will simply ruin the whole precious enterprise.

Christ's resurrection errand for the Church is final for it. This Church once entered on its world-witnessing career from Pentecost, having "begun in the Spirit," will never "be made perfect by the flesh." It is not impossible, reckoning with our poor human nature, that, even in churchly ways, the missionary undertaking may yet apostatize and the Church itself yield to policies that Christ in His supreme temptation refused; Christian missions depend on things ultimate; and

they must "endure throughout" or they collapse. "But we are persuaded of better things" concerning Christian missions, "though we thus speak."

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