THE AIM OF JESUS CHRIST

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

THE AIM OF JESUS CHRIST

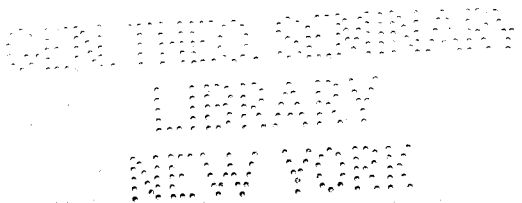
A CRITICAL INQUIRY FOR THE GENERAL READER

BY

WILLIAM FORBES COOLEY, PH.D.

INSTRUCTOR IN PHILOSOPHY IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
AUTHOR OF "PRINCIPLES OF SCIENCE," ETC.

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1925



Set up and printed.
Published October, 1925.

Printed in the United States of America.

PREFACE

This study of the purpose of Jesus is first of all an attempt to place the methods and results of New Testament scholarship within reach of non-technical readers. It is hoped that not a few such will take the pains to trace the steps by which the original Christ figure is discovered in the palimpsest of the New Testament. Beyond the critical and the historical, however, is the ethical aim of the book. It seeks by reconstructing Jesus' objective to throw a needed light on present-day issues, especially the problem of civilization, and the church's mission and duty.

My obligations to the masters of research are too numerous for mention in this place. I have sought to make proper acknowledgements in connection with the development of the subject-matter.

Columbia University
1925.

Contact Information:

INTRODUCTION

On a summer afternoon in the early part of the first century of our era we may picture to ourselves a group of middle class Jews resting in the shade in one of the valleys near Mount Hermon, and not far from the city of Caesarea Philippi, where a generation earlier Herod Philip had built himself a capital. No notice is taken of them by the Gentiles who pass along the road; for already the Jew is an international merchant, and travel in companies is common, the roads being so often infested with robbers. Presently their leader arrests their attention with a question:

"Who do men say that I am?" [1]

The replies are various:

"John the Baptist."

"Elijah."

"One of the prophets."

"But who say ye that I am?" the leader asks again.

"Thou art the Christ," Simon Peter answers for them all.

Thus in the lifetime of Jesus Christ and among eye- and ear-witnesses there was no unanimity of opinion about him. So it has been ever since. On Palm Sunday he was popularly acclaimed as the "Son of David" and the "prophet" of Nazareth;[2] a few days later the Sanhedrists referred to him as "that deceiver." [3] For St. Peter at Pentecost he was "Lord and Christ;" [4] for St. Paul, the "Son of God;" for the Roman historian Tacitus, "one put

[1] Mk. viii. 27 f.
[2] Mt. xxi. 9, 11.
[3] Mt. xxvii. 63.
[4] Acts ii. 36.

to death by Pontius Pilate in Judea during the reign of Tiberius;" for Athanasius, "Light of Light, very God of very God;" for St. Bernard, "the King most wonderful," the "Conqueror renowned;" for certain modern radicals, "the first socialist;" for Rabbi Wise, "not a God who lived humanly, but a man who lived divinely." Each generation has viewed him and his mission through its own spectacles, and handed down to posterity a portrait in no small degree imaginative. Naturally many of these have fused, forming composite portraits, such as the "Savior" of popular faith, the theological Christ of the creeds, and the heavenly Friend of the pietists.

For a century past historical criticism, instead of accepting or modifying any of these current representations, has been seeking to discover by the methods of inquiry approved in other historical fields what Jesus was to his own generation *and to himself*. The result has been like that in an ancient, but still living, city—say, Rome. The life of the first century has been brought to light once more, and the actual Jesus, the man of Nazareth and prophet of Israel, may now be seen, if one will look reflectively. The picture lies on the face of the Gospels in English, somewhat, but not fatally, overwritten by later teachings.

In the pages that follow it is doubtless not to be expected that the reader will look up all the Gospel citations (which are from the Revised Version); but it is a reasonable expectation that he will not *dispute* any statement of the text without examining its supporting references and reflecting upon them. No passage has been cited for display or mere mass effect, but only because it is one of the facts of the investigation; and in a historical, as in a scientific, inquiry *facts* (data) are fundamental. With them all statements must agree, and to them all interpretations must bow. The usual treatment of these historical facts is

very unscientific. Readers preoccupied with traditional interpretations and prepossessions snatch a sentence or a paragraph out of its setting, and out of its relations to other teachings of Jesus; and, if they can then make it seem reasonable to them, they accept it; if not, they account it a hard saying and forget it. This is, of course, to make the Gospels express the reader's own opinions, not those of the original speaker. If we are to see the actual Jesus of the first century, it must be by giving an attentive, unbiased ear to his message as it comes from his own lips and to the statements about him of eye- and ear-witnesses.

This little book is not purely historical, however. Indeed, the ethical interest is dominant, it being the author's conviction that the welfare of the world in our troubled times demands that Jesus of Nazareth have an authoritative voice in our modern affairs. The main inquiry is as to the *aim of Jesus Christ*—what he sought to do, and how he hoped to do it. Upon the result of that inquiry must depend our conclusion as to what he would have done now.

The historical method pursued has led to the postponement of certain pertinent points in debate by scholars until these present themselves naturally in the course of the investigation. Among these are the questions, whether Jesus was the founder of Christianity, or its hero; what his own religion was; what the sources of the familiar Christian doctrines were—supernatural, or Jewish, or Greek.

That in any case these (especially the aim of Jesus) are fundamental inquiries for Christendom is plain. At the present time they have a special urgency. Despite the increasing years since 1918, tragedy is still the basic fact of the world, a fact presenting with a new weight of scorn the old demand, "Where is thy God?" [5] Full many stricken peoples, groping amidst the ruins of their former

[5] Ps. xlii. 10.

life, find the old assurances of faith failing them. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing"! "None of them that trust in Him shall be desolate"![6] Do these promises hold good? Alas! it is hard to think so. Life seems to pass a sweeping judgment of denial upon our comfortable optimisms, and in place of any beatitude to declare, in essential accord with the Old Testament preacher's commination[7]—woe to the simple-minded and the unwary; for nature sendeth her miseries to the just as well as the unjust, and maketh the sun of hope to set alike for the evil and the good! Perchance Jesus Christ found a way out of this conflict of testimonies. It appears to be worth while to look and see.

[6] Ps. xxxiv. 10, 22. [7] Eccles. ii. 14-16; ix. 2, 3, 11.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

THE AIM OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER I

NATURE OF THE INQUIRY

1. Its Difficulties. To the inexperienced student it may seem that an answer to our question should be a simple matter. There are the four Gospels, narrating in simple language the life and death of Jesus and recording his teachings: why should not his aim be clear? Such might, indeed, have been the case, had the story ended with Jesus' death; but that was signally not the case. Soon the Gospel accounts were enlarged by not a few ideas more or less different from their own; and in the complicated loom of Christianity's development some threads seem to have been dropt, or at least overlaid, and new and old to have been woven together into complicated patterns.[1]

The difficulties of our inquiry are chiefly of two kinds: (1) those which lie in the character of our historical sources,[2] and (2) those which lie in ourselves as inquirers. Of the first kind one is the fact that the stage of the original Christian drama is remote in time and place. Its actors and spectators were relatively few and the accounts of the parts they played scanty. References to Jesus by contemporary or early outside authors are very meager, and some of them questionable. Even the accounts of the first

[1] Compare the teachings of the Gospel of Mark with, say, the Epistle to the Hebrews.

[2] *Cf.* Foster, *Finality of the Christian Religion*, p. 395 ff.

disciples are far from full. They consist either of brief memorabilia—less than one half the New Testament, itself a small book—or of incidental references of a rather casual nature.[3]

Then, none of the accounts were written with a genuinely historical purpose, but rather with a view to the spiritual edification of believers and the spiritual enlightenment of religious inquirers. As with a modern evangelical preacher, their purpose was not so much to inform as to awaken faith and zeal. How far, then, can we trust them historically? Do they give us the actual *order* of events or simply miscellaneous recollections?

Moreover, the Gospels were written in Hellenistic Greek, whereas Jesus spoke Aramaic. His sayings, therefore, have been translated twice when they reach us in English. At best we have but a few phrases as they actually fell from his lips.[4] Finally, the oldest narratives were not put into writing until a generation or more after his death. Now, we know well, from the long history of the church (and of other human institutions) how easy it is for later interests to color, obscure, or overweight the teachings of a former day. Was there no such human and natural modification of Jesus' sayings and of the disciples' conception of him in that first strenuous generation? May there not have been a certain emotional reconstruction of his figure in the minds of his followers, and at that later day a change in emphasis, if not a downright selection, in their reports of his teaching? We are not called upon to assume that such was the case; but since it was so very possible, that possibility must be taken into account.

Of the *second* set of difficulties—those which lie in ourselves—one is the ordinary reader's lack of historical per-

[3] *Cf.* Acts xx. 35; II Cor. v. 16; Jn. xx. 30; xxi. 25.
[4] *Cf.* Mk. v. 41; xv. 34.

spective. For many persons all the statements of the Bible seem to possess about the same character as to time and authority. The millenniums from Genesis to the Apocalypse are fused into a kind of separate supernatural age in which time has ceased to be. The striking differences of style and theme, too, are covered up by the assumption of a single divine Penman. Such a magical view of the Scriptures can, of course, furnish only artificial, not historical, results. Other readers, who can smile over such naiveté, still find it hard to allow for the difference between the Palestinian outlook in the first century and the Anglo-Saxon outlook in the twentieth century. Indeed, most Christians have a strong tendency to construe Jesus of Nazareth as an Occidental in all but garb. But we are Caucasians, not Shemitics. Our reflection and our practical interests have been shaped, partly by the laws and institutions of ancient Rome, with their literalness and dry precision, partly by our new and relatively intimate acquaintance with nature, due to our place on the skirmish line of humanity, and in some degree by the methods of physical science. We are consequently always in danger of misconstruing—literalizing and legalizing—the tropical speech of the East. Even our familiarity with parts of the Bible is often against us for historical purposes; for our uses of it are generally either devotional or theological, neither of which makes for objective historical results. To treat the Gospels as armories of theological warfare is manifestly not to get a coherent and honest account of ancient occurrences; and even the devotional use of them —often so excellent in itself—is by no means historical. It is directed to feeling rather than to understanding, and commonly quite ignores literary differences and historical connections. It is *selective,* also—as much so as the feeding of a bird.

2. PRINCIPLES OF THE INQUIRY. A study thus handicapped plainly needs to be guided by trustworthy rules or canons. It is the control of such canons that the word "critical" in the sub-title of this book is intended to indicate—in other words, *the modern point of view.* This view-point may be described as that body of tested ideas and interests which are the common heritage of modern men of intelligence, and on the basis of which they have learned to estimate all statements offered for their credence.[5]

For our purposes this critical attitude consists largely in the application of two major principles, or canons of judgment, one juristic and historical, the other scientific. The former is the evidential primacy of eye-and-ear-witnesses. Hearsay evidence is an inferior thing at best, and may be quite negligible in value. *The authoritative sources are the original sources.* This is the principle utilized by Luther when he appealed from the "fathers" of the church to the Bible, and it is a principle in constant use in courts of justice. Nor is this all. Even among original sources discriminations must be made. Testimony must be weighed as well as sifted. Its trustworthiness depends, *partly,* on the *competence* of the witness—his opportunities of knowledge, his ability to observe, his possible bias, his honesty, etc.—and *partly* upon the inherent credibility of what he relates,[6] its internal coherence, its agreement with the other facts of the time and the general order of human affairs, etc.

The second cardinal principle is what the man of science calls *positivism*—the rule that *empirical facts* (actual

[5] Of course, mere modernness is no guarantee of a sound mental attitude or of trustworthy conclusions. The Mormon theology is modern. The term "modern" is used simply to designate a body of critical methods and results which, as a matter of fact, has been fully achieved only in modern times.

[6] Prof. Huxley has pointed out that no intelligent man would accept as true the statement of another, however sincere, that he had seen an acquaintance drive a centaur through Hyde Park!

experiences) have a standing, or basic authority, which is not to be yielded to any *ideas about* them. For scientific thought ideas (inferences, theories, etc.) have standing only as the facts of experience *require* them,[7] consequently when an idea conflicts with the facts, it must be rejected, or accommodated to the facts, not vice versa. There is quite a general acceptance of this principle today; but unfortunately in theology and social reform it is often largely a lip service. In religious discussion two other ways of thinking, hoary with age and primitive in origin, dispute the claims of positivism. These are (1) prescription, or personal authority, and (2) tradition.

The former claims or assumes that ideas coming from persons regarded as superior (perhaps through having marvelous events associated with their names) are to be accepted even if the facts do not support them. Thus sacred scriptures, decrees of councils, and *ex cathedra* pronouncements of popes, do not require the endorsement of facts, or at any rate not of all the pertinent facts. This claim the modern mind rejects.[8]

Traditionalism, the second non-modern way of thinking, resists the rule of positivism less openly, but not less effectually. Its test of truth is age. Beliefs that have come down from long ago are regarded as presumptively true. It is as though the countless human beings who through the generations have accepted these ideas have thereby

[7] The first notable expression of this principle was by the last of the great schoolmen, William of Occam, who declared that "theoretical existences [causes, etc.] are not to be multiplied without necessity," the "necessity" being the need of the added ideas to explain the *facts*. This cornerstone of science, long ago nicknamed "Occam's razor," is now generallly known as the "law of parsimony." To illustrate it from our own subject matter, a critical judgment of the Gospel of Matthew is likely to exclude many of his private interpretations of events and sayings, on the ground that these are not required for the explanation of the facts, but have been added thereto for naive catechetical purposes. *Cf.* Mt. i. 22; ii. 15, 18; iv. 14 f.; viii. 17; xii. 17 f.; xxi. 4 f.

[8] The break at this point appears to be complete. On the one hand, dogmatic theology finds no controversial weapon but denunciation of critical thought as "godless" and the like; on the other, these fulminations impress no one not already on the authoritarian side. The critics can be convinced of error only by an appeal to the facts, which is the very test in dispute.

voted them into the dignity of truth. Critical thought rejects this principle, also. For it no accumulation of votes whatever can determine historical or scientific truth. It is well aware that if ideas that are quite possibly utterly mistaken do not enter practically into the daily life of men, there is little enough—apart from criticism, of course—to prevent their all but unanimous acceptance by every generation—lasting as long as the race itself.

The principle of positivism, though first maintained by a churchman, seriously curtails that favorite resource of churchmen—explaining physical events by supernatural causes. It does not necessarily exclude the supernatural, to be sure; but it does make it the last resource of thought. A representative modern man, acquainted with nature and life as science reveals them, cannot accept the more or less miraculous explanations which were once natural enough. He cannot infer, as did Augustine after the Gothic sack of Rome, that since the ancient city by the Tiber appeared not to be eternal, there must be a *spiritual* city—the church—which was eternal. Nor can he reason, as did the promoters of the Children's Crusade, that since the failure of the Second Crusade was due to the sins of the crusaders themselves, therefore a crusade conducted by innocent children would surely succeed, it being inconceivable that God should allow it to fail. Indeed, he can scarcely take such reasonings seriously, he has lost the world-view which made them plausible. For us, if we really think on the subject, the old provincial view of the universe, with its small flat earth, spanned by a relatively solid heaven in which a Zoroastrian Deity sat enthroned, looking on while his partisans below fought the myrmidons of Satan, has become impossible. With the passing of that ancient cosmology has gone naturally many an accepted belief of the

past—for example, the Jewish expectation of a heavenly Messiah sailing cloud-draped through the skies.

If the reader cannot look at questions regarding Jesus Christ from the modern point of view, it is to be feared he will soon lay this book down, declaring that the author is a mere rationalist—a judgment which will be true or untrue, according to what he means by rationalist. The book is not written from a rationalistic viewpoint in the metaphysical sense; nor is its outlook by any means that of the older theological rationalists, who first decided *a priori* what reason could accept, and then cut the Scriptures down to match the pattern. It is rationalistic only in the sense of scientific positivism. If this is rationalism, the stigma must be accepted.

An important remark is to be added: sound positivism makes *no claim* or assumption as to *what the facts of experience are.* In particular it is not assumed that, since the phenomena of physical science are facts of experience, *only* such are really facts. That would be poor logic, indeed. On the contrary, in this discussion the phenomena of the inner life are held to be at least as real and important as those of the outer, though generally more difficult to study and explain.

One other matter of method calls for notice—*the critical use of the constructive imagination.* We cannot reconstruct the past without extensive use of the imagination. The important thing is that its activity should be controlled by the principles already stressed, and that *use should be made only of materials actually belonging to the period studied.*[9] It is a canon of historical criticism that events and persons are to be estimated in the light of the times in

[9] This is a particular application of the well established principle of scientific analogy.

which they occurred and lived, not in the glow of subsequent enthusiasms or the side-lights of later doctrines and controversies. Jesus, for example, is to be viewed and construed as a Palestinian (*i.e.* Oriental) teacher of the first century, one who naturally thought and taught in ways characteristic of the Eastern mind and suited to the taste and understanding of Eastern audiences. We shall go on repeating many misunderstandings if we try to force his teachings and his figure into accord with Greek speculations or, still worse, into the juristic thought moulds of the Latin mind or the precise conceptions and statements of modern research.

3. SOURCES. Our information about Jesus Christ, his life, teachings, and purposes, comes from four sets, or kinds, of sources: (1) The original Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Luke's continuation in the Book of Acts. This group is known as the Synoptic Gospels, because owing to the many similarities of its members they can be viewed together; (2) The New Testament Epistles, written in the second half of the first century; (3) The Fourth Gospel, traditionally assigned to the apostle John; and (4) References in the works of non-Christians who wrote at relatively early dates. The historical value of these sources varies: for the present inquiry it appears to be in the order just given. All of them contain material derived apparently from eye- and ear-witnesses, but in quite different degrees of fullness and accuracy.

The Synoptics, although antedated by six of St. Paul's epistles, come first; because they include sayings of Jesus which pretty certainly were reduced to writing at no long period after his death. To a large degree, also, their authors appear to have been ear-witnesses themselves. The apostolic references to the actual Jesus, on the other hand, are few and incidental; and in the case of St. Paul are

based upon the current tradition, not personal acquaintance. The Fourth Gospel probably includes additional original material, but material which was reduced to writing in or near the second century, and thus so long after the events referred to as possibly to have become much modified. The references to Jesus by Josephus, Tacitus, etc., are very few, and some of them are seriously challenged by critics of standing. Their value consists chiefly in supporting the historicity of the New Testament.

The Synoptic Gospels are analyzed by scholarship into four main constituent factors, or sub-sources. The oldest of these is no longer extant in its original form. It was a collection of sayings of Jesus, with perhaps certain narratives that served to introduce them.[10] Extracts from it —too precise verbally to be due to oral tradition—are found in Matthew and Luke, and perhaps in Mark. In the early days when "daily in the Temple and in every house" the first disciples "ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ," it was but natural (because important) that such a collection of the Master's own teachings should be made.

The next Synoptic factor is the Gospel of Mark. This comes nearest to being a history of Jesus' ministry. It, too, arose out of the needs of the new movement. In the tense years preceding the destruction of Jerusalem [11] all vital Jewish movements were greatly heightened. At the same time the generation which had seen and heard Jesus was passing away. The new company—the followers of "the Way"—was made up chiefly of believers who had never seen their Lord nor heard him speak. Naturally it seemed to the elders important that the story of his work should be written out so that it might remain with the church after they, too, had passed away. John Mark, the

[10] It is generally referred to by critics as Q, the initial of the German word "quelle" and the English word "quarry."
[11] A.D. 70.

cousin of Barnabas and the early disciple in whose home, according to Papias,[12] the apostle Peter spent much time, was the first to undertake the task. He is generally regarded by scholars as giving us the story of Jesus as St. Peter was wont to relate it.

Of the third and fourth Synoptic factors little is known beyond their contents. The former consists of the material found exclusively in Matthew, and the latter of the material peculiar to Luke. Both Matthew and Luke draw extensively from both Q and Mark, and to that extent are not original sources.

The three evangelists have certain secondary differences. Mark is a zealous partisan of his Master as the Messiah of popular expectation, a claim which he seeks to establish by recounting Jesus' remarkable works, regarded by him as miracles.[13] Matthew endeavors to establish the same truth by tracing Jesus' Davidic lineage and magnifying him as the fulfiller of Messianic prophecy.[14] Though writing from a Jewish point of view, he delights to show how superior his Master was to the representatives of the old Jewish order.[15] Luke, on the other hand, was a Gentile and a physician, and was especially impressed by the humanitarian and universalistic[16] bearings of Jesus' career. For him the Messiah is a Savior of men, both from woe and from sin.[17]

This interconnection of the original sources in the Synoptics together with their differences of interest and outlook affect our inquiry but little. The personality and the teaching of Jesus remain self-consistent and essentially

[12] About 130 A.D.
[13] *Cf.* Mk. i. 14, 15; xiii. 21-37.
[14] Mt. i. 1-17. *Cf.* i. 22 f; ii. 5, 15, 17, 23; iii. 3, etc.
[15] *Cf.* Mt. xxi. 12-16, 23-46.
[16] For example, he traces Jesus' lineage back to Adam!
[17] *Cf.* Lk. ii. 10, 11; xviii. 35-43; xix. 1-10. The chief critical caution called for is that Luke has a tendency to stress the economic aspects of Jesus' teaching, at times representing him in the guise of an Old Testament reforming prophet with an economic class message. *Cf.* Lk. vi. 20-26; Mt. v. 3 ff.

the same in all. It is otherwise when we come to the Fourth Gospel. Here the subject matter is very different from that of the Synoptics, the figure and attitude of Jesus present a striking contrast, and the interest and purpose of the author are new. The reader who passes directly from the Synoptic accounts to that of the Johannist finds himself in a different atmosphere, almost a different world. With the exception of the second chapter and the scenes of the passion, there is little connected narrative. The text is largely a set of not very vigorous paraphrases, or expositions (*midrashim*), of presumably actual sayings of Jesus then preserved in the evangelical tradition.[18]

The most striking change, however, is in the figure of Jesus himself and his type of teaching. The Jesus of the Synoptics answers to St. Peter's description of him as one "who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." [19] He does not impress us as a seeker for dignity and authority, but as a devoted promoter of human good. He alludes to himself only incidentally, except in the few cases where the criticism of opponents forced him to defend himself.[20] The Jesus of the Fourth Gospel, however, is occupied throughout with his own superhuman position. He not only talks about himself over and over, but in the last analysis about little else.[21] He is gracious, indeed, to his followers; but his grace is entirely contingent upon their belief in him as the Son of God. It is not only that the evangelist makes him pass through the Gospel's pages as a heavenly Being; *he*

[18] *Cf.* Jn. xv. 1-8, where the whole idea is conveyed in the first two and fourth verses, and the remainder is mere weakened exposition.

[19] Acts. x. 38.

[20] *Cf.* Mt. vii. 22, 23; Mk. iii. 22-30.

[21] A like remark is to be made of virtually all the speakers in the Fourth Gospel—the evangelist himself, John the Baptist, Nicodemus, the Woman of Samaria, listeners to the discourses, the Temple guards (Jn. vii. 46) Jesus' brothers, the cured blind man, Mary of Bethany, the disciples, the Sanhedrists, and Pontius Pilate—all are chiefly concerned with the person of Christ.

makes the Master himself claim such divinity—an attitude strongly at variance with the Synoptic picture.

According to the Johannist, his very first statements (beyond ordinary conversation) have to do with his superhuman personality; his first miracle was performed, not to alleviate human distress, but to manifest "his glory;" [22] his first public appearance was an act of superior authority, justified to the Temple rulers by a riddle;[23] his first talk with a man of education was a bit of mystic philosophy, supported by a claim to higher knowledge due to heavenly origin.[24] The like is true of his first conversation with a foreigner: mystic ideas lead up to a claim of supernatural dignity.[25] The cure of an impotent man at the pool of Bethesda is made a kind of text for a long discourse on his own divine position and functions and the evidence for them.[26] The feeding of the multitude—an act of compassion in Mark—becomes in John a wonder which serves to introduce a mystic sermon regarding himself as the bread of life "which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." The next two discourses continue in a like strain, debating, with what seems much futile dogmatism, his own claims to divinity.[27] It is very hard to believe that this is the same speaker to whom we listen in the Sermon on the Mount.[28]

It is true, of course, that there are other themes in the

[22] Jn. i. 48-51; ii. 11.

[23] Jn. ii. 13-21. According to the Synoptics the purging of the Temple came, not at the beginning, but at the close of his ministry, and was part of his final appeal to Israel as the Messiah. *Cf.* Mt. xxi. 12; Mk. xi. 15; Lk. xix. 45.

[24] Jn. iii. 1-8, 11-13.

[25] Jn. iv. 5-26.

[26] Jn. v. 1-47. In connection with this cure on the Sabbath, Burkitt points out that while the Synoptic Jesus brushes aside rigid Sabbatarianism when, and because, it clashes with human welfare (*Cf.* Mk. ii. 23 to iii. 5), the Johannine Jesus justifies his anti-Sabbatarianism on the ground of his superior dignity due to his close connection with God.

[27] Mk. vi 34-44; Jn. vi. 5, 6, 26-59; vii. 16-24, 28 f., 33 f., 37 f.; viii. 12-19, 21-58.

[28] This is virtually the conclusion of Burkitt, who says, "The Christ of the Fourth Gospel is not the Christ of history, but the Christ of Christian experience" (*Encyc. of Religion and Ethics*, Art. "Gospels," p. 342).

Fourth Gospel besides this dominant one of the person of Christ; but the remaining topics are still in strong contrast with those in the Synoptic Gospels. How varied are the latter, varied as life itself by which indeed they are suggested—suffering and cure, fasting and feasting, ambition and renunciation, sin and sorrow and forgiveness, stewardship and loyalty, forbearance and mutual service, marriage, the place of children, righteousness and the coming of the Kingdom of glory, etc.—the concrete things of practical life treated vigorously and sententiously. In the Fourth Gospel, on the contrary, the themes are few and vague, repetitiously discussed, and (with the doubtful exception of fraternal love), doctrinal, not practical. Ethics gives place to metaphysics, mostly mystical, the four favorite themes of mysticism—light (or truth), life, love, and union with God—recurring over and over.[29]

Our present concern with the book, of course, is as to its value as a historical source. Regarding this, it is significant that the author frankly avows a theological and religious, rather than a historical, purpose. "These things are written," he says, "that ye may believe that Jesus is

[29] *Cf.* for *Light*: i. 4, 5, 7-9; iii. 19-21; v. 35; viii. 12; ix. 5, 39; xii. 35 f., 46; for *Truth*: viii. 32; xvi. 13-15; xvii. 17; xviii. 37 f.; for *Life*: i. 4; iii. 36, 3, 5 f., 16 f.; iv. 10-14; v. 24-26, 40; vi. 35, 40, 47 f., 51, 53-58, 63; vii. 37 f.; viii. 12, 51; x. 10, 28; xi. 25; xiv. 6, 19; for *Love*: xiii. 34 f.; xiv. 21-23; xv. 9-13, 17; for *Union with God or Christ*: vi. 54 (26-35, 41-58); xiv. 9-11, 20, 23; xv. 1-7; xvii. 21-23.

So, too, the miracles recorded seem to have been selected from the mystic point of view—the conversion of the water into wine, which "manifested his glory" (ii. 11), standing for the transformation of the believer's inner life effected by the Son of God; the cure of the impotent man and the raising of Lazarus revealing him as the earthly fount of divine life; the healing of the blind man disclosing him as "the light of the world," and the feeding of the multitude as "the living bread which came down out of heaven." On the other hand, the demoniac cures, of which the Synoptics made so much, are eschewed. The divine man, through whom alone is that union with God possible which constitutes salvation, was, however, a real human being, and not, as certain "anti-Christs" maintained, a purely metaphysical person, a supernatural simulacrum of humanity. *Cf.* I Jn. ii. 18 f., 22; iv. 3. His opposition to this theory, upheld in the second century and later by many Gnostics, explains certain of the author's references to the physical life of Jesus. *Cf.* iv. 6 f.; xi. 35; xix. 28, 34 f. In this view his contemporary Polycarp quite concurred, declaring, "Whosoever doth not confess Jesus Christ to have come in the flesh is anti-Christ."

The Johannist makes Jesus say not a little about obedience; but on examination the obedience resolves itself into simply two things: belief in the Son of God and love to the brethren, and the latter seems to have been mostly sentimental.

the Christ, the Son of God;[30] and that believing ye may have life in his name." Apart from that purpose the writer shows scarcely any interest in events. He mentions John the Baptist, but apparently only for the purpose of introducing his testimony [31] as to the uniqueness of Christ, and in particular his account of the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. The actual baptism of Jesus is omitted, perhaps under the idea that the only fitting baptism of the Son of God was that of the Holy Spirit. Similarly in his account of the Last Supper he omits Jesus' words about the memorial significance of the bread and wine. The raising of Lazárus he connects up intimately with the closing scenes of Jesus' life (especially the bitter Sanhedrist opposition), and yet Mark's Gospel leaves no place for such an event at that time.

Just *when* the Gospel was written and *by whom* [32] is unknown. From about the first quarter of the second century it was used in the churches, especially by Gnostics. Some fifty years later it came to be ascribed to the apostle John. Eusebius, the first but quite uncritical church historian, said that Clement of Alexandria (a speculative theologian of a century before his time) learned from

[30] The Christ for him was not the Jewish Messiah, whose figure occupied the thoughts of Israelites in Jesus' day a century earlier, but the God-man of theology. The old apocalyptic Kingdom and the second coming of Jesus are quite dropped out. *Cf.* iii. 13 ff.; vi. 14 f., 29, 32 f., 38, 42, 46 f., 51, 57; viii. 56-58.

[31] This testimony harmonizes ill with the Baptist's subsequent uncertainty about him. *Cf.* Mt. xi. 2 f.

[32] The strongest reason for thinking the author was himself a witness of Jesus' career is the opening words of the First Epistle of John, the author of which seems to have been the fourth evangelist. There we are told that "that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled concerning the Word of life . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, also, that ye also may have fellowship with us," etc. In the case of a modern writer this language would naturally be regarded as a claim to the standing of an eye- and ear- and tactual-witness. The author was an Oriental mystic, however, and lived eighteen centuries ago, when ideas as to sound historical narrative did not exist. It is perfectly possible, consequently, that, as Harnack thinks, the language is figurative and the meaning mystic. How it is to be construed must be determined by further evidence, especially by the remainder of the epistle. When we look there for the things "seen and heard," we find that not a thing is mentioned that could be a matter of observation by eye, or ear, or hands! The things actually "declared" are matters of mystic experience or inferences therefrom. So what seemed at first clear evidence becomes very doubtful indeed.

"early presbyters" that St. John, "perceiving that the bodily [*i.e.*, external] facts had been set forth in the other Gospels, at the instance of his disciples and with the inspiration of the Spirit, composed a spiritual gospel" [33]—apparently with a view to setting forth what were held to be the esoteric teachings of Jesus. Thus, on this view, which is still accepted by conservative scholars, St. John in extreme old age (about the end of the first century) wrote the Fourth Gospel as a doctrinal supplement to the original gospels. The more advanced critics reject the Johannine authorship,[34] and put the date of the book somewhere from 120 to 135 A.D. The difference between these views is of small importance for the present inquiry; for in either case we are left with a work written a long time after the events and sayings recorded, and with a purpose that was not historical, but doctrinal.[35] It may, of course, contain historical material, and material unknown to or overlooked by previous writers; but its testimony cannot be accepted when it conflicts with earlier accounts. This is especially true with regard to the discourses, for words are much more difficult to recall accurately than events. Moreover, the lapse of sixty or more years inevitably, and largely insensibly, modifies memories and produces new conceptions. Especially is the influence of religious theory, in the course of such an interval, pretty certain to sway the mind and to bring the past into harmony with the views of the present.[36]

[33] Quoted by W. S. Sanday in his *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 67.

[34] Certainly it is hard to understand how a Jewish apostle, whom St. Paul refers to as one of the "pillars" of Jewish Christianity (Gal. ii. 9), should later have become so anti-Jewish as the author of the Fourth Gospel.

[35] The dominance of the theological motive is not strange, for by that time the *interpretation* of Jesus' life, not its particular events, was the foremost intellectual interest of the church.

[36] One way of evaluating the book for historical purposes on the Johannine authorship theory is to ask oneself whether a nonagenarian of ancient times, narrating events and sayings of his early manhood, and writing in support of a cherished doctrine, would be apt to reject a tradition favorable to his own views simply because his memory did not support it.

We must conclude, therefore, that our main sources are the Synoptic Gospels; all others are secondary and of various degrees of value. Turning to these sources, and guiding ourselves by the recognized canons of research, let us now ask first of all *who Jesus was.*

CHAPTER II

WHO WAS JESUS?

It is evident from the gospel accounts that prior to his public career Jesus of Nazareth was one of the common people, an Israelite undistinguished as to property, social standing, or learning. To his fellow townsmen he was one of the village artisans, a respectable citizen, no doubt, but not entitled to exercise functions superior to those of ordinary Nazarenes. When in the course of time he did preach in their synagogue, they said one to another, with the freedom of Oriental assemblies, "From whence hath this man these things? . . . Is not this the carpenter,[1] the son of Mary, the brother of James . . . and are not his sisters here with us?"

Yet from early days apparently his character and piety won the favorable opinion of his immediate neighbors, an opinion with which his boyish episode in the Temple, when considered in the light of the customs of the time, is in no way inconsistent.[2] This judgment of the vicinage, both the friendly and the unfriendly, is of more importance than may appear to the casual reader; for it means that *we must attribute to Jesus the customs and interests,* and largely *the ideas and hopes, of a devout Galilean Jew of the first century,* unless there is good evidence to the contrary. The simpler the social group, the more intolerant

[1] Mk. vi. 3. Evidently carpentry was his calling. This does not justify, however, certain careless or supercilious references to him as a "Galilean peasant," for he was not a tiller of the soil, and every Jewish boy was then expected to learn a trade.

[2] *Cf.* Lk. ii. 40-52. At the Passover season there were hours when any Jewish boy might put questions to the rabbis.

it is of variations from the type. Thus we must suppose that the Jewish worship, with its liturgies, sermons, and rites, was on the whole acceptable to him.[3] He never criticized it, and his only recorded reforming act was to clear away from the Temple obvious abuses, so that it might serve its original purpose. He seems to have attended the great feasts and participated in them like other Israelites.

1. JESUS A HEALER. He did not remain a Galilean carpenter. Mark represents him as one of the great number receiving baptism from John, the wilderness prophet; and then, after certain dramatic experiences, presumably mystic, as coming "into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God," and at length in Capernaum calling four disciples. Evidently he was becoming a public character; his prophetic ministry had begun. In that little city by the Galilean lake he healed a demoniac in the synagogue, a fever patient in the home of his host (Simon), and after sundown "many that were sick with divers diseases." The popular effect of these cures was great. When early the following morning Simon and others followed him out to the desert place whither he had retired for prayer, they brought the news that all men were seeking him. Soon eager throngs were about him, begging him to remain among them.[4] To these excited townspeople Jesus plainly was a remarkable man, and a man most valuable to the community—a *physician,* and a wonderful physician.

As "the great physician" evangelical tradition has loved to depict him; and rightly enough, for the relief of distress, and especially the cure of disease, was evidently a natural and a welcome activity to Jesus. He healed from

[3] His almost complete silence regarding the Temple sacrifices indicates, no doubt, that his interest was not in that direction; yet there are indications that at least he had no quarrel with them. *Cf.* Mt. v. 23 f.; viii. 4; xxiii. 17-21.
[4] Mk. i. 14-37.

the love of it. Ministration was his natural reaction to human suffering and need. *How* he healed admits of difference of opinion. Whatever one's view as to that, his *power* to heal appears to have been a natural gift, the reality of which, in view of recent discoveries in psychotherapy, there is no sufficient reason to challenge. In a sense he was a faith curist: his curative power was conditioned by the patient's belief.[5]

It is to be noted, however, that as a healer Jesus was an amateur—in the best or literal sense—not a professional. He had had no medical training, made no medical claims, taught no medical art, and received no medical fees. It was on a like basis that he commissioned his ministering apostles—"Freely ye received; freely give." Moreover, he did not regard healing as his prime mission, but subordinated it to preaching. There must have been many still ailing in Capernaum and roundabout, but to solicitations to remain he replied, "I must *preach* the good tidings of the Kingdom of God to other cities, also; for therefore was I sent;" [6] that is, as preacher rather than healer.

2. JESUS A TEACHER. So his biographers describe him. Their narratives are largely occupied with such of his teachings as could be remembered. Matthew begins his account of his Master's public career with the words: "From that time began Jesus to *preach*," etc., and adds that he "went about in all Galilee, *teaching* in their synagogues, and *preaching* the gospel of the Kingdom." [7] Luke learns that in his sermon in the Nazareth synagogue he claimed a divine commission "to preach good tidings to the poor"—a task in which he regarded himself as continuing the work of John the Baptist.[8] It was as preachers

[5] *Cf.* Mt. viii. 13; ix. 28; xiii. 58; xvii. 20; Mk. v. 36; ix. 23; Lk. viii. 50.
[6] Lk. iv. 43.
[7] Mt. iv. 17, 23; *cf.* ix. 35; v. 2 ff.; Mk. i. 14, 39; ii. 2; iv. 1, 2; Lk. xx. 1; Jn. iii. 2.
[8] Lk. iv. 18; xvi. 16.

primarily that he chose certain disciples to be apostles. "He appointed twelve," we are told, "that they might be with him, and *that he might send them forth to preach,* and to have authority to cast out devils." [9] Apparently whatever else he was to be or to effect was to come about through this agency—appeal and instruction.

It has been urged [10] that "the picture of Jesus as teacher is not true to the fact of the oldest presentation;" that he "was not contemplative, but active, . . . not a passive watcher of events," but the forcer of events. "In his thought the Kingdom cannot come until the people are roused to reach forth for it." The substance of this claim appears to be true. It does not, however, displace preaching and teaching from their central position in Jesus' work; for with him teaching was a means of effecting results, and in his case the most important means—that is, as propaganda. Yet it is quite true that Jesus was not a *mere* teacher; he was deeply occupied in furthering a message which had direct and important bearings on life, that is, in a gospel. He was no scholastic, no philosopher, not even a moral philosopher.[11] He was a devoted preacher, a spiritual leader, a prophet.

3. JESUS A MESSIANIC CLAIMANT. Soon, if not from the first, Jesus appeared to his disciples in a third character or aspect. He was the Messiah, the long hoped-for, glorious figure which, by common consent, was to usher in the Kingdom of God upon earth. As we have seen, this was the firm belief of the disciples at the time of the Caesarea Philippi sojourn. But was this Jesus' own view of his position and calling? Dr. Martineau and others

[9] Mk. iii. 14; *cf.* Mt. x. 7; Lk. ix. 60.

[10] By Schweitzer in his *Secret of the Messiahship,* quoted by J. F. McConnell in the *Harvard Theolog. Rev.,* April, 1919.

[11] So J. Weiss remarks: "We cannot in strictness speak of the ethics of Jesus at all . . . but we may see how a great personality creates a moral standard by what he does and suffers, and how he illustrates it in his words."——Quoted by H. C. King, *Ethics of Jesus,* p. 17.

have claimed that the Messiahship was a misconception on the part of Jesus' followers, due to their ardent longing for the promised Kingdom. Certainly when one reads the gospels with discrimination, he is impressed by the contrast between the freedom and fullness with which Jesus discourses about the Kingdom and the reserve he maintains when referring to the Messiah. His ministry was well advanced when John the Baptist, still in doubt regarding him, sent messengers to inquire whether he was actually the Promised One; yet even then the Master returned a diplomatic and not a plain answer, virtually bidding the Baptist to judge for himself.[12] Indeed, to the close of his career the popular opinions about him showed an uncertainty [13] which scarcely admits of an open claim to Messiahship on his part.

It has been pointed out,[14] however, that there were special reasons for Jesus' reticence on this point. The Kingdom, being future, could be proclaimed and discussed much more safely than could the Messiahship of a person actually and tangibly present. Such was the tension of popular hope at the time, that a claim to that dignity would quite certainly have precipitated a crisis, and doubtless a premature one. Martineau's argument that Jesus could have made the claim and yet have avoided a crisis by explaining that his mission was in no way political, is academic. Jesus no doubt appreciated the unreadiness of the common people to make distinctions, especially when these are not in accord with their expectations. Most New Testament scholars hold that Jesus did regard himself as the Messiah; that the deep and sure consciousness of this dignity [15] was the guiding principle of his life, his "acco-

[12] Lk. vii. 16-23.
[13] *Cf.* Jn. x. 24; vii. 26 f.; xi. 55 f.; xii. 34; Lk. ix. 18-21; Mk. xiv. 60 f.
[14] By Bousset; *cf. Jesus*, p. 175 ff.
[15] *Cf.* Mk. ii. 7-11, 19 f., 27 f.; x. 47.

lade of the Spirit;" and that he withheld the open announcement of his claim out of concern for the interests of the Kingdom.[16] This view seems to be the only one that accords with the serious fact that Jesus accepted from his followers Messianic faith and devotion, and on a few occasions, as when adjured by the High Priest, claimed the dignity itself.[17] Of course, it was as an aspirant to the Messiahship that he was crucified, and as the Messiah that his teachings were disseminated after his death.

4. DID JESUS PRESENT HIMSELF AS A WORLD-SAVIOR? To some readers it may seem that the most important aspect of Jesus' life and work has yet to be touched upon —his supreme distinction as the Savior of the World. But the Synoptic Gospels do not represent him in that guise, at least not in the evangelical sense. It is true that, according to the nativity accounts,[18] he was named Jesus because he was to "save his people from their sins" and that he was heralded by the angels as a Savior. It is true, too, that he said he had come "to seek and to save that which was lost"—a purpose with which what are known as the parables of grace in Luke quite accord.[19] Nor is it to be denied that Jesus' life and aim can be described in terms of salvation. His was a gospel of love, a program of human benefit and uplift, and that does involve deliverance from evil, physical and moral. The traditional conception of the church, however, is of a different kind of Savior, of one who saves in a metaphysical, or theological, not an ethical, sense. It has to do with a religious situation which is hard to locate in space or time, the position of a wrong-doer at the bar of a holy God. That conception, so common later, does not appear in the Synoptic

[16] *Cf.* Mt. xvi. 20.
[17] Mt. xvi. 15 f.; Lk. xix. 40; Mk. xiv. 61 f.; Mt. xii. 28, 41 f.; Jn. iv. 26.
[18] Mt. i. 21; Lk. ii. 11. These were probably later additions prefixed to Matthew and Luke. They are hard to reconcile with Mk. iii. 21, 31 ff.
[19] Lk. xix. 10; vii. 36-50; x. 30-37; xv. 1-32.

accounts at all, though there are passages which can be made to agree with it, if one so desire. It is a conception concerned primarily, not with the *power* of sin (the debased will) and the way to a holy purpose and life, but with the *guilt* of sin and the means of escaping offended law. It has to do with the way in which God, or a part of his nature, may be "satisfied" without the punishment of the sinner. Jesus does not seem to have been concerned with it.[20] The impression given by the first three evangelists is that Jesus' work as Savior was simply the consequence of his work as healer, teacher, and Messiah. In particular he is never described as a sacrificial victim.

It appears, then, that, in addition to his natural standing as a middle class Jew of the first century, Jesus was to all the actual witnesses both a prominent teacher, or unaccredited rabbi, and a notable healer; and that to many he was also that great hope of Israel, the Christ.

[20] It is common with theologians to find the idea in a saying of Jesus at the Last Supper; but, as will appear later, without real justification.

CHAPTER III

WHAT DID JESUS TEACH?

1. GENERAL CHARACTER OF HIS TEACHING. The *content* of Jesus' message may seem to be evident enough. Are not the synoptic gospels largely made up of his sayings? What is the Sermon on the Mount but the teaching of Jesus? True enough; and yet, as a matter of fact, there have been large differences of opinion as to what Jesus taught. Two things have contributed to these divergencies: (1) Jesus' sayings, being so largely tropical, are often open to differing interpretations, and (2) since they are not systematic but occasional (like the teachings of the courts), it is not evident at first which idea or message is central and dominant. Our concern in this chapter is with his main themes and emphases, and with such a correlation of them as will give them an organized and unitary character. *What was Jesus' prime message*—the teaching in the light of which his other teachings are to be interpreted?[1]

A preliminary and partial answer to this question is to be found in the account of his sermon in the Nazareth synagogue already referred to. The audience, being fellow townsmen, was emotionally critical, as was natural. Probably in the breast of nearly every male Israelite present there was incipient the jealous demand that later broke into

[1] According to the Fourth Gospel this seems to have been the question in the mind of Nicodemus in his private interview with Jesus. The Fourth Evangelist gives what he evidently considered to be the true answer, namely, mystic connection with God as the source and essence of salvation.

open expression, "Whence hath this man these things?" It was thus an occasion to call forth from a courageous man a frank expression of his major theme—the core of his message. It is significant, therefore, that we find him selecting (unless possibly it was the appointed reading for the day) and reading the prophecy (recognized as Messianic) in which the second Isaiah describes "the Spirit of Yahveh" as anointing the speaker "to preach good tidings to the poor," "release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind," freedom to "them that are bruised," and the presence of "the acceptable year of Yahveh." [2] This prophecy Jesus proceeded to connect up with his own work and time by the bold announcement, "Today hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." How he applied these glowing metaphors to the actual socio-political situation of the day we do not know; but in view of his work as a healer, already extensive and already the cause of jealousy in his home town, it is reasonable to think that at least his first reference was to literal relief of distress—a *humanitarian* service of Israel.[3]

Another inference can be made more definitely and more confidently. It is recorded that on that occasion "all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth." These jealous neighbors of his did not, then, quarrel with his message, little as they relished him as its bearer. Evidently his theme, as he enlarged upon it, was in fundamental accord with

[2] This tranaliteration of the Hebrew personal name for God is to be preferred to the hybrid term "Jehovah."

[3] A symbolic, or "spiritual," interpretation of the prophet's phrases is easy enough if we go outside of Israel to the religion of Mithra (as many preachers have done without knowing it), and take seriously its doctrine of a divinity (Mithra) making perpetual sacrifice in his own person in order that humanity may be delivered from the power of Satan (see *infra*, p. 139 f.); but this would have been anathema to the Nazareth audience.

As will appear later, Jesus probably did have in mind, also, an ethical deliverance, and in particular deliverance (1) from care and fear (*cf.* Mt. vi. 25-34; xi. 28-30; Lk. xii. 22-32), and (2) from the deceitfulness and sufferings of the present social order, with its selfishness and violence. *Cf.* Mt. vi. 19-24; Lk. xii. 13-21, 33 f.

what they recognized as the best thought and the cherished hopes of Israel. And how could it have been otherwise in the case of one who rose so quickly to widespread popularity? Can we believe that the citizens of Galilean towns would have packed their houses and streets in the effort to see him and hear him; that along the country highways the plowman would have left his share in the furrow, the shepherd his flock on the plain, and the vinedresser his vineyard on the terrace in order to look upon him and hear his words, if his message had made any serious denial of their accepted ideas or called for any radical change in cherished beliefs and hopes? We cannot, if we are acquainted with the ways of the ordinary religious mind. Assuredly it was because, and, his cures apart, only because, these eager listeners, rightly or wrongly, found in his teachings "words of grace," that is, inspiring expressions of their own vague beliefs—with new insights doubtless into the implications of these—and confident justifications of their dearest hopes, that they flocked around him so enthusiastically. So we must conclude that, as understood by men in general, *Jesus was not a religious radical.*

It may be objected that to describe Jesus' teaching as in accord with the best sentiment of his fellow Israelites is to deny him originality and to regard him as a mere popular speaker. This objection has force only when originality is limited to intellectual novelty, which is assuredly too narrow a definition, a definition, indeed, which while it might have been accepted at Athens at the time of St. Paul's visit,[4] would have been repudiated by an Alexander the Great, a Luther, or a Shakespere.

2. SOURCES OF JESUS' TEACHING. The objection does raise, however, and properly enough, the question as to

[4] *Cf.* Acts xvii. 21.

the sources of Jesus' teaching. These plainly were two: (1) the accepted religious beliefs and hopes and the literature of his people, and (2) his own original insights. The former constituted his religious inheritance as a Jew, the latter his spiritual *discoveries,* or personal "inspiration." He appears not to have been influenced, directly at any rate, by Gentile thought.

As to *preponderance* in his teaching, it is a common belief in the churches that this was greatly on the side of his own inspired vision. The statement of the Temple guards, "Never man so spake," is accepted in the sense that the things he taught were all but unheard of before his time. Inquiry, however, by no means encourages this notion. Indeed, it is difficult to point out any doctrine of Jesus of which the intellectual or moral subject-matter was really new.[5] That as a teacher he was in some way unique is not to be questioned. The influence of his sayings through nearly two millenniums is proof of that; but his uniqueness appears to have resided rather in a deeper insight and a sounder estimate of values than in any novelty of conceptions. Especially are these superiorities evident in his appreciations of life and welfare, both individual and social.[6]

That Jesus did not live in a different intellectual world from his fellow countrymen is evident when we inquire as to his ideas in the field of general culture. Like the rest of Israel he believed in angels and demons, in demoniacal

[5] Many of his sayings are quite in accord with the Old Testament, and are naturally to be regarded as derived from it. For example, the command to love God supremely (Mt. xxii. 37) is evidently taken directly from Deut. vi. 4, 5; and the companion injunction from Lev. xix. 18. The former was known as the "shema." Deut. vi. 8 f. was taken literally by the scribes.

[6] Consequently they yield deeper and more universal values than traditional Judaism. The distinction between the traditional and the original, or intuitive, in Jesus' teaching, however, is not absolute. In a new individual traditional ideas may become objects of spiritual insight, and so in a sense be discovered anew, and with a new breadth and depth. Nor is it to be forgotten that they may be the sound intuitions of seers of the past, and so by no means to be disparaged wholesale.

possession, and in the evil divinity, Satan,—ideas which contact with Persian culture had introduced into Hebrew thought. On the other hand, he shared his countrymen's ignorance of natural science [7] and of the contemporary Greek progress therein, and was uninterested in most lines of history and in questions of metaphysics, though with the latter the Greeks had grappled for six centuries. He was acquainted, indeed, with the history of Israel as contained in the Old Testament; but his concern with it appears to have been purely for religious and ethical ends. His was not a *critical* knowledge of the Old Testament. He was content to join with the Pharisees in referring to it as "Moses and the Prophets," with no thought apparently that the Pentateuch could be other than Mosaic in authorship. Even Deuteronomy is accepted as Mosaic, and the Psalms, it would seem, as Davidic.[8]

The most important application of the distinction between the inherited and the original in Jesus' thought is to the cases where his sayings appear to conflict either with each other or with the truth of today. Some of his statements as to the Kingdom of God are hard to harmonize, as will appear later. A more detached case is that of his unqualified commendation of ordinary alms-giving [9] and lack of appreciation of the evils, moral as well as economic, which experience has shown to arise therefrom. It would seem that this was a case where a relatively primitive and uncritical view held over, owing no doubt to the fact that

[7] *Cf.* the remark of Prof. G. B. Foster: "As a child of his time Jesus held the popular view concerning the world: the kingdom of the dead below; the terestrial world above it; then above the latter heaven with its inhabitants. Heaven is a locality, a firmament, where God dwells surrounded by angels and spirits. . . . The earth, not so very extensive, is the center of the universe. So Jesus thought and spoke, and it is clear that he could not have done otherwise" (*The Finality of the Christian Religion*, p. 407). *Cf.*, also, p. 12 *supra*.

[8] Lk. xvi. 29, 31; Mt. viii. 4; xxiii. 2; xix. 8; Mk. vii. 10; xii. 26; Jn. v. 46 f. If correctly reported, his memory wsa not always accurate, for the High Priest he refers to in Mark ii. 35 f. was not Abiathar but Ahimelech. Then, too, no one was with David. *Cf.* I Sam. xxi. 1, 2.

[9] Mt. xix. 21.

in Judea then the harmfulness of indiscriminate giving had not become manifest, while the distress of the poor was plain and widespread.

If the recognition of a certain element of traditional, and quite possibly erroneous, matter in the Master's teaching seems to detract from its authority, it should be borne in mind that the situation is usual and probably unavoidable in human development. Life in its upreaching never altogether breaks with its past. It cannot, for its roots are there. Even when most notably it builds for itself "nobler mansions" the older constructions remain for a time as the scaffolding of the new. Moreover, traditional ideas in Jesus' teaching which now offend us are, with one notable exception (to be considered later), incidental. They were not distinctive of him; for they were not part of his constructive thought, nor had they been fashioned by his creative and vivifying personality.

3. Analysis of Jesus' Teaching. When we seek the teachings which, whether original or not, are truly distinctive of him, because springing from his own deep conviction, we must turn to such passages as the Sermon on the Mount, the discourses concerning the Kingdom, and the parables of grace in Luke. Professor Harnack, in a widely approved division, has pointed out that these teachings may all be included under the three heads, the Kingdom of God, the fatherhood of God, and the higher morality,[10] the last named consisting of those sayings concerning forms of conduct springing from more rational and more sympathetic motives than mere social approval.

The Sermon on the Mount bears out this analysis: (1) It begins with the promise of the *Kingdom of heaven* to the poor in spirit. A like promise is made to those who

[10] *What is Christianity?*, p. 55.

are persecuted for righteousness sake, which is followed soon by a statement as to how eminence in the Kingdom may be gained, and what kind of righteousness is insufficient for admittance to the Kingdom. The disciples are taught to pray for the coming of the Kingdom, and enjoined to make entrance into it their prime aim in life.[11] (2) The *fatherhood of God* is likewise in evidence,[12] God being repeatedly referred to as the Father of those present and likeness to him being held up as the supreme ideal of character. (3) The higher morality naturally is not lacking.[13] The sermon's demand is explicitly for a righteousness surpassing that of the scribes and Pharisees.

There is a difference, however, in the way these topics are presented. The first and second are introduced allusively, as subjects already familiar to the audience. Jesus does not explain what the Kingdom of God consists in, nor does he assure his hearers that God is their Father. Only the third topic is directly explained and inculcated. May we therefore conclude that the higher morality was his major interest, and the furtherance of it the aim of his career? No, for he habitually represents it as instrumental, not final—the necessary means to something further, or beyond, namely: divine approval and blessing, admission to the Kingdom and enjoyment of it,[14]—human welfare in some form or other. Apparently for him righteousness was not itself the end of life,—"virtue for virtue's sake" [15]—as it was for the Stoics; it was the way to true happiness.

4. THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD. Of the other two groups of teachings which was foremost in Jesus' thought? It

[11] *Cf.* Mt. v. 3, 10, 19 f.; vi. 10, 33; vii. 21. *Cf.* Lk. iv. 43; xix. 11-27, etc.
[12] Mt. v. 9, 45, 48; vi. 4, 6-8 f., 14, 18, 26, 32; vii. 11. *Cf.* Lk. xv. 12-32.
[13] Mt. v. 6, 10, 13, 16, 20, 48; vi. 33, etc.
[14] Mt. v. 3, 5, 8, 10-12, 20; vi. 19-21; vii. 14.
[15] If it be thought that Mt. v. 45-48, with its ideal of perfection, may be quoted to the contrary, the passage immediately following (vi. 1-6) negatives the idea. There reward is again brought in as final.

has been urged by some scholars and many preachers that his central teaching is the fatherhood of God. This was his dominant theme, for this was the most important truth that he uttered, being in fact the very central principle of all true religion. The fatherhood of God means that the Soul of the universe is friendly to man, and invites man's filial response. Jesus' own life, it is held, was the exemplification of that filial relation, and his power as teacher, healer, and leader, sprang from it. The Kingdom of God, on this view, is identical with the higher morality when this is truly spiritual; but neither Kingdom nor morality discloses so truly the very spirit of true religion and the fount of man's well-being as does the fatherhood of God.[16]

In this claim there are evidently metaphysical factors which are not subject to historico-critical tests. When we appeal to our historical sources, the claim breaks down. Jesus is never described as explicitly teaching this doctrine, though implicitly it is present throughout. On the contrary, the evangelists unite in declaring that the theme he put foremost, or proclaimed, was the *Kingdom* of God."[17] Furthermore, the proclamation of the fatherhood of God would not have been a "gospel" in Palestine in the first century. If we concede, as we well may, that real religion is man's response to this great idea, it remains true that the idea was not distinctive either of Jesus or his time. Where, for example, has it found more genuine expression than in many of the Psalms,[18] or, indeed, in

[16] *Cf.* E. G. A. Sabatier, *Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 147, 149, 151 ff.

[17] *Cf.* Mk. i. 15; Mt. iv. 12, 17, 23; Lk. iv. 43; x. 9, 11; xvi. 16; Acts i. 3; Jn. i. 26 f., 41, 49 f.; iii. 3, 5. *Cf.* also, for Jesus' words, Mt. x. 7; v. 3, 10, 19 f.; vi. 9, 33; vii. 21; viii. 11; Lk. x. 9, 11; xi. 20.

[18] *E.g.* Ps. ciii. 13, "Like as a father pitieth his children," etc.; and in general Ps. xxiii., xci., xcv., xcvi., c., ciii., cvi., cvii., cviii., cxi., cxii., etc. *Cf.* also, Mal. iii. xvi. ff.; Hos. i. 10; II Sam. vii. 14 f.; Deut. xxxii. 6; viii. 5; Ex. iv. 22 f; Jer. xxxi. 9.

Christian worship long since adopted most of these ancient expressions of filial piety as its very own.

Cleanthes Hymn to Zeus, or in some of the Buddhist literature? However true the principle and however good, it was not *new* in Jesus' day, and so was not a "gospel," not good *news*. Philo, the Alexandrian Jewish contemporary of Jesus, represents his people as "from their swaddling clothes . . . trained to recognize God as their father, and as the maker of the world." [19] Long before the first century the pious Jew looked upon Yahveh as sustaining a paternal relation to Israel, a relation deeply personal and moral and not merely creative. How is it possible to believe that Jesus went up and down the land proclaiming this familiar truth as a new message, a "gospel"? And how can we imagine throngs of religiously trained people, accustomed from childhood to the daily repetition of the "Shema" and familiar through reiterated public chanting with the confident lines of the "Hallel,"[20] dogging the steps of a rabbi whose main message was that God was their father?

The doctrine appears implicitly and incidentally in Jesus' teaching because he *assumed* it, and appealed to it as a recognized truth. At times he developed its meaning and implications more fully than did common thought, as when he pointed out that God's interest and care are not confined to any single class of his children, least of all to the self-righteous.[21] The teaching in these cases, however, appears to have been occasional rather than deliberate. It is quite possible that but for certain carping criticisms of his opponents, we might not have had the story of the prodigal son at all, nor the other two parables in the fifteenth chapter of Luke.

It is urged that Jesus' teaching of the divine fatherhood was unique and supremely important because he extended

[19] Quoted by Edersheim, *Life of Jesus the Messiah*, I, p. 230.
[20] Deut. vi. 4, 5; Ps. cxiii-cxviii.
[21] *Cf.* Lk. xv.

the principle to *all* men, whereas the accepted view of his time applied it only to the Jews. There is doubtless truth in this claim so far as Jesus' own conception of human brotherhood was concerned; but he did not put any such world-wide application of the doctrine into the forefront of his teaching, as any one may prove to himself by trying to establish the universal doctrine from his recorded words.[22]

5. THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Our survey thus throws us back upon the plain statement of the evangelists that what Jesus proclaimed (that is, the content of the gospel) was the Kingdom of God, or, more strictly, its *imminence.* The important question then is, what the phrase "Kingdom of God" meant in his day, and especially what it meant for him. More specifically, (1) What were the current opinions regarding the Kingdom when Jesus began to teach? (2) How far did he concur in these views? and (3) What modifications, if any, did he make in the Kingdom conception?

[22] Certainly the church has rarely discovered universal fatherhood and consequent universal sonship in the gospels, at least as a truth of major practical importance. Generally it has held that only a part of mankind—the elect or true believers or the baptized—are God's children. Christian teachers in the Middle Ages would not concede that dignity to the heathen, nor would American slave-holding Christians yield it to Africans.

CHAPTER IV

THE KINGDOM OF GOD: JEWISH VIEW

On a certain Sabbath Day Jesus was the dinner guest of a leading Pharisee.[1] The company was not friendly to him. The host and his fellow rigorists "were watching him" to see whether he would venture to heal a certain sick man who was present. The man was healed, despite the Sabbath; and Jesus, after justifying the act, took advantage of the atmosphere of criticism to speak critically himself on certain ethical matters suggested by the dinner and the behavior of the guests. Perhaps to turn the conversation into a less personal channel, perhaps as a mere pious platitude, one of the guests remarked, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." Jesus' response to this was the caustic parable of the great supper, the moral of which evidently was that the well-to-do—most of the Pharisees, for example—were far from regarding admission to the Kingdom as the matter of first importance.

1. ORIGIN OF THE KINGDOM IDEA. For us certain less obvious features of the occasion are also of interest. One of these is that no explanation of the term "Kingdom of God" was offered by any one. Evidently none was required; all present knew what it meant. It was far from new, the idea being a current one of the time. John the Baptist had drawn multitudes into the wilderness by the

[1] *Cf.* Lk. xiv. 1-24.

proclamation of its nearness.[2] Every frequenter of the synagogue was familiar with Nathan's promise to David [3] that his house and his throne should be "established forever," with the prediction in Daniel [4] that in certain days to come "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed," and with the earlier promise that "the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem." [5] The nature of that reign the pious Jew discovered in Isaiah's glowing words about the "shoot out of the stock of Jesse" [6] and the Psalmist's account of the gracious king [7] whose "name shall endure forever" and in whom "men shall be blessed."

This dream must not be regarded as a mere product of religious fancy. Rather was it a natural result of the expanding ethical life of Israel as conditioned by adverse fortune. The normal unification of the Hebrew tribes under David broke down under his grandson. The forces of tribalism proved too strong. Therewith the hope of a prosperous, quasi-civilized nation became overcast, and finally set in national overthrow. In the generations of disappointed reflection that preceded and followed that event Israel's adverse fortunes took on for the religious-minded a new spiritual and ethical significance. A naive philosophy of history arose. The "earlier prophets" [8] saw in Israel a chosen people of Yahveh, delivered by him from Egyptian captivity, and therefore his property. Rightfully the nation was a Kingdom of God, a theocracy.

[2] Mt. iii. 2, 5; Lk. iii. 15. Bousset remarks: "The Kingdom of God—there was no need for Jesus to enter into detailed explanations of what he meant by the phrase, for every child in the country could have told him" (*Jesus*, p. 71).
[3] II Sam. vii. 16.
[4] Dan. ii. 44; iv. 3; vii. 13 f., 18, 22, 27.
[5] Isa. xxiv. 23.
[6] Isa. xi. 1-12.
[7] Ps. lxxii.
[8] The Jewish name for the authors of Samuel and Kings. Amos and his successors were the "later prophets."

It had not been faithful, however, to its allegiance, and its calamities were but the just punishments of its rebellions, rebellions for which evil rulers—such as the usurper, "Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin" [9]—were primarily responsible. Deliverance, as the prophets, "earlier" and "later" came to see, could come only through return to Yahveh;[10] and this, according to the strongly collected conceptions of the time, waited upon the leadership of a righteous king.[11] But where was Israel to look for such a king? Not in mere legitimism. The monarchs of the Davidic line were often no better than the usurpers;[12] and yet—the promises had been given to the "seed of David"! From such reflection it was not a long step to the thought that a new kingdom was needed, and was to be expected [13]—a Kingdom of God.

2. CONTENT OF THE IDEA. The need of a human agent being recognized, Cyrus,[14] the deliverer from Babylonian oppression, was at first regarded as commissioned for that role; but soon pious thought returned to the hero king of Israel, and it was maintained that Yahveh would produce from the roots of David a new royal scion,[15] under whose rule the promised happiness and glory of Israel would be realized. God's "Anointed," or Messiah, was to be the Son of David.[16] In the book of Daniel (a much later work) the figure of the Messiah appears as the "Son of Man,"[17] who is described as "coming with clouds"—an

[9] I Kings xxii. 52.
[10] Jer. iii. 12, 14, 22; iv. 1; xv. 19; Mal. iii. 7-12.
[11] It was a fundamental tenet of prophetism that God's Kingdom was necessarily righteous. Yahveh was a holy God, and could not tolerate evil. *Cf.* Ps. xlv. 6; Isa. i; ii. 5-12; iii. 8, 14-26, etc.; Jer. v. 25-29; Zech. vii. 9-14. And there are suggestions that the sins of Israel were the great obstacle to the Kingdom's coming. *Cf.* Isa. i. 16-20; ii. 1-5; Mal. iii. 1 f., 7-12; iv. 5, 6.
[12] Ezek. xxi. 25 ff.; Hos. xiii. 9-11.
[13] Isa. xi. 1, 2; Jer. xxiii. 5 f.; Ezek. xxxvii. 21-25.
[14] Isa. xliv. 28; xiv. 1.
[15] Jer. xxxiii. 17, 21 f.; Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12 f.; Ezek. xvii. 22-24; xxxiv. 23 f.
[16] Isa. ix. 6 f.
[17] Dan. vii. 13 f., 17 f., 26 f.

idea perhaps borrowed from Mazdaism. His empire was to be the perfection of earthly kingdoms, and to be in strong contrast with the injustice and cruelty of the four empires preceding it. In the Book of Enoch (written in the latter part of the second century B.C.) this Messianic conception of a heavenly Person, now hidden with God but ultimately to be manifested on earth for the establishment of the Kingdom, is brought into clear expression.[18] Later, both in the apocryphal books and in the Talmud, Yahveh's anointed Agent, supernatural albeit human, repeatedly appears. From about 50 B.C. his is the central figure.

With the increase of Messianic speculation, views as to the nature of the Kingdom naturally became more diverse. As individualism grew and the sense of sin strengthened, some writers distinguished and separated salvation from the Kingdom of God, and described it as a spiritual attainment (or divine gift) in a supernatural world. Others, unattracted by this thorough-going spiritualism but sharing in the feeling that the earth was not fitted to be the seat of an eternal Messianic order of things, held that the difficulty was to be overcome by the redemption of the earth itself and the establishment of "a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." [19]

To return to the discussion at the Pharisee's table: another feature of interest was that the Kingdom was regarded, both by Jesus and the other guests, as a *free gift*—something bestowed by favor and not won by merit. Such was the uniform representation in the Messianic literature. The Kingdom was not thought of as a human achievement, either individual or social, but as an institution erected by sovereign act of God, and in his own

[18] *Cf.* H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History*, p. 483 f.
[19] II Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1. *Cf.* Prof. Charles' careful survey of this post-prophetic development in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Art. "Kingdom of God."

good time, namely, "the great day of Yahveh." [20] This passive attitude was quite characteristic of ancient thought, especially in the weaker nations. Peoples then were wont to consider their destinies as dependent upon the power and favor of their gods, and Israel was no exception to the rule. A small nation, approximately at the meeting point of three continents, it was demonstrated in early days to Israel's thinkers that, if not helped from above, their situation amidst the collisions of the great powers about them was desperate. Hence their literature abounds in appeals to Yahveh and in trust in him. All their hopes were contingent upon his aid. The more they felt their national weakness, the more they looked to God for the redress of their wrongs and the satisfaction of their deep longings. Of course, when the divine point of reference was once established, it was easy for the imagination to take flight. With omnipotence on tap, so to speak, a new Jerusalem could be made to come down from heaven to earth in overwhelming triumph, endowed with supernatural power and glory.[21]

3. THE PLACE AND TIME. It is to be noted that in this drama of the future the means are supernatural, but the stage, the persons, and the interests are earthly. The picture is that of a Kingdom *from* heaven, but *upon* earth [22]—located in fact in Palestine [23]—not a Kingdom *in*

[20] Zeph. i. 14; Mal. iv. 5; Joel ii. 31. It is often referred to as "that day" or simply "the day." *Cf.* Joel ii. 28-31; iii. 14-21; Zeph. ii. 1-3 ff.; iii. 8; Ezek. xxx. 3 f., 9. *Cf.* also, I Cor. v. 5.; I Thess. v. 2; II Pet. iii. 10. Often "the day" is represented as one of judgment for Israel, also. *Cf.* Joel i. 14 f.; ii. 1 f., 10-17; Zeph. i. 7-9, 12-18; Isa. ii. 12, 17; xiii. 6, 9 f.; Amos v. 18; Micah ii. 1-4; Mal. iv. 5; Zech. xiv. 1. With very few exceptions "the day" is, in one way or another, "the day of Yahveh."

[21] *Cf.* Isa. lxiv. 1 f.; lxvi. 15 f., *20-23*; Rev. iii. 12; *xxi. 1-3, 9 f., 22-27.*

[22] Professor Charles summarizes the apocalyptic teaching of the Ethiopic Enoch (about 166 B.C.) as follows: "God will set up a New Jerusalem. The surviving Gentiles shall be converted and serve Israel, the dispersion be brought back, and the righteous [dead] Israelites be raised to take part in the Kingdom. When all is accomplished, the Messiah, whose role is a passive one, shall appear, and all shall be transformed into his likeness." *Cf.* I Jn. iii. 2. "The scene of the Messianic Kingdom is the earth. In Eth. En. 83-90 its centre is to be, not the earthly Jerusalem, but the New Jerusalem brought down from heaven." *Cf.* Rev. xxi. 2.

[23] *Cf.* Isa. xxiv. 23; lxv. 17-25; Joel iii. 14-17, 20.

heaven, and so to be entered only after death. Still less is it merely a state of mind, such as spiritual harmony and peace.[24] "The Kingdom which was awaited was a new and divine Israelitish state, of which the Messiah as the representative of God was the head, all Jews the members, and all peoples the subjects. Palestine was to be the seat of its capital, the righteousness of the Jew the qualification of membership. . . . No Jew thought of it as an abstract ideal." [25] The time of the Kingdom was the present life, though it was common for Jewish writers to represent Israel's righteous dead as rising again to participate in it, an idea which appears also in the New Testament.[26] It was to be "a Jewish empire, and the New Jerusalem, inhabited though it might be with risen saints, had still its Temple and its worshipping Jews and proselytes." [27]

There was, of course, a political aspect to the expected Kingdom, but it cannot be demarcated very clearly from the religious; for God was to be King as well as Divinity. Yet it is plain that politically the Kingdom stood for the breaking of the foreign yoke and the long prophecied triumph of Israel over neighboring peoples,[28] together all too often with a wholesale vengeance upon them which recalls the fury of the original conquest of Canaan.[29] It meant for many, and perhaps for most, Jews the restora-

[24] The spiritual ideal had been exalted by the ethical thinkers of Greece for three centuries before our era; but it was not the dominant ideal in Israel. As Prof. Shailer Mathews says, "The eternal religious influence of the Jew has lain, not in his capacity to see the abstract in the concrete . . . but in his noble genius for rational anthropomorphism. . . . His idea of the Kingdom of God was no sweet Greek dream of a past Golden age, but an intoxicating belief in a new state in which righteousness was to reign, and his enemies were to bow before the anointed of Jehovah. His hope for the future was for an everlasting Jerusalem that was to descend from heaven, arrayed like a bride for her bridegroom, as free as God's own realm. Even when the Kingdom grew more remote . . . the Jew never thought of it as anything but social." Mathews, *The Messianic Hope in the New Testament*, p. 56.

[25] Mathews, *Social Teaching of Jesus*, p. 56.

[26] *Cf.* I Thess. iv. 13-17.

[27] Mathews, *Messianic Hope*, etc., p. 51.

[28] Isa. ix. 4; x. 24, 27; lx. 1-3, 10-14; lxi. 1-7; Amos ix. 11-15. Obad. 15, 17. *Cf.* the Psalmist's, "Why do the heathen rage . . . against Yahveh, and his Anointed?" etc. (Ps. ii. 1-10).

[29] Isa. lxiii. 1-6; Ps. cxxxvii. 7-9; Isa. xiii. 1, 9, 15-22.

tion of the Davidic rule in the person of a descendant of David and the world dominance of Israel,[30] with Jerusalem replacing Rome as the universal capital. As to definite program, political opinion was divided, the Zealots advocating an early national revolt against Rome, and the Sanhedrists (the priestly and rabinnical leaders) standing firmly for delay and cautious opportunism. To Hebrews of the nobler sort Israel's world-dominance involved ultimately the uplift and true welfare of all mankind—a kind of transfiguration of the tribal ideal whereby through the victory and overlordship of one people, blessing was to descend upon all peoples.[31] Imperial Rome at its best exhibited the possibilities of this program, possibilities to which *under the eagles* the Jews were persistently blind. For a generation prior to the World War the more spiritually minded circles of Germany appear to have been dazzled by this ideal, and, as Anglo-Saxons have become conscious of superior national might, it has not been unknown among Britons and Americans.

4. The Kingdom's Appeal to the Masses. Many of the ideas mentioned above belonged, doubtless, to the literary class rather than the common people. The latter naturally were more elementary and practical in their interests. For them the Kingdom of God meant primarily, (1) *deliverance from oppression,*[32] whether of foreign tax-gatherers or of the favored classes, and (2) the abiding presence in the land of *economic opportunity and prosperity for all Israelites.* Indeed, concern for popular welfare was probably the original root of Messianism. It was ethical reaction against the social evils of their times that prompted the best prophetic messages of old. Amos and

[30] Isa. lx. 11 f.; lxi. 4-9; lxii. 2 f., 7; xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5 f.
[31] Isa. ii. 2-4.
[32] *Cf.* Lk. iii. 12-16 and Mt. ii. 7-12 for the popular expectation—evidently shared by the Baptists—as to the social deliverance to be effected by the Messiah.

his successors could not tolerate the oppressions and vices of Samaria and Jerusalem.[33] They could not believe such things were to endure; and since commonly the king and the nobles were on the side of the abuses, they appealed to Yahveh, whom they had already learned to think of as a just God and whom in their righteous wrath they clothed with new moral attributes. In the heat of their zeal they often viewed the "day of Yahveh" as one of judgment upon Israel as well as upon the heathen.[34]

The psalmists took up the theme, and looked to God for social deliverance. The coming heavenly King, one of them assures us, will "judge the poor with justice . . . and will break in pieces the oppressor. . . . In his days shall the righteous flourish." "He will redeem their soul from oppression and violence," etc.[35] Even Jeremiah[36] kindles to hope as he tells of the "righteous Branch" who "shall reign as King and deal wisely, and shall execute judgment and justice in the land," and whose name shall be "Yahveh our righteousness."

The righteousness thus stressed by prophetism was not formal but vital, yielding the fruits of everyday human blessing,[37] as is indicated by the metaphor of the other guest at the Pharisee's table and accepted by Jesus, the metaphor of a *feast*. This, no doubt, is the explanation of its popular appeal, for a widespread appeal the prophetic ethical teaching did make. John the Baptist preached no politics to his flocking auditors, but struck the same ethical note as Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah.[38] The like was true of Jesus, and the common people "heard him gladly." They

[33] Amos. ii. 6-8; v. 7, 11-15, 21-24; Isa. i. 1-4, 11-23; iii. 14-26; Mic. ii. 1-3; iii. 8-12.
[34] *Cf.* p. 42, n. 20, *supra*.
[35] *Cf.* Ps. xxxvii.; xlv. 4-7; lxxii. 2, 4, 7, 12, 14.
[36] Jer. xxiii. 5 f.; xxxiii. 15 f.
[37] *Cf.* Jer. vii. 3-11.
[38] *Cf.* Lk. iii. 7-14.

rejoiced when the prophet of Nazareth discomfited his critics by opposing humane interests to the hard legalism of the latter. The issue then was, not as to the importance of morality, but as to the true *kind* of morality.[39] The well-to-do, property-holding classes, headed by the Sanhedrists, held to formalism. They supported the established economic system throughout, and relegated the Kingdom to some future age of divine interposition unassisted by men. The common people, on the other hand, restive under economic burdens, cast about impatiently for a leader who would do something *at once* to bring in the "day of Yahveh." They listened as those who hear words from heaven when Jesus boldly declared, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in nowise enter into the Kingdom of heaven." [40]

For the ordinary Jew, then, in Jesus' day the Kingdom of God was the prophetically visioned, longed for golden age, or Utopia, which was expected to prevail ere long in Palestine.[41] It was to be a new Israel, an Israel transformed and glorious, religiously and politically, ethically and economically.[42]

May we conclude that this was Jesus' view? When he "came into Galilee . . . saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand," [43] did he consider himself to be the herald of that golden age? Perhaps; but not as a matter of course. It is not safe to make hasty inferences about superior men. They are wont to find deeper meanings in common words, and wider applications for them, than those of ordinary use. It will not do to attrib-

[39] Lk. xiii. 10-16; Mk. xii. 28-40; Mt. vii. 20-23, 28 f.; ix. 10-17.
[40] Mt. v. 20.
[41] Mk. x. 35-45; Lk. i. 32 f.; Acts i. 6.
[42] *Cf.* E. F. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, ch. ii.
[43] Mk. i. 14 f.

ute merely the usual meanings of the word faith to Martin Luther or of the word freedom to Abraham Lincoln. Quite possibly Jesus' conception of the Kingdom was much larger than that of most of his countrymen, and even radically different from it. Our conclusion on this point must wait upon further evidence.

One thing, however, we may affirm confidently in advance: The meaning of the term kingdom in Jesus' public discourse must be regarded as the accepted one of the time, or at least not in conflict therewith, *unless he gives some indication to the contrary;* for otherwise he would be open to the charge of misleading speech. Knowing how "Kingdom of God" would be understood by his auditors, Jesus, in giving a radically different meaning to it, would be under obligation to indicate that fact. Reservations purely mental by no means suffice. Of all men an ethical leader must be sedulously honest.

How far, then, did Jesus concur in the current view of the Kingdom of God?

CHAPTER V

THE KINGDOM OF GOD: VIEW OF JESUS

As Jesus' ministry drew toward its tragic close, we are told that he took final leave of Galilee and sojourned in the section east of the Jordan, then relatively populous. Later, as the Passover season approached, he continued his journey toward Jerusalem, crossing the Jordan near Jericho. Somewhere on the way he took occasion to warn the twelve afresh that disaster awaited him at the Holy City. The practical effect of this warning, which was perhaps not so detailed as it seemed to the evangelists writing a generation later, was to cause the disciples to feel that a definite Messianic dénouement was at hand. Thereupon the sons of Zebedee, accompanied by their mother, Salome, seized the first opportunity to come to him privately, and ask that they might have the places of highest privilege and power in the approaching Kingdom [1]—a primitively naïve request! Far from their minds, evidently, was any notion that the Kingdom was not institutional and Palestinian. Their Master, with what seems a sorrowful patience, rebuked their self-seeking. For perhaps two years these leading disciples had been his associates, and yet they did not understand that the master motive of the Kingdom was not private ambition, but devotion to the common good and joy in service!

1. JESUS' AGREEMENTS WITH THE PROPHETIC VIEW. —For our inquiry the significant thing about the incident

[1] Mk. x. 32-45; Mt. xx. 17-28.

is that Jesus did not dispute, nor fundamentally modify, their ideas as to the nature of the Kingdom. If their evident expectation that it was to be a glorious politico-economic institution was wrong—a mistaken popular notion —what an excellent opportunity was this to correct it! Instead, he tacitly accepted their view. The high positions they sought were not denied them on the ground of their non-existence and the absurdity of the notion, the Kingdom being a state of mind not an institution; they were denied because Jesus had no authority to assign them. Their future reality was conceded by the statement that they were to go to those "for whom it hath been prepared of my Father."

If Jesus entertained in general outline the view of the Kingdom current at the time, this account presents no historical or logical difficulties. Difficulty does arise, however, when we read into the incident the commonly accepted modern belief that Jesus repudiated the Jewish view of the Kingdom, and construed the term metaphorically as a picturesque name for a religio-ethical, or "spiritual," [2] state of mind in individual believers. In that case, why did he not set these confidential friends of his right on the subject? Indeed, why had he not done that long before? for we must not forget that the twelve were sacrificing their property and years of life in behalf of a belief and hope which he (then) knew to be vain. Was he trafficking in their illusions, utilizing them Jesuitically for pious ends? If so, the charge that he deceived the people seems to be sustained.

The question what Jesus meant by the Kingdom of God is evidently a serious one. Did he share in the current

[2] This ambiguous word is used here in what seems to be its more common religious sense, namely, as denoting the higher inner life and especially the finer desires and emotions. With many persons it is more or less synonymous with mystic.

expectation of a new political and social order, or did he regard the Kingdom as purely abstract—an inner religious attitude—and so placeless and timeless and unorganized? The present-day difficulty of this question—tradition aside, of course—may well be due to the fact that in Jesus' own day there was no such question, the whole situation being then so obvious that there was no occasion for explanation of the term or for conditioning adjectives and phrases. Yet, in that case, an answer to our query is suggested, the answer that Jesus did use the term in its usual Jewish acceptation.

Many things in the gospels go to confirm this inference —Jesus' references to the Kingdom's supernatural features, for example. For him, too, it was to come *from God,* to be the *gift* of God, to reveal the power and glory of God, and the righteousness of God; and it was imminent.[3] Nor do we find him deprecating in the least the popular expectation that the Kingdom would be introduced by apocalyptic wonders and splendors. On the contrary more than once he depicted his own Messianic return to earth in cloud-draped glory and might.[4]

2. THE TWO KINGDOMS THEORY. From such agreements, which could be multiplied greatly, it is natural to conclude that Jesus' view of the Kingdom was in substantial accord with that of Israel in general. True enough, the advocate of the spiritual view hastens to admit. Jesus did indeed predict a coming literal, institutional Kingdom—the *Kingdom of glory;* but he saw that this

[3] Mt. vi. 10; xxii. 2; xxiv. 36; xxvi. 29; Lk. xii. 32; Mt. xiii. 37-43; xvi. 27 f. The nearness of the Kingdom's manifestation seems to have impressed Jesus more at first than later. In his commission to the twelve the Kingdom was to come before they had completed their missionary circuit of "the cities of Israel" (Mt. x. 23). It was somewhat farther off when he was in the north, although still it was to come within the lifetime of some of those about him (Mt. xvi. 27 f.) In his last teachings, while it is still to come in the generation then living, he does not know the day, "but the Father only" (Mt. xxiv. 36).

[4] Mt. xxiv. 27, 30 f.; xxv. 1-13, 31-34; xxvi. 64.

belonged to a remote future and a far wider theatre than men in his day supposed. He saw, also, that there was another Kingdom of God that was actually "at hand"—a spiritual Kingdom, constituted by the reign of God in individual hearts and lives, a Kingdom of *inner development* which as it becomes established expresses itself increasingly, and withal universally, in individual conduct and in social relations and institutions.[5] This latter is the *Kingdom of grace,* which is without capital and officers, which has been on the earth ever since Jesus' day, and will remain and continue to grow like the mustard seed until the end of the world. The Kingdom of glory, on the other hand, still lies in the future, but will be manifested triumphantly at that "far-off divine event," the second coming of Christ.[6]

This modern exegetical theory is very ingenious. It is rooted, it is to be suspected, largely in theological reasons. It concerns us only on the historical side. Do the sources support it as a true account of Jesus' conception of the Kingdom? The one critical claim of importance in its behalf is that many sayings of Jesus *require* this distinction for their interpretation. These sayings have been divided into the following groups: (1) Those which depict the Kingdom with non-earthly concomitants; (2) Those which represent it as a state of mind—something inner; (3) Those which represent it as a developing force or movement.

[5] *Cf.* Stevens, *The Teaching of Jesus,* ch. v. Prof. Stevens thinks this spiritual Kingdom was the new patch which Jesus declined to sew upon the old Messianism. The effect of this rendering upon Jesus' prime rule of life, "Seek ye his Kingdom and his righteousness," is to reduce it to a single objective, righteousness and the Kingdom being then identical.

[6] *Cf.* Hastings' *Bible Dictionary,* art. "Kingdom of God." Dr. Orr prefers to think of Jesus' Kingdom of God as a heavenly order with "two stadia—an earthly and an eternal," the latter being a *post-mortem,* catastrophic consummation *in heaven* of the unseen spiritual Kingdom now present on earth as a leaven in the hearts of believers. Similar is the view of Dr. G. H. Gilbert, who remarks, "The usage of Jesus differs from that of the prophets, further, in that he speaks of a Kingdom of God as existing on both sides of the grave, or in two spheres, an earthly and a heavenly" (*Cyc. of Relig. and Ethics,* art. "Kingdom of God").

3. THE ARGUMENT FROM NON-EARTHLY CONCOMITANTS. As an example of group one, Jesus' description of his second coming, or *parousia,*[7] is adduced. In Matthew we read, " 'the Son of man' shall send forth his *angels,*" who "shall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." [8] Despite the fact that the theatre of this event seems to be the earth, the "end of heaven" apparently meaning the horizon,[9] Professor Charles [10] argues that the theatre must really be heaven and after death, because the angels are introduced; and they have no part in earthly dramas. The obvious answer to this singular argument is that it makes use of the modern view of angels, not the view of the first century, as is evident enough from the gospels themselves—for example, the accounts of the annunciation, the nativity, and the resurrection.[11] In the parable of the tares Jesus brings angels into what is evidently a mundane situation, being called "the world," and "them that do iniquity" being part of it![12] As a matter of fact, heaven and earth were by no means clearly demarcated in those days. Men and angels slipped across the border every now and then. There were times when St. Paul did not know which side he was on.[13]

Another feature of the Kingdom held to be incompatible with an earthly situation is the presence in it of the long-dead Jewish patriarchs, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." [14] But this argument would relegate the Mount of Trans-

[7] This Greek word (transliterated from the original text), meaning presence or presence due to a coming, is generally used by New Testament scholars to denote the supernatural second coming of Jesus.
[8] Mt. xxiv. 31.
[9] *Cf.* I Thess. iv. 16; Ps. ciii. 11 f.; Lk. xvii. 24.
[10] *Encyclopedia Biblica,* art. "Kingdom of God."
[11] *Cf.* Mt. i. 20; ii. 13, 19; xxviii. 2-7; Lk. i. 11-20, 26-38; ii. 9-14.
[12] Mt. xiii. 41.
[13] Mt. xvii. 1-5; xxvii. 52 f.; Lk. xxii. 43; Acts v. 19, 20; xxvi. 13-19; II Cor. xii. 1-4.
[14] Mt. viii. 11 f.

figuration to heaven, and make Simon Peter's remark there senseless. Moreover, as we have seen, it was not uncommon for Jewish apocalyptic speculation to include a resurrection of righteous Israelites as a feature of the expected, and surely terrestrial, Kingdom. So, also, did St. Paul in his description of the *parousia,* adding, "Then *we* that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord *in the air*" [15]—surely a passage eloquent as to the haziness of the heaven-earth boundary in first century religious ideas!

4. THE REFERENCES TO THE KINGDOM AS "INNER."—No more conclusive are the citations offered to show that there was for Jesus a Kingdom of God (the "Kingdom of grace") which was so completely inner and spiritual as to quite exclude the Jewish view. He did tell the Pharisees that "the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation . . . for, lo, the Kingdom of God is within you;" [16] but the word translated "within" may be equally well rendered "amongst" or "in the midst of," as the marginal reading recognizes. This latter, or collective, reference seems to be required by the context. Is Jesus, after sweepingly excluding the Pharisees from the Kingdom of God,[17] now assuring them that it is already in their hearts? As to its not coming with "observation," if he meant to exclude all external perception, then he contradicted himself a moment later when, without change of subject matter, he stated that "as the lightning . . . shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall the Son of man be in his day."

The reconciling element in this seeming conflict is doubtless the word "observation," which in this case should be understood in the common ancient sense of ob-

[15] I Thess. iv. 15-17. [16] Lk. xvii. 20 ff. [17] *Cf.* Mt. v. 20.

serving *omens.*[18] In every age religious visionaries have been given to reading the future by hazardous inferences from *signs,* sometimes physical, sometimes political. In Rome it was a high official function. So the Pharisees hypocritically demanded of Jesus a "sign from heaven" [19] —a mode of approach of which this very interview was apparently an example (see v. 20). On the other side, the Zealots were eagerly and honestly looking for "signs" of the "great day." Jesus' reply becomes, then, a sane warning to both parties, and to his followers also, not to be led astray by apocalyptic calculations of omens, whether in the heavens or on the earth. When the "day of Yahveh" did come, no subtle auguring, no dubious proof by signs, would be needed. It would be as manifest as the lightning.

It may be asked how, in that case, Jesus could tell the Pharisees that the Kingdom was already in the midst of them. The answer is by no means evident from our fragmentary records. The most probable explanation appears to be that he saw the actual presence of the Kingdom wherever the power of God, in him or in his followers, was at work in Israel overcoming the power of Satan and destroying his works; that is, in the new movement's works of healing, especially in the cure of demoniacs.[20]

Another saying cited as excluding the popular view is that in which it is declared of little children that "to such belongeth the Kingdom of God," and that "whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." [21] This passage is no doubt an unqualified demand of filial piety and openness of mind on the part of candidates for the Kingdom; but

[18] *Cf.* Isa. viii. 16-20; I Cor. i. 22 f.
[19] Mt. xii. 38-42; xvi. 1-4; Jn. ii. 18 f., 23 f.
[20] *Cf.* Bousset, *Jesus,* p. 78. *Cf.* Lk. x. 9-11; xi. 20; Mt. xii. 24-28.
[21] Mk. x. 14 f.

how it excludes the prophetic institutional expectation is far from evident. Which Kingdom would a child understand and desire most readily, the apocalyptic or the purely spiritual? As a matter of fact, the children did on at least one occasion acclaim Jesus and his Kingdom in the popular sense. On Palm Sunday they cried in the Temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David;" and Jesus justified them! Why was not this the childlike acceptance of the Kingdom that he had in mind in his words to the disciples? Nor was a childlike attitude at all alien to current thought on the subject. The Kingdom was to be a gift from God, and was to be received as a child receives gifts from his father.

Again, it is urged that in the account of the Messianic judgment at the *parousia* inheriting the Kingdom is identified with "eternal life," [22] which is quite a different thing from becoming part of a new institution. But is that so? The Greek word *aionios,* rendered "eternal" means strictly agelong; and generally in the New Testament "eternal life" refers far more to the *kind* of life of the age referred to than its length.[23] Construed as mere endlessness, it fails to fit the case, that is, to offer blessing; for then it might be a curse. And why should endlessness of existence wait upon the consummation of the age (the so-called "end of the world") before it becomes the characteristic of the righteous? How can it be conceived as something to be "inherited" at a future time—an external addition to a man's nature coming by pure fiat of a judge? So, too,

[22] Mt. xxv. 34, 46.

[23] *Cf.* Rom. ii. 7, 10. Prof. Cheyne (in the *Encyclopedia Biblica*) points out that this term then stood for messianic *quality* as well as duration, for something heavenly as well as lasting. In the Johannine writings it becomes chiefly a mystical phrase, standing apparently for a vaguely conceived potency which proceeds from God (Jn. i. 1, 4), is manifested in Christ (I Jn. i. 1 f.; v. 11, 20), and can be shared by men, but only as they become one with Christ (Jn. iii. 15 f.; v. 40; vi. 54; I Jn. v. 12 f.; iii. 15). The value of "eternal life" as a present mystic possession is stressed to the virtual eclipse of its future aspect.

of Jesus' earlier promise of "eternal life" in the "age to come:" [24] It is evidently characteristic *of that age;* but endlessness cannot be confined to a particular period. On the other hand, when "eternal life" is understood in its usual New Testament sense, as *a blessed kind of life,*[25] it falls readily enough into accord with the view of the Kingdom of Jesus' day. It was the kind of life which Israel hoped to enjoy in the apocalyptic Kingdom of God.

A like remark is to be made concerning Jesus' representation of the Kingdom as the *summum bonum*—a treasure of such value as to justify the sacrifice of all other goods in order to obtain it.[26] With this estimate Jewish thought then quite agreed, at least in theory, institutional and apocalyptic as that thought was.

Dr. Gilbert argues for the "Kingdom of grace" as a real and fundamental conception with Jesus on the ground that he represents the Kingdom as beginning with himself and his disciples, which we know was not true of any apocalyptic Kingdom. Our question, however, is not as to what history has had to say about the Kingdom since Jesus' day, but what Jesus himself said and thought about it. As to the former question, it is easy to rejoin that neither is the existence of any spiritual Kingdom *originated by Jesus* recognized by history. The filial, and at times mystic, relation to God for which the spiritual Kingdom stands may well be as old as humanity. Actually in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus' references to the Kingdom as present in his own day are confined to certain small beginnings, which doubtless he looked to see followed by far more dramatic manifestations. His cures, especially of demoniacs, are the only instances of the Kingdom's actual presence offered by him.[27] Generally

[24] Mt. xix. 29; Mk. x. 30.
[25] *Cf.* I Tim. vi. 19. R. V.
[26] Mt. vi. 33; xiii. 44-46.
[27] Lk. xi. 20; Mt. xii. 28.

he refers to the Kingdom as future, even for his disciples, whom he warns repeatedly of the need of watchfulness, lest it come unexpectedly and find them unprepared.[28]

How far Jesus was from making this distinction between a "Kingdom of grace" and a "Kingdom of glory" is strongly suggested in his conversation with the twelve at his last supper with them. Surely that tragic occasion was not one for delphic sayings unintelligible to these intimate companions, nor can we believe that in that parting hour his thoughts were occupied with events that were to transpire only after many millenniums. Then, if ever, he would use words in their familiar meanings. Yet in taking up the Passover cup he said earnestly, "I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until *that day* when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom." [29] Only allegorizing, it would seem, can avoid the Messianistic teaching of these words, with their evident reference to the "day of Yahveh."

Luke records two other sayings [30] of that first Eucharist, and they are of like Messianistic tenor: One is the statement, "I will not eat it [the Passover] until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." Since the Passover represented a national, not an individual, deliverance, any Kingdom of God which "fulfilled" it must be collective, and not purely personal. The second utterance—"I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may *eat and drink at my table* [31] *in my Kingdom*"—seems to cry out for something like a literal rendering. How unspiritual is the imagery, and how near the events referred to must have seemed to his auditors!

[28] Mt. xxiv. 42 f., 44; xxv. 1-13; Lk. xxi. 34-36.
[29] Mt. xxvi. 29.
[30] Lk. xxii. 16, 29 f.
[31] The metaphor of a feast was a common one then for designating the expected Kingdom. *Cf.* pp. 39, 46, *supra.*

5. The Evolutionary Kingdom Sayings. More to the point as regards the spiritual interpretation are the sayings of the *third group,* those which represent the Kingdom of God as a developing force, and sometimes, it would seem, in a universal way. The parable of the self-growing seed,[32] for example, depicts the Kingdom as an organic product passing through the stages of seed and blade, ear and fruit. It is urged that the Kingdom there referred to cannot be the Messianic, institutional one, since the latter relies upon supernatural intervention, not upon development from within.

It appears to be true that in this and similar parables we have an important new factor in the Kingdom conception, or an extension of it. Jesus evidently was strongly impressed by the organic, living character of the world. But is this development factor incompatible with the view inherited from the prophets? The claim that it is so overlooks an important feature of the prophetic teaching and expectation, namely, the necessity of *moral preparation* on the part of Israel. This the best of the prophets had dwelt upon, and Jesus certainly not least; and moral preparation is a matter of time and development, as Jesus himself fully appreciated. By the end of the first year of his ministry it must have occurred to the twelve that but a small proportion of the people who thronged about them became disciples, that is, open candidates for the Kingdom under Jesus' leadership. Why was it? Jesus explains in the parable of the *sower.*[33] Soil is as needful as seed; the state of the heart and of the environment are as important in bringing men to discipleship as the appeal of the truth itself. Moreover, real discipleship was a living process, and living processes require time; time in this

[32] Mk. iv. 26-29. [33] Mt. xiii. 1-23.

case for experience to coöperate with spiritual appeal, and for development to arise out of experience. No doubt the reference in the parable is primarily individual; it is not the individual's development *within* the Kingdom, however, but his development *in preparation for* it. The idea of the harvest, which is implicit, represents the "day of Yahveh," or consummation of the age, when the Kingdom in its full manifestation will appear. There is no hint that the development *constitutes* the Kingdom.

This distinction comes out more clearly in the next parable, that of the tares.[34] There the growth is of the *bad* as well as the good, and is plainly *prior* to the consummation of the age. The development of the good seed is evidently the preparation of a righteous citizenry for the Kingdom, the Kingdom, not the developing process, being the objective. Messianic citizenship was the fruit of growth, but the growth was not the citizenship. Indeed, throughout the so-called evolutionary teachings, so far as an end or culmination is indicated, it is *always apocalyptic* —the consummation of the age and the institution of a new, objective, social, and political order. For example, "*Then* shall the righteous shine forth *as the sun* in the Kingdom of their Father." How objective! and it is *after* the harvest and the burning of the tares. The burning of the tares! what has the overthrow of the wicked and elimination of the worthless to do with the inner Kingdom of the believer's harmony with God?

In the *mustard seed* parable[35] the main teaching is, of course, the evolutionary character of the Kingdom and its great potencies despite its small beginnings. But what is the nature of that evolution—individual (confined to separate hearts and lives) or collective (a leaven, or con-

[34] Mt. xiii. 41, 43. [35] Mt. xiii. 31 f.

tagion, of righteousness gradually spreading throughout society)? Opposed to a purely individual construction is the fact that then we have merely the idea of the preceding parables in less detail, and also that then the remark about "the birds of heaven" coming and lodging "in the branches thereof" seems to be quite pointless. It is much more probable that the development in mind was collective. What then is the period of its course? Is it the whole subsequent history of mankind (no rapid growth that!), with the growth of the Catholic church as its first stage, or is the period in mind more limited—say, the preparatory epoch introduced by the coming of John and Jesus and terminated by the "consummation of the age"? In favor of the latter view is the apt remark of Professor Scott, that Jesus evidently regarded the growth of the mustard seed, not "as a mere natural process, but a wonder, in which we may discern the power of God." [36] Furthermore, the selection of an annual rather than a perennial plant points to the more limited outlook. If Jesus had thought of the Kingdom as coming by growth through thousands of years, why should he have illustrated it by an organism whose life is confined to a single season? Why not by a cedar of Lebanon?

The parable of the *leaven* [37] may be construed either individually—in which case its root idea is much the same as that of the self-growing seed—or collectively; but why in either case should it exclude the institutional conception of the Kingdom? It appears simply to show, as did the sower and tares narrative, that Jesus recognized the essentially developmental character of all life processes, and the consequent need of time in that ethical preparation without which the "day of Yahveh" and the Kingdom

[37] Mt. xiii. 33. [36] *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, p. 102.

could not come. Because a preparatory process *was* necessary; because there were conditions to be met and "narrow is the gate and straitened the way that leadeth unto life" [38] (that is, the Kingdom), did that make the Kingdom any less a divinely established *institution?*

It is usual, to be sure, to hold that Jesus thought of the Kingdom as characterized by development, not only in the preparatory stage, but in all its manifestations in all times and places; that is, the Kingdom is a growing thing in its very nature. This may be true; but the evidence for it is by no means conclusive—much scantier, indeed, than most thoughtful Christians suppose. None of Jesus' evolutionary characterizations of the Kingdom *require* more than a preparatory reference. In the tares parable the field is indeed the world—that is, the inhabited earth—but the Jews were then scattered throughout the world, and there is nothing to indicate that the "sons of the Kingdom" included any Gentiles. Again, in the leaven parable the whole was finally "all leavened;" but what was the "whole" —Israel, the elect, or all mankind?

More trustworthy as indicating universality, but not in themselves evolutionary, are Jesus' commendations of the faith of certain Gentiles.[39] These, with his decision, "Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," [40] suggest that for him the divine order, that is, the Kingdom in its fullness, was wider than the apocalyptic expectation of Israel. This conclusion is reënforced by his warnings to the Sanhedrists that Israel's privileges were temporary, and conditioned upon highminded faithfulness, in default of which the Kingdom would "be taken away from" them and "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." [41] So, also, in the description of the *Parousia*

[38] Mt. vii. 14.
[39] Mt. viii. 10, 13; xv. 28.
[40] Mt. xxii. 21.
[41] Mt. xxi.-33-43, 45; xxii. 2-10; viii. 11 f.

the whole inhabited earth is represented as contributing to the Messianic assemblage. "Before him shall be gathered all the nations;" and it would seem that righteous Gentiles as well as Jews were to be summoned to "inherit the Kingdom." [42]

It is probable, therefore, that Jesus regarded the Kingdom which he declared to be "at hand" as itself a progressive and plastic thing, and but the opening stage of a world-wide Kingdom of God. But did those widened horizons exclude from his mind the prophetic (and popular) conception of the Kingdom? It does not appear so. The conceptions are not incompatible; and as a matter of fact the higher forms of Messianism generally included an expectation of world-wide benefits, as has been pointed out already.[43] Isaiah seven hundred years earlier had looked forward to the day when the law of Yahveh, proceeding from Jerusalem, should judge and bless the nations, and bring in the day of universal peace.[44] Such glimpses of the universal bearings of the Kingdom apparently never disturbed the apocalyptic institutional expectation in the least.

One other passage remains to be considered: "And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." [45] This utterance, though evidently it refers to an institutional, not a purely spiritual kingdom, favors the traditional view in one respect. It postpones the "day of Yahveh" indefinitely. It sets up a new condition precedent for the coming of the Kingdom, namely, a world-wide gospel propaganda. There are difficulties,

[42] It is not clear, however, that this description (vv. 31-46) was spoken by Jesus himself. It is couched throughout in the third, not the first, person, except, of course, as the King's words are cited. The writer appears to be telling *about* Jesus, rather than quoting him. Yet the ideas in the passage are evidently his. It is most likely that the real speaker was one of the apostles applying the apocalyptic teaching of Jesus to some situation in the primitive church.

[43] P. 44, *supra*.

[44] Isa. ii. 2-4.

[45] Mt. xxiv. 14; Mk. xiii. 10.

however, in accepting it as Jesus' own statement. It is not articulated with the context, but interrupts the movement of the discourse. If taken in a truly universal way, it conflicts with Jesus' assurances that the *Parousia* is to come in the lifetime of those then living.[46] If, as is not unlikely, the words, "for a testimony unto them," are to be stressed, it may be possible to escape that difficulty by thinking that only a nominal, hasty offer of the gospel to all nations was intended, the purpose being, on their neglect of it, to put them into a kind of technical default. This way out may possibly have been the thought of some a generation later when the gospels were written, and it does not appear elsewhere in Jesus' teachings, and it does not seem characteristic of him or worthy of him. It would be a petty program, and one which we could not excuse on the ground that it was part of his theological inheritance. It is most likely that the saying is a "gloss," that is, a marginal comment [47] on some early manuscrupt which subsequently was incorporated into the text by an uninformed copyist.

On the whole, then, it does not appear that there is any serious indication in the teaching of Jesus that he discarded the general Messianic views in which he had been reared. Rather does a careful survey [48] point to the conclusion that the main features of Israel's Kingdom expectation, apocalyptic and institutional as that was, were accepted by him quite without question.[49] He, too, looked

[46] Mt. xvi. 28; Mk. xiv. 62.
[47] Derived most likely from xxviii. 18-20. *Cf.* Mk. xvi. 15.
[48] This survey is completed in the appendix. See p. 198 ff. *infra.*
[49] *Cf.* Prof. Foster's remark: "Biblical scholarship seems to have settled down to the conclusion that Jesus, in common with the entire primitive Christianity, expected the immediate advent of the Kingdom of God" (*Finality of the Christian Religion,* p. 414). *Cf.* also, Scott's *The Kingdom and the Messiah,* pp. 101-103. In support of this may be added Bousset's remark, "When Jesus spoke of the future, he was not thinking of a colorless and purely heavenly beyond, but pictured it to himself as a state of things existing upon this earth, though, of course, a transfigured earth—and in his own land" (*Jesus,* p. 82). Also, the statement of Prof. Burkitt: "We are beginning to see that the apocalyptic vision, the new age which God is to bring in, is no mere embroidery of Christianity, but the heart of its enthusiasm" (Introd. to Schweitzer's *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*).

for a literal socio-political *institution,* set up on earth and centered in Jerusalem, with officers as well as laws, and a truly human citizenry. His prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," was an appeal to the divine Giver of the Kingdom for the realization of the long-cherished "hope of Israel," and his petition "Thy will be done on earth," was a supplication for the open, quasi-political acceptance by organized society of the divine will as its law. If this conclusion is to be denied, it must be on the strength of evidence drawn from other sources than his teaching.

With this conclusion the views of eye- and ear-witnesses of the time are in manifest agreement. As we have seen,[50] the disciples regarded him as claiming to be the Messiah; and the Jewish leaders, despite his reticence, viewed him in that light. They certainly, if we accept the Fourth Gospel's testimony, took him seriously as a political force. "This man doeth many signs," they argued, "if we let him alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." [51] Evidently the ruling class in Israel by no means saw in Jesus Christ a prophet with only a spiritual message.

They were wrong, of course, in their inference that he was a nationalistic agitator, a Zealot, with a platform of independence from Rome.[52] As little as they did he favor a military revolt against Caesar,[53] which to his sane outlook was madness. Indeed, his quasi-pacifist utterances,[54] so often uncritically stressed, are best understood from this point of view, that is, as cautions against the nation-

[50] P. 26, *supra.* [51] Jn. xi. 47-50.

[52] The Zealots, one of whom (Simon, *cf.* Lk. vi. 15) was in the circle of the twelve, may be likened to the idealistic Bolsheviki in 1917: They believed in realizing their ideal by force.

[53] According to the Johannine writer—who doubtless took the words in a mystic sense—he made this plain to Pontius Pilate, saying, "My Kingdom is not of [from] this world: if my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight"; and the Roman governor, whose official duty it was to be vigilant on this point, was satisfied. *Cf.* Jn. xviii. 36.

[54] Lk. xiii. 1-5; xix. 41-44; xx. 16-18.

alistic zealotry which was then brewing ominously in Israel.[55] His poignant warnings of coming woe through persistent national wilfulness indicate the same sober political outlook. The Zealots were then, however, a relatively small minority, and Jesus' dissent from them did not prevent his accord with the bulk of the sentiment of his people.

6. THE SPIRITUAL VIEW THEOLOGICAL, NOT HISTORICAL. Doubtless the question will be raised, why, if Jesus' thorough-going Messianism is so evident, Christians of all churches and creeds have so generally been blind to it.[56]

The answer is not far to seek. Since Jesus' time Christianity has become the world's greatest religion. Modern Christians, with their world-wide horizons, find it hard to believe that their Lord's message was concerned primarily with the hopes of a petty ancient state. A powerful doctrinal prepossession [57] is in the field. Believers wish to use the figure of Jesus Christ as an authority and an ideal in the life of today, and they feel that this is possible only if he is definitely cut loose from Judaism—so definitely that he belongs not to any one people, but to all peoples and all ages. It is held that his mission was to reveal to men the true ideal of character—godlikeness—and the true dynamic of life, namely aspiration,[58] and thereby to

[55] *Cf.* my art., "Was Jesus Christ a Pacifist" in *The Bookman* for April, 1917.

[56] Even so critical a writer as Bousset assures us that while "Jesus ever remained a faithful son of his nation . . . he delivered his faith from merely national interests," which he "glorified and transfigured." "And if these notes are now and again struck, they are . . . the last sounds of an old song that is dying away. Thus Jesus freed the belief in a future life, and with this belief piety, from any thought of the Jewish nation" (quoted in Hamilton's *People of God*, p. 249 f.). *Cf.* also, J. Orr in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, art. "Kingdom of God;" S. Mathews, *The Messianic Hope in the New Testament*, p. 67 f.; G. Harris, *Moral Evolution*, ch. x.; G. H. Gilbert in *Cyc. of Ethics*, etc.; *Dic. of Christ*, etc., arts. "Kingdom of God;" Stevens, *Teaching of Jesus*, ch. v.; F. P. Graves, *What did Jesus Teach?*, pp. 43, 73, 87, 142 f.

[57] It is powerful, because, in addition to what are apt to seem the dictates of common sense, it makes a combination of traditional and philosophic interests, neither of which is sympathetic with Jewish aspirations. Philosophy, of course, is strongly abstract and universalistic. *Cf.* Paulsen's remark, "Jesus abandons this Messianic hope. . . . The Kingdom of God is not at all like the old kingdom of David," etc. (*Introd. to Philosophy*, p. 288.)

[58] Mt. v. 43, 48.

become the moral and religious authority of all the ages. The higher morality and the Fatherhood of God *must,* consequently, have been his main themes, and his phrase "the Kingdom of God" *must be* metaphorical; it must mean the reign of God's law in human hearts. To many this view seems so much more satisfactory ethically and theologically that it is all but inevitable. Why, *of course!* their thought runs; Jesus was not interested in matters of ordinary welfare; he was a teacher of religion and ethics. The patriotic and Utopian aspects of the Jewish Kingdom expectation were for him mere crude and childish fancies —often gross, in fact, with their solicitude for the human body—and far beneath the breadth and grandeur of his thought.[59] They were ideas which he doubtless felt were to be tolerated for a time, because it was not prudent to controvert them, but were by no means to be embraced. This line of argument—if it *is* argument—appears to be quite sufficient for most Christians today; and, for all that great multitude which, whenever possible, exalts ideas above facts, it may well continue to be sufficient to the end of time. To the believer in scientific thinking, how-

[59] *Cf.* Prof. H. C. Vedder's comment: "If this view [the Messianistic] is correct, and Jesus believed in an immediate and catastrophic consummation of the Kingdom, after his lifetime yet near at hand, the remote future is excluded from the scope of his ethical teaching. In other words, all his teaching is of a temporary character, intended to govern his disciples during the brief time that was to elapse before the end of the age—interim ethics, not universal. In this view of the case Jesus not only did not teach any absolute ethics, valid for all subsequent ages, but he had no intention of doing such a thing. For all we know, therefore, his sayings may have no application whatever to the conditions of the present age [!]. Then . . . what concern have we with his writings, or what difference does it make to us what he taught? . . . His opinions can not matter to us more than those of any crack-brained enthusiast." (*Socialism and the Ethics of Jesus,* p. 350). Thus does the "aboslute" moralist try to blast a chasm in the path of historical inquiry in order to keep it in the traditional and supposedly safe regions of authority. If morals must be "absolute" and "valid for all subsequent ages," and will reduce to mere brittle conventions if not supported by divine authority, then Prof. Vedder may be right in his conclusions; but ours seems a late date in the history of thought for this patriarchal and naïve assumption. What sense is there in "absolute" rules of conduct in a changing, developing world? And why should Jesus' "interim" ethics be useless for us, seeing the interim still continues? Why, too, assume that those ethics would be useless *after* the interim? Jesus expressly links them up with the Kingdom. It is the *righteous* who are to shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.

ever, it simply shows that many Christians are not willing to take the *historical* question seriously, and to apply the approved standards of historical interpretation to the story of Jesus of Nazareth. They are so interested in the *Christ* figure as it functions in modern religious life that they beg the question as to the *Jesus* figure of 30 A.D.[60]

In denying that Jesus' conceptions of the Kingdom was the abstract, spiritual one, no disparagement of the latter is intended, which may, indeed, take ideal forms. At its best its chief drawback is that of all abstract ideas as sources of action—vagueness and ineffectiveness. But to strive for the reign of God in human purpose and life is surely a noble undertaking. On the *personal* side it is a movement toward ideal self-realization, a process which beginning on earth as mere seed may well be believed to increase with time and experience and to break forth into bloom in a heavenly life to come. On the *social* side it aims at the world-supremacy of the Christ mind—mankind's willing adoption individually of Jesus' thought and purpose and loving interest. The theoretical excellence of this ideal is not to be disputed. The only questions about it raised in these pages are (1) as to its practical adequacy and (2) its historical verity as representing Jesus' conception of the Kingdom and Messianic program. It appears to be not either of those things, but rather the fair product of the ethico-religious imagination, a structure of faith and purpose which men of aspiration have built around and above their climbing steps.

[60] It is much as though two thousand years hence the traditional opinions and preferred ideas *of that day* should be introduced to determine what *must* have been the views of Charles Darwin.

CHAPTER VI

THE KINGDOM SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF JESUS

One of the oldest descriptions of Jesus of Nazareth—all the more illuminating because of its naïveté—is Simon Peter's account of him as one "who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." [1] Jesus' view of his own work must have been similar, for when two disciples of the Baptist appear asking whether he is the Christ, he points in reply to just these two forms of service, adding that "the poor have good tidings preached to them." To the people thronging about him manifestly the most important things he did were his cures, and, above all, his cures of demoniacs.[2] That these humanitarian deeds were natural reactions on his part to the appeal of distress has been remarked already; may they not also have had in his view an organic connection with his mission? Such a conclusion is suggested by his statement that "the Son of man" came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." [3] Then, his compassionate ministration was maintained to the end of his career, and it is unlikely that a prophet with such an intense sense of mission would have given it so much time and strength, if it had no bearing on the Kingdom. He appealed to his works of mercy, also, in justification of his course, and his indig-

[1] Acts x. 38.
[2] Lk. vii. 22; Mt. ix. 32-35; viii. 14-17. These were wonders as well as cures in the eyes of the people, and perhaps for Jesus himself, also.
[3] Mt. xx. 28.

nation was aroused when they were unscrupulously misconstrued. Finally, he required such acts of the twelve on their missionary tours.[4]

1. SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS' WORKS OF HEALING. On investigation it appears that for Jesus his cures were related to the Kingdom in two ways: (1) As his personal *credentials* of Messiahship, and (2) As *results* of the Kingdom's presence, and so *examples* of its power and character.

It has been said often that Jesus disparaged the evidential character of his cures and deprecated faith's dependence upon them. Such statements are much too sweeping. The alleged disparagements are found mostly in the accounts of the Johannist—an author with a strong preference for mystical evidence.[5] Even in the Fourth Gospel, however, Jesus is represented as offering his works as sufficient evidence for the ordinary man.[6] The criticism fails, also, to take account of the difference of phraseology in the passages cited. What Jesus disparaged were mere "signs and wonders," not "works." Acts suited merely to make the crowd gape in foolish astonishment were evidently condemned by him.[7] He was not a thaumaturgist. Indeed, it was evidence of an evil mind to demand such things after *the "mighty works" of blessing* which had already been forthcoming so abundantly. Those *works,* however, he appears to have regarded as quite sufficient proofs of his Messiahship.[8] When challenged as to his right to declare a man's sins forgiven,[9] he justifies himself on the spot by the cure of a

[4] Lk. vii. 22; Jn. x. 32; Mt. xii. 24-32; x. 1, 8; Lk. x. 25-37.
[5] Jn. iv. 48; v. 37-39.
[6] Jn. v. 36; vii. 17; x. 25, 37 f.; xiv. 11; xv. 24.
[7] *Cf.* Mt. xii. 38-42; xvi. 1-4.
[8] Lk. x. 13-15.
[9] Mk. ii. 10 f.

paralytic.[10] Such works, too, done by his disciples were to be the sufficient evidence of the presence of the Kingdom of God.[11]

The objection of critical readers to the idea of cures as Messianic credentials is *partly* that they involve appeal to the supernatural—a modern objection which there is no reason to suppose that Jesus entertained at all—and *partly* that they are at best external and arbitrary events that have in themselves no logical bearing upon what they are said to prove. How, for example, does the unexplained cure of a paralytic establish any kind of divine authority in the healer? As regards many alleged miraculous proofs of Jesus' messiahship (the magical making of wine and the walking on water, for example) this objection is no doubt serious enough; but it does not hold as regards what Jesus calls his "works," for these were regarded by him as the normal *results* of the Kingdom, and so actual parts, samples, or cases, of it.[12]

The reasonableness of this view at that time appears when we understand the ancient therapeutic theory—the usual one of pre-scientific days—to the effect that physical malady is *personal in origin*.[13] From this view-point, when the cause of disease cannot be found in the patient's own wrong doing, it is, of course, to be looked for in the agency of other persons, either human or demonic. From this view-point, too, it is plain why so large a place is allotted in the gospels to the restoration to sanity of those believed to be demon-possessed. To the thought of the time such persons

[10] His argument runs, "That ye [the rabbinical critics] may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins . . . I say unto thee [the paralytic], take up thy bed and go unto thy house."

[11] Lk. x. 8-11; Mk. xvi. 17 f.

[12] This is the second significance of Jesus' cures referred to above.

[13] Thus in the account of the Gadarene swine (Mk. v. 1-20) no one—not the patient himself, nor the observers, nor the healer, nor even the owners of the swine!—raised the question whether the maniac's idea of demonic possession might not be a delusion. Note the personal attitude of Jesus toward the "unclean spirit." (vv. 8, 13).

were manifest cases of the victorious dominion of Satan.[14] All the more, therefore, did the people marvel when these were cured, saying, "What is this? a new teaching! With authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."[15] And there was no fault with their logic, once their premises are accepted. Then assuredly a Kingdom superior to Satan's must be admitted to have entered the field![16]

That Jesus himself entertained this view is clear from his words to the Pharisees, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you."[17] Nor is the argument confined to cases of dementia. Regarding the bowed woman whom he cured at Sabbath worship, we find him appealing to the ruler of the synagogue as follows: "Ought not this woman . . . whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the Sabbath?"[18] Every unexplained turning of disease into health, woe into joy, was thus an overthrow of the kingdom of Satan, and an instance of the actual victorious presence of the Kingdom of God.[19] It appears, then, that for Jesus the Kingdom *of God* was so named, not simply because it was the *kind* of kingdom that God approved, nor yet merely because it had its origin in heaven, but also, and most impressively, because in it God was actually present as a conquering and beneficent force.

Nor was this all; for Jesus evidently regarded his

[14] This view was no doubt part of the Zoroastrian heritage acquired in the Babylonian captivity.
[15] Mk. i. 27 f.
[16] Mt. xii. 22-29.
[17] *Cf.* also, his reply to the seventy missionaries, when they reported that "even the devils" were "subject unto" them: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," *i.e.* because of their successes (Lk. x. 17-19).
[18] Lk. xiii. 16.
[19] As we have seen in a preceding chapter, it was apparently because of the manifest presence in Israel of such works of victorious deliverance and blessing that Jesus told the Pharisees that the Kingdom of God was already in the midst of them (Lk. xvii. 21).

humanitarian works as in a measure revelations of the Kingdom's *character*. In his dramatic address in the Nazareth synagogue, after reading the message which Isaiah put into the mouth of Yahveh's "anointed" [20]—words whose natural meaning is humanitarian—he added, "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." How fulfilled? we naturally ask. It is not until we recall that it was his works of healing, performed in other places (*cf.* the "in your *ears*") but not in Nazareth, that then filled the minds of his auditors. Only then do we see the point of his announcement. These works were the fulfillment of the Messianic promise—*first fruits indicating what the Kingdom was to be*. Things such as these—human deliverance, blessing and joy—were to characterize the Kingdom.[21]

It must be evident that the healing work of Jesus favors strongly the social and humanitarian view of the Kingdom, not the spiritual. A new conquering force, revealing itself in deliverance from physical ills and in the promotion of everyday happiness, is not that increasing sway of abstract moral principles for which the spiritual view stands.

Little additional need be said of Jesus' work as a *teacher*.[22] Naturally most of our information on that subject is derived from his teachings, and these have already been considered. Yet it is worthy of note that his course as a public teacher, or propagandist, was *systematic on the practical side*. On careful scrutiny his tours and the missions of his followers take on an aspect of definite

[20] Isa. lxi. 1 ff.; Lk. iv. 16-23; Mt. xiii. 54-58.

[21] *Cf.* his charge to the seventy: "Into whatever city ye enter . . . heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." Another illustration appears in the specific inclusion of "the poor and maimed and blind and lame," *without any question as to spiritual qualifications*, in that feast which, for Jesus and his hearers alike, symbolized the fully established Kingdom of God.

[22] See the outline account on p. 24 f., *supra*.

purpose, not that of mere rambling pursuit of an audience. He was striving to bring his message to the whole country; and, as we see this, we feel the pulse of a sense of mission, an earnest will to deliver a message and accomplish work while still it was day, since "the night cometh when no man can work." Evidently, also, that message which burned within him was not theological, but ethical. He was not seeking to give currency to any speculative ideas. The philosopher Xenophanes, five centuries before, might wander about the Mediterranean, criticizing idolatry, and proclaiming, "The All is one," as even in his own time Philo of Alexandria was busy building a Judaic-Hellenistic theory of God and the world; but Jesus did not occupy himself with these metaphysical questions. He was not a philosopher, not even a religious philosopher, or theologian. His theology was mostly traditional, and appears only incidentally, as in his application of the doc-
numbered," and in the subsidiary doctrine of prayer.[23]
trine of Providence, "The very hairs of your head are all

2. WHY THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY? The only other feature of Jesus' life (as distinguished from his teaching and his death) that appears to have Kingdom significance is his so-called triumphal entry into the Holy City. This event has been a notable challenge to the ingenuity of all those who seek to combine a purely spiritual view of the Kingdom with historico-critical exposition. It is not difficult to find symbolic meanings in the dramatic episode, meanings, too, that have value for religious and ethical feeling. The trouble comes when we try to fit these meanings into Jesus' own thinking and action. Dean Milman, with the progress of the Christ figure through the centuries in mind, exclaims:

[23] Mt. x. 29-31; *cf.* Ps. cxxxix. 1-16; Mt. vii. 7, 11; xxi. 21 f.

"Ride on, ride on in majesty,
In lowly pomp ride on to die:
O Christ, thy triumphs now begin
O'er captive death and conquered sin."

For the *spectator* this far-reaching, poetico-religious insight may be quite true; but did Jesus himself participate in the pathetic spectacle as a symbol of his increasing influence through succeeding centuries? It is hard to think so. Anything savoring of the theatrical was far from the usual course of his life.

It is plain that the populace found a very different meaning in the event. To them it was a Messianic demonstration, so that they raised the cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David," and the children repeated it in the very courts of the Temple.[24] Are we to think that Jesus, too, was carried away by Messianic enthusiasm? If so, on the theory of the essential spirituality of the Kingdom, the episode seems to indicate a slackening of purpose, a stooping from the spiritual to the carnal, a reversal of his high decision in the wilderness to employ only moral forces,[25] not those of the world. But no, that evidently was not the case; for while the throng was still hailing him as the incoming King, he halted to weep over Jerusalem, and to lament that it knew not the things that belonged unto its peace. Manifestly what he looked forward to was not any immediate Messianic success, but tragic experiences for Israel and himself.[26]

Why, then, did he participate in the futile pageant? Is it suggested that though the "triumphal entry" had no

[24] Mt. xxi. 9, 15. And Jesus by no means discouraged the cry. When the Sanhedrists protested, he replied, "I tell you that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out" (Lk. xix. 39 f.). "Yea, did ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Mt. xxi. 16). *Cf.* also, Mt. xxiii. 39, where, in what was perhaps his last farewell to the Temple and its worldly governors, he harks back to the popular cry on Palm Sunday.

[25] Mt. iv. 8-10.

[26] Lk. xix. 41 f.; Mt. xxiii. 38 f.

valuable significance for Jesus himself, it was permitted by him in order to give a little cheer to his disciples? That is a weak explanation, implying that Jesus raised hopes which he knew must be blasted, and made a perilous concession to Zealotry, a Zealotry which, since it might easily lead to Israel's destruction (as he evidently foresaw), greatly needed to be corrected, not encouraged.

What then is the true explanation? The answer involves a view of Jesus' purpose, or aim, which constitutes the central thesis of this book. It is the natural, and historically reasonable, view that *Jesus Christ was a true child of his people and his time; that he actually expected the speedy coming of a divine Kingdom here on earth, a Kingdom centered in Jerusalem; and that he was deeply convinced of his commission from God to prepare Israel for its coming, and wholly intent upon presenting this regenerated Israel to Yahveh as a repentant and righteous-minded people, entitled to claim the fulfillment of the Messianic promises.*[27] From this point of view the difficulties of the event before us pass away. Naturally experience had enlarged Jesus' conception of the Messianic task. Israel, despite his devoted ministry was apparently not yet ready for the Kingdom, and his working day was drawing to a close.[28] The issue between him and the hostile Sanhedrists could no longer be postponed or evaded. Their destructive purpose was fixed; his own duty as anointed representative of the Kingdom was clear; and Israel, gathered at this Passover season from all parts of the civilized world, was present in Jerusalem to make decision. The time had come when the nation

[27] So construed, Jesus' Messianic conception was entirely in accord with his religious heritage and the intellectual and social environment of an Israelite of the first century, and quite consonant with his emphasis upon the *imminence* of the Kingdom and with his charges to his missionaries, whose first and last message was to be, "The Kingdom of God is come nigh" (Lk. x. 9, 11).

[28] Jn. ix. 4.

must choose between the Kingdom, the true, righteous Kingdom of God, and the kingdom of this world as represented in its selfish leaders. It was all too likely from the dullness of mind they had shown hitherto that his people would side with mammon, or stand aside and leave him alone,[29] in which case mammon's brute force would destroy him. Nevertheless, Israel must have the opportunity to make the higher choice if it would.

His small but significant pageant, with its plain, but non-military, suggestion,[30] was his appeal to his people to choose the divine Kingdom then so near, to come forward and join the company of Yahveh's expectant subjects. It was the public raising of his standard as the Messiah. So viewed, one cannot but admire the leader of that "lowly pomp." Jesus on that humble beast was, with rare coolness and courage, leading the forlorn hope of Israel's finest ideal, and, as will appear farther on, of mankind's greatest cause. The campaign in which he served was located on earth, not in the skies, and its time was that in which he lived, not after death, nor in any indefinitely remote future. Indeed, the time was, and is, that of all human lives, until justice and mercy prevail and God's will is "done on earth as it is in heaven."

It thus appears that the life and work of Jesus, quite as truly as his teaching, point to an *institutional* Kingdom, a Kingdom of social welfare, as his great interest and objective. It may be said, however, that a man's supreme interest, or concern, is not always evident in what he says, or even in what he does on ordinary occasions, but is to be discovered most surely by what he does in time of stress, especially by what he holds to in face of death. It remains, therefore, to consider whether Jesus' martyr death calls for any modification of our conclusion.

[29] Jn. xvi. 52. [30] Zech. ix. 9

CHAPTER VII

THE KINGDOM SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DEATH OF JESUS

On the original Good Friday, in the year 30 A.D., three crosses stood on a little hill outside the wall of Jerusalem, and upon them the lives of three men ebbed agonizingly away. On the middle cross passers-by read the inscription, "The King of the Jews." [1] To Pilate's wording of this inscription, we are told, the Jewish leaders objected; but they found no fault with its main purport, namely, that Jesus was executed as an aspirant to Jewish kingship.

Were the Roman governor and the Sanhedrists—all of them eye- and ear-witnesses—totally at fault in this judgment? The theologies of Christendom have been virtually a unit in answering, yes. As they will have it, Jesus had no thought of being a Jewish king, and the charge that he had was but a pretext—a mask for wicked hearts.

1. WHY DID JESUS DIE? Why, then, did he die? This seems to have been an early inquiry of the bereaved and perplexed disciples;[2] and in all periods of reflective activity it has been a problem for thoughtful believers. Though answered authoritatively over and over by eminent theologians, church councils, and œcumenical creeds, it nevertheless, with each new period of theological interest, has a way of thrusting itself to the front a-fresh. From the political and historical point of view the event was not mysterious. It was tragedy, indeed, brutal and bloody; but to those familiar with the age-long course of human-

[1] Mk. xv. 26; Jn. xix. 20 f. [2] Lk. xxiv. 13-21, 25 f.

ity, particularly those who have seen Europe crucified in recent years, there is sadly little of strangeness about that. How often in the clash of human interests have the finest and best gone down before the brute surge of prejudice and greed! Yet there is a problem in the event; for Jesus foresaw it, and yet made no attempt to avoid it. Evidently he was not a mere victim; he could have escaped. In a sense his death was voluntary. The real query is, Why did Jesus *choose* to die?

2. THE ANSWER SUGGESTED BY THE GOSPELS. If we turn to the gospel narratives, it is natural to conclude that it was because, as suggested in the last chapter, the path of loyalty led to the cross; because he could not be true to his mission as the divinely appointed agent for bringing Israel into fitness for the Kingdom without the fullest possible public witness to it and teaching about it; and without withal a nation-wide summons of Israel to its standard. For a time the primitive church seems to have taken substantially this view. Jesus' predictions of the *parousia,* vividly reënforced by his resurrection appearances, rendered it acceptable and sufficient. Evil had, indeed, triumphed on Calvary; but it was only a temporary reverse, and was due entirely to Israel's slowness to understand the heavenly appeal and respond to it. In "a little while," when the people were finally won to God and his holy law, Jesus would return in Messianic victory, and the Kingdom would be established gloriously.[8]

But the years went by, and Israel was not won to the Nazarene; rather did the majority become more hostile to him. When at length the Holy City was actually destroyed, and Jesus did not return nor the Kingdom come;

[8] Jn. xvi. 16-22; Acts iii. 17-21; I Thess. iv. 13-17; v. 23; II Pet. iii. 2-4, 9-14. Says Prof. T. J. Foakes-Jackson, "The idea of a Messianic Kingdom pervades the whole book of Acts" (*Harvard Theolog. Review,* April, 1919, p. 193). *Cf.* Chapter X, *infra.*

and when the eye- and ear-witnesses of his ministry died off, and still he did not appear, then the new generation of Christians, by that time largely Gentiles, ceased to be satisfied with the Messianic explanation; and some other reason for his death appeared to be called for.[4] Those were days when the Graeco-Roman intellectual world was dominated by various religious philosophies—Platonic, Stoic, Philonic, etc.—which by free speculation obliterated the usual common-sense lines of distinction between the natural and the supernatural, earth and heaven, man and God. Not unnaturally Gentile believers, especially as recruits came in who were familiar with Greek philosophy, came ere long to find *metaphysical rather than historical* solutions to the problem of why Jesus chose to die.

3. THE THEOLOGICAL ANSWERS. One of the first theories was derived from the old ethnic doctrine of sacrificial propitiation. Jesus was declared to be "the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." [5] This theory takes no account of Jesus as the Messiah nor of the Kingdom of God. It has left the domain of mundane affairs and interests, especially *social* interests, and is concerned only with the individual's sense of sin—or status as sinner—which it conceives to be removable or assuageable only through a *change in the attitude of the Deity,* a change which the death of Jesus effected for all believers.[6]

The theory that in the course of time came to acceptance taught that Jesus died to free mankind from captivity to

[4] This development of thought will be traced more fully in Chapter XI.
[5] Jn. i. 29; I Jn. ii. 1, 2.
[6] It is probable that this primitive idea never had large currency in the church, although at times we find suggestions of it even in St. Paul's writings (*cf.* Rom. iii. 25 f.). Generally, however, the great apostle represents man as the one needing to be reconciled (*cf.* II Cor. v. 18-20). It is hard to believe that the propitiation doctrine was a serious belief even of the Johannine writer, with most of whose teaching it appears to conflict (*cf.* Jn. iii. 16 f.; vi. 27-58; chaps. xv.-xvii.). This author's vagueness of expresesion probably facilitated his use of old words in new senses.

the Evil One—an evident reminiscence of Mazdaism,[7] with which the Jews came into such close contact in the Babylonian captivity. Satan in his age-long contest with God had won a notable victory in the very first earthly campaign. He had led the parents of the human race into disobedience, and so into subjection to the powers of darkness. The only way in which this lien of the Adversary upon the race could be lifted was through a ransom paid to him, a ransom which Jesus actually paid in his death. The fact that this ransom theory prevailed for a thousand years is eloquent testimony as to the reign of religious metaphysics in the ancient church.

Bizarre as it is apt to seem today, it may be questioned whether it has not more truth in it[8] than its successor, which in one form or another has worn the vestments of orthodoxy since. In the eleventh century, with the revival of reflective thought, believers of a serious mind found more difficulty in thinking of the Deity as but little stronger than the devil and liable to be countered by him. The devout Anselm raised once more the question, why Christ died.[9] Writing in the height of feudalism's vogue he found a feudal solution of the problem. In a political order founded, as was that of the Middle Ages, on personal will it was all important that the lord should maintain his superior standing in the eyes of all—should "save his face." All infringements upon his law and his dignity must be punished, if only in the person of a substitute; since otherwise, in those turbulent times, society would dissolve in anarchy. Anselm raised this social situation to

[7] *Cf.* Isa. lxiii. 1-6.

[8] The theory, if we construe its Satanic mythology metaphorically and regard the lien of Satan as a picturesque term for man's brute inheritance, has real metaphysical value; for it represents in a dramatic way humanity's most serious and ominous handicap; so serious that in very truth vicarious sacrifice is needful to bring men to any considerable improvement of life.

[9] *Cf.* his *Cur Deus Homo?*

the skies—then not so far away—and maintained that man by his violation of the divine law had impaired the dignity of the supreme Lord of the universe, and hence must be punished, not vindictively, but in the interest of the divine government. God could not overlook man's sin, nor forgive it, even when man was truly repentant. Some one must suffer for it; the *offense itself* must be expiated. God's mercy appears, not in freely forgiving his wayward but finally contrite children, but in providing for them a substitute victim in the person of "his only begotten Son." So Christ died to satisfy God's justice, to maintain his dignity as supreme Overlord. In this theory, as in its predecessors, the Kingdom of God becomes a mere figure of speech.

It is evident that these theological explanations of Jesus' death are speculative. They deal not with a real problem, but an artificial one, one that the theologian has created for himself by his doctrine of Jesus as a supernatural person. They are constructions of the *a priori* reason based largely on metaphysical assumptions. Hence, at best they share with metaphysical conclusions in general the drawback of being *opinions,* not truths; though no doubt they are opinions that have been accepted by many very competent minds. What is more to our present concern is that there is nothing to warrant the belief that Jesus himself had the least acquaintance with them. It is true that certain sayings of his have been construed so as to accord with the atonement idea which is present in them all; but none of these sayings *requires,* or itself *suggests,* any one of these interpretations. On the contrary, *the idea is imposed upon the sayings, not derived from them.*

Jesus' statement that "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a

ransom for many" [10]—the only case in which he uses the word "ransom"—is often cited. Now, no doubt Jesus was then looking forward to his all too probable violent death, but that he referred to any *metaphysical* "ransom"—any discharge of a speculative legal relation to Satan or to God—is not suggested in the least. According to the Johannist, he called himself the "good shepherd," and added, "The good shepherd [*i.e.* every good shepherd] layeth down his life for the sheep," *i.e.* rather than fail in his care of them.[11] In this saying, as in the preceding, the idea of the sacrifice of life in behalf of others is, indeed, involved; but how does that commit him to more than unsparing self sacrifice in behalf of human welfare *on earth?* As well attribute Allen Seeger's true forecast of his death on the battle-line in France [12] to the need of satisfying the devil or the divine justice as impose either of these alleged necessities upon Jesus' prevision of his approaching end.

Again, at Jericho Jesus justified his entrance into the house of the publican, Zacchaeus, on the ground that he had come "to seek and to save that which was *lost.*" [13] Modern Christians are apt to think that "lost" in this passage means a state of fatal alienation from God, one which can be overcome only through the sinner's appropriation of the "satisfaction of Christ;" but the idea appears to have nothing in its favor, except the fact that generations later speculative theologians taught the church to think that way. The remark itself in the actual situation offers no suggestions of a supernatural stage and drama. Zacchaeus seems to have been by no means an abandoned character. His eagerness to see Jesus is evi-

[10] Mt. xx. 28.
[11] Jn. x. 11-15.
[12] *Cf.* Seeger's poem, "I've a rendez-vous with death."
[13] Lk. xix. 1-10.

dence to the contrary. The gospels suggest various men more worthy of the epithet "lost" in a moral or metaphysical sense. In the popular thought of the time all Israelites who took up the trade of tax-collector were classed with flagrant sinners [14] and regarded as "lost" to Israel—a social, not a metaphysical, meaning. Doubtless the word "lost" (in this sense) was called forth by the criticism of the onlookers, who complained that he had "gone to lodge with a man that is a *sinner*." The point of the reply was that it was the business of the Messiah to reclaim for the approaching Kingdom those "sons of Abraham" who, like sheep, had wandered away and become "lost." [15]

4. JESUS' LAST SUPPER. The main gospel support claimed for the metaphysical explanations is the statement of Jesus at his last supper with the twelve, about his *blood*. This is variously reported, and is almost without context. In the earliest gospel it reads, "This [Paschal wine] is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." [16] Matthew adds to this the phrase, "unto remission of sins." [17] As this addition is not included in the three other accounts,[18] it is quite possible that the phrase is an explanatory comment made by the Evangelist, or an early gloss, and is not part of the original saying. On the other hand, Luke and Paul, neither an ear-witness, make it read, "This cup is the *new* covenant in my

[14] Mt. ix. 10 f.; xi. 19; Lk. v. 30; xv. 1, 2.

[15] Twice Jesus spoke of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel"—a reminiscence doubtless of the metaphors of the prophets (*cf.* Isa. liii. 6; Jer. l. 6; Ezek. xxxiv. 5 f., 16; also, Mk. vi. 34); but on neither occasion can we believe that fatal alienation of heart is referred to, for Israel is set over against the Gentiles (Mt. x. 6; xv. 24). That Jesus meant by "lost" those who are *out of the way*, or beyond the bounds of safety (*cf.* the parable of the lost sheep, Lk. xv. 1-7, 32), and so *in danger from natural causes*, is evident enough from Mt. xviii. 10-14.

[16] Mk. xiv. 24.

[17] Mt. xxvi. 28.

[18] Lk. xxii. 20; I Cor. xi. 25.

blood." [19] Is there a reference to man's standing before God in this statement, as furnished by the last three sources? If so, it is to be found in the words "covenant" and "blood." The former is a dark term to modern Occidentals; but it was not so to Jesus' hearers. It pointed back to a notable national event—the solemn agreement entered into by Yahveh and Israel at Mount Sinai.[20] That "covenant" had been sealed by the blood of sacrificed animals, which was sprinkled upon the obedience pledging people—a proceeding quite in accord with the thought and custom of primitive times. Solemn promises then were sanctioned with ceremonies and outward tokens, the latter being preferably some object connected with the divinity and so tabu. These being included in the ceremony served thereafter to *remind* the parties of their agreement, and of the Divinity's knowledge thereof, and to deter them from breaking it. In the words of Professor Schmidt, a covenant was "a promise supported by a curse." [21]

The surety, or token, might be of almost any kind, provided it was permanent, and was striking enough to act as a reminder. The rainbow was one of the earliest tokens, and circumcision was another.[22] Often it was some

[19] The distinction between the "new covenant" of grace, conditioned on faith, and the Sinaitic covenant of law (Ex. xxiv. 7 f.), conditioned on obedience, was an important one for St. Paul; and Luke was evidently influenced a great deal by Paul, with whom he traveled extensively. Says Prof. N. Schmidt, "His [Jesus'] words at the paschal table have evidently undergone successive modifications, and it is difficult not to trace Pauline influences" (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, art. "Covenant"). Had Jesus made such a distinction himself, he would doubtless, judging from his recorded teachings, have represented the old covenant as one of worldly prosperity, conditioned on elementary and largely ceremonial obedience—the needful status of the immature minded—and the new covenant as one of a higher social order, or civilization, conditioned on the higher morality as taught by himself.

[20] Ex. xxiv. 7 f.; Zech. ix. 11.

[21] O. C. Of this character was the Mizpah covenant (Gen. xxxi. 41-55). Jacob and Laban, on parting in outward amity but mutual distrust, set up a pile of stones, called the Watch-tower (Mizpah), and consecrated it by joining in a sacrificial meal at its base. Then Laban said warningly: "Yahveh watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. . . . This heap be witness . . . that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap . . . unto me, *for harm.*" The heap of stones was thus the reminder of their covenant, its real sanction being the invoked presence and watchfulness of Yahveh.

[22] Gen. ix. 16 f.; xvii. 11; *cf.* Ex. xxxiv. 8-11; Isa. lv. 3 f.; Mal. iii. 1 ff.

part of a slain animal, the mystery of the departed life being in such cases the impressive and divinity suggesting feature. In the most solemn covenants the blood of the victim, which having been consecrated to Yahveh was tabu, was sprinkled on the garments of the parties, where its stain would long remind them that their God was a party to the pledges they had made and that his wrath would be upon them if those pledges were broken.

Now, when Jesus uses the symbolism of these familiar customs to describe his own situation, his words seem to mean that the covenant between God and Israel was certified afresh by his death. Was there need that it should be so certified? Assuredly; for the tragedy of the night was to bring a tremendous shock to the eleven. When they looked upon his lifeless body, they must not despair. Nor need they despair; rather should they regard the blood of his cross as a new pledge of the covenant's validity. And assuredly even to us doubting moderns it is eloquent proof of his own unshaken confidence in the great hope of Israel. In this simple, though tragic, sense even St. Paul, with all his solicitude as to his standing with God, seems to have understood Jesus' words; for without warrant from the Synoptic sources, he twice attributed to Jesus the injunction, "This do in remembrance of me." He even stressed the memorial idea, pointing out that the Eucharist was a *token*—a witness to their Master's loyalty and love and to the expected *parousia*. "For," said he, "as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death *till he come*"![23]

Analysis of the accounts of Jesus' last supper thus makes it plain that, with the possible exception of an unexplained phrase in Matthew, no metaphysical references are in any way required to give a direct, coherent meaning

[23] I Cor. xi. 24 f., 26.

to Jesus' words about his death. Quite the contrary; it is the metaphysical interpretations that are hard to fit into the actual situation. If Jesus really meant to represent himself as the expiator of sin for all mankind, it is most improbable that he would have left this world-embracing principle so vague that his reporters could recall but one reference to it on his part, and even as to that be unable to agree upon just what he said. Moreover, the gospel narratives indicate that Jesus was not interested in the expiatory side of Israel's religion, a side magnified far too much by Christian theologians. From his twelfth year he was a frequent visitor in the Temple, and taught in its courts time and again; yet we never find him referring to its sacrificial ritual. To him the Temple was "a house of prayer;" [24] he joined in its great annual feasts; his mystic discourses on the light of the world, the water of life, and the living bread [25] find suggestion in its festival features. But of the daily shedding of sacrificial blood on the great central altar he had not a word to say, nor from it a single truth to point!—a most remarkable, and indeed inexplicable, omission if he considered himself to be the sacrificial "lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Finally, the metaphysical, or atonement, interpretation of the saying under review involves an unbelievable hiatus in the Master's thought. Though the three evangelists are not agreed as to just what Jesus said about the cup, they are substantially at one as to the words immediately following: "I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine until *that day* when I drink it new in the *Kingdom of God.*" [26] Was this a rational context for a statement about the conditions of man's acquittal in the divine

[24] Mt. xxi. 13.
[25] Assuming these to be authentic.
[26] Mk. xiv. 25. *Cf.* p. 57 *supra.*

court of justice? By what kind of explanation can this utopian picture be fitted into a spiritual frame? Does not a reader dominated by the traditional spiritual conception of the Kingdom experience a jolt as he comes upon these words?

Summing up, it appears that, in his death as truly as in his life, the mind of Jesus was whole-heartedly directed toward the prophetic ideal of the Kingdom of God.[27] Of course, this conclusion does not require us to think that his view of the Kingdom was as vague as that of the prophets or as limited as that of the Israel of his day. How, in non-conflicting ways, he modified the Kingdom idea then current will be the theme of the next chapter.

[27] *Cf.* Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, p. 97, and the chapter on "The Suffering Messiah."

CHAPTER VIII

JESUS' KINGDOM IDEAL

1. ITS GENESIS. If Jesus held to the traditional prophetic "hope of Israel," [1] it was not in the vagueness and softness of popular thought. Evidently he could not envisage a righteous Kingdom without a righteous people as its constituency;[2] and from the outset of his career he knew that this requirement had not been met. Israelites generally were not yet ready for the Kingdom. They did not take the moral law seriously enough—not by any means! They wished the joyous fruits of the divine reign without the trouble of cultivating them.[3] Often they made the Kingdom a secondary concern, or treated it as a doubtful adventure. The most adverse fact was that so many in Israel were not "fit for the Kingdom of God." [4] No wonder it tarried, and the pious strained their longing eyes in vain. In continued default of a right-minded citizenry, Yahveh would be forced to seek in some other nation a people worthy of his favor [5]—which God forbid! The need of Israel, then, was moral preparation, that when the Kingdom arrived they might join in it loyally and successfully. But who was sufficient for the great task of preparing them?

It is reasonable to suppose that thoughts such as these often occupied Jesus while he was still plying the tools of his trade at Nazareth; at first, perhaps, simply as a pious

[1] *Cf.* Acts xxviii. 20; xxvi. 6, 7.
[2] *Cf.* Mt. v. 20; Mk. i. 15.
[3] Mt. xiii. 3-9, 18-22.
[4] Lk. ix. 57-62.
[5] Mt. xxi. 33-43.

Israelite, but sooner or later as a man with promptings to divine service. When and how his prophetic self-consciousness awoke is not told us. Probably his consciousness of superior insight was one source of his Messianic conviction; and we can scarcely doubt that his discovery of his healing gift was another. On becoming aware of that, it is probable enough that he would reason that since this power—evidently God-given—was superior to Satan's, God must design to use him in those critical times for the defeat of Satan, and the initiation of the Kingdom of heaven.[6] If so, if he was indeed the Anointed of God, what could that mean but that the "day of Yahveh" was actually near?

What deep mystic experiences re-enforced this line of thought we do not know.[7] Then as he "was musing the fire kindled."[8] From the wilderness of Judea came the cry of the Baptist, speaking his own thought, and declaring the imminence of the Kingdom. If "all the land of Judea" was stirred by John's message, and the "people were in expectation,"[9] how much more the brooding healer in Galilee!—especially by the Nazarite's prediction that *"there cometh he that is mightier than I. . . .* He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire"! We may well believe that to the Nazareth carpenter these words amounted to an *external* divine call confirming an *internal* vocation, a call to go forth openly as the champion of the Kingdom. Certainly that was the course he took, adopting at first the Baptist's message, but soon branching out into the many themes incident to personal preparation

[6] Lk. xi. 20.

[7] Except, of course, those later at his baptism and in the wilderness (*cf.* Lk. iii. 21 f.; iv. 1-13). The fourth evangelist makes much—and probably rightly—of his immediate awareness of the divine presence (*cf.* Jn. xiv. 9-11; xvii. 1-26, etc.). For such a career as his this would seem to be an indispensable factor; for reason supported only by ordinary experience is not favorable to great ventures of faith.

[8] Ps. xxxix. 3.

[9] Lk. iii. 15 f.

for the Kingdom. One thing, then, one thrilling, but weighty and serious thing, that the Kingdom meant to Jesus was a personal summons to bring Israel into a loyal and submissive attitude to Yahveh.

2. NATURE OF ITS APPEAL. The day came when the prophet of Nazareth bade a mournful adieu to the Holy City and its Temple.[10] His was the fortune so common with prophets, great and small. His people, though they listened, would not, or could not, understand. Henceforth Jerusalem should know him no more until it learned to say with the Palm-Sunday throngs, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Yahveh."

The farewell was preceded by a bitter arraignment of the Pharisaic leaders,[11] a notable feature of which was an initial approval of their general teachings. Why, then, did he break with them so passionately?[12] The reason was given: "They say, and do not." Ye, "scribes and Phari sees . . . shut the Kingdom of heaven against men." "Ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter." That is, with all their pretenses they were defeating the realization of the Kingdom. The Pharisaic reply is lacking: doubtless they denied the charge, insisting that the "day of Yahveh" had not yet come. Their position appears to have been that Yahveh must take the initiative, and until He did they were not minded to make any sacrifices or take any risks in the Kingdom's behalf. Specifically they would not pay for its coming the old prophetic price of social justice.

It was the demand for this price that separated the

[10] Mt. xxiii. 37-39; xxiv. 1, 2.

[11] Mt. xxiii. 2-7, 13-16. That this diatribe was altogether just we need not suppose. Political reformers are wont to be over severe in their criticism of obstructionists.

[12] Of course, his ethical interest was quite different from theirs. An Israel devoted to tithing of "mint and anise and cummin" naturally had no appeal for a prophet. Nor could he believe that such pedantic formalism would call forth the intervention of Yahveh, as the Pharisees hoped.

orthodoxy of the day from the Prophet of the Kingdom. How, then, did he conceive of that price—the social justice requisite for qualification for the Kingdom, and characteristic of the Kingdom after its establishment? Why was the Kingdom so desirable to him—a hidden "treasure," a "pearl of great price"? Not, we may affirm confidently, because of its nationalistic features. That Jesus was not without patriotic feeling may be inferred from his words to the Syrophenician woman, his saying to the woman of Samaria, and his charge to the twelve in their missionary tour: "Go not into any way of the Gentiles . . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." [13] But that he had no faith in mere nationalism has been pointed out already.[14] He would have the people endure foreign domination rather than do worse. After all, the evils of foreigners in government positions, of unfair taxation, and the like, were not the great things of life. Besides, why substitute a Herod for a Pilate? In the main he avoided nationalistic questions as out of his province, leaving them apparently to individual judgment. "Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." [15]

Was it then, the wonder features of the apocalyptic dream that constituted the charm of the Kingdom for him? Was he one of those religionists, more or less in evidence in every age, who revel in the dreams of romantic supernaturalism—the pomp of angels and lightnings, of heavenly radiance and thrones of judgment? We cannot think so. Dreamers are not, as he was, patient persistent teachers, eminently sane in their outlook upon everyday affairs, and fearless in opposing intrenched injustice. Nor do they, like him, disparage interest in signs and wonders.

[13] Mt. xv. 24, 26; Jn. iv. 22; Mt. x. 5, 6.
[14] *Cf.* p. 64.
[15] Mt. xxii. 21.

That he did think of his second coming as in the nature of a supernatural triumphal entry into the domain of a transformed earth—akin in a measure to the "triumphs" of the city by the Tiber—seems evident; but it was simply as commonly accepted parts of the coming divine order which he never felt called upon to discard—the scenery, not the action, in the Kingdom drama. His references to them were never by way of self-glorification but always for some ethical purpose—to sustain the faith and loyalty of the disciples, to warn haughty selfishness,[16] etc. Moreover, not an item does he appear to have added to the eschatalogical picture, which seems to indicate that his original and fertile mind was not stirred by it.

Broadly speaking the charm of the Kingdom for Jesus, its dynamic as an ideal, was in its promise of a happy human society, a new order and organization of life, realizing both the prophets' dreams of human welfare and the potential beauty of human nature. He had an absorbing concern for the good of his fellow men. In his heart reigned that law of love which he laid upon others.[17] Not only did he have compassion upon those about him in their bodily distresses, but he pitied them in their spiritual blindness and wanderings. These fellow children of God were so pitifully foolish—sheep without a shepherd,[18] and no lack of wolves abroad! Most earnestly he craved for them a better chance and a greater success in life.

3. CHARACTER OF JESUS' ETHICS. The human welfare sought by Jesus was fittingly represented by the term Kingdom; for it was to be the fruit of a finer organization of society, one with an ideal ruler, a righteous law, etc. Yet that organization was no favored creation of his own constructive imagination. He did not devise a pattern social order—say, of workers, guardians, and wise

[16] Mt. xxvi. 64. [17] *Cf.* Lk. x. 25-37. [18] Mk. vi. 34.

rulers—and then demand that the actual state be conformed thereto. On the contrary, if he could get Israel ready for Yahveh's sway, he was content to leave the organization of the Kingdom to the future. So he never became a nostrum vendor, with a "sure cure" social system to dispose of; and he escaped the lure of speedy completeness, with its attendant bane of finality, which has rendered so many Utopias barren. It thus transpires that, whether prevised and intended or not, his ideal as it has come down to us is flexible and adjustible to a changed and changing world.[19] This flexible character appears in his ethics in general, which is one of *principles,* not rules. It is *empirical,* based on known, or knowable, values, not on conformity to any eternal pattern. The end, or reason, of a moral act is always the welfare of conscious beings.[20] The *right* is that which is justified by its *good results;* not any kind of rule, Pharisaic or Platonic, with which conduct must be squared.[21] It is that kind of action which either experience or divine assurance shows to be needful for true happiness. "The sabbath," for example, "was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" [22]—an open denial of certain rabbinical teachings, which was justified by him on the prophetic principle that God desires "mercy [*i.e.* loving-kindness] and not sacrifice." [23] Again, in the judgment scene at the *parousia* concern for human happiness is used as the critical test. The King is to say "unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed, . . . inherit the

[19] *Cf.* p. 61 f., *supra.*

[20] Lk. xv. 7, 10, 32.

[21] The age-long attempts of Hellenically inclined theologians to fit the ethics of Jesus into an *a priori,* rationalistic mold—Platonic or Stoic—is futile. Jesus did not live in a Greek world, albeit Greek influences circled round about Palestine. For the pious Jew of his day it was a virtue to be ignorant of Gentile teachings, and Jesus seems to have made *no* break with the scribes at this point. He never portrays God as the Absolute, whose ideas and will *constitute* the right, but rather as the great *vindicator* thereof (*cf.* Lk. xviii. 7 f.), and the great promoter of human happiness. Even of physical goods he says, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things" (Mt. vi. 32 f.).

[22] Mk. ii. 27.

[23] Mt. xii. 7, 12.

Kingdom, . . . for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink," etc.[24]

Is it asked what human good consisted in for Jesus—*happiness or virtue?* In *both* evidently. Not being a moral philosopher, he seems not to have entertained this question, nor to have been disturbed by the supposed incompatibilities between the two that have troubled moralists. He had no ban for any kind or source of pleasure *in itself*, and he was almost as ready as the common people to think of it in terms of physical and social enjoyment—the great supper or that week-long Oriental festivity, the marriage feast.[25] Nor was he afraid of commercializing morality, or converting it into a "pig philosophy," by appealing to motives of policy. "It is *profitable* for thee," he declares, "that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell." [26] "What shall a man be profited," he asks, "if he gain the whole world, and forfeit his [higher] life?" [27] The beatitudes are, of course, simply succinct statements of the *profit* (spiritual or otherwise) of righteousness. Not only does he urge the laying

[24] Mt. xxv. 34 ff.

Appreciation of the *value* point of view in Jesus' ethics is needful to understand his views regarding marriage and divorce (*cf.* Mt. xix. 3-9). With him the institution of marriage was evidently in high esteem. Celibacy gets no comfort from his teachings. Nor, on the other hand, do the patriarchal conceptions of Rome on the one side and the Far East on the other, with their insistence that the lineal "house," the family as continuing through the generations, has claims superior to those of the individual wedded pair and their offspring. Not so; but because of the interests of the present generation "shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife" (Mt. xix. 5). It is from the point of view of human happiness, and in response to the inquiry of the Pharisees whether it is lawful for a man to put away his wife for *every* cause," that he goes on to condemn divorce, except in cases of unfaithfulness. The teaching seems over severe, especially for the more complex life of our time. But it may fairly be urged that Jesus probably had no thought of legislating for all possible cases, and still less for the ages to come. He was meeting a concrete evil of his time—man's inhumanity to woman in the husband's haughty dismission of his wife from her rightful home. The significant thing is that Jesus is taking the part of the injured member of the family in the household divisions of the time. It is concrete human happiness that appeals to him, and not a theoretic rule; of, if the theoretic rule, then that only so far as it is the safeguard of human happiness.

[25] *Cf.* Mt. xxii. 1-14; xxv. 1-12; viii. 11; xxvi. 29 (*cf.* xxv. 21, 23); Lk. xii. 35-37; xiii. 25-29; xv. 22-24, 32.

[26] Mt. v. 29 f.

[27] Mt. xvi. 26.

up of treasures in heaven,[28] "where neither moth nor rust doth consume," but he even advises the philanthropic use of property *in order that* useful friends may be secured against a future day of need![29]—a scandalous lapse in the eyes of absolutist ethicists.

At the same time the value of a developed personality, a proved character (that is, "virtue"), is no less appreciated. It is the condition or prerequisite of enlarged power. The servant who has "been faithful over a few things" is the one who will be set "over many things." "He that hath, to him shall be given." [30] Its own excellence is a form of blessedness, and virtue its own reward; "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." [31] The true goal of life is not possessions, but participation in the Kingdom of God and in the *righteousness of God*,[32] and participation to the full. "Ye, therefore, shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." [33]

4. Dynamic Factors of the Kingdom. That the Kingdom is thus to bloom with welfare for man is due to two factors—*divine grace* and the governing *spirit of goodwill*. Divine grace is a fundamental factor, because the Kingdom is not to be a human achievement, but the gift of God through his "good pleasure." [34] Though its gate is narrow, the invitation to enter is broad.[35] God is even represented as going forth to meet and welcome the repentant wastrel. "There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." [36] Citations of a like tenor might easily be multiplied. Later the theme was greatly enlarged upon by St. Paul.

[28] Mt. vi. 20. This unexplained metaphor may reasonably be construed as credit, or standing, with the incoming *Kingdom* of heaven, then "at hand."
[29] Lk. xvi. 9; Mt. xix. 21.
[30] Mt. xxv. 14-30; Mk. iv. 25; Lk. xix. 12-26.
[31] Mt. xiii. 43.
[32] Mt. vi. 33.
[33] Mt. v. 48, 45.
[34] Lk. xii. 32 (*cf.* ii. 14).
[35] Mt. vii. 13; xxii. 2-10.
[36] Lk. xv. 11-32, 7.

Doubtless in this factor of the Kingdom is to be found the secret of Jesus' firm confidence and unwavering courage, even in the face of tragic disappointment. Though he did not know how, none the less the Kingdom would surely be set up; for divine grace was pledged to it.[37]

The second, or human, factor receives even more stress. For Jesus it was the natural corollary of the gracious origin of the Kingdom that its governing principle should be gracious, also, namely, *good will*. The recipients of loving kindness must themselves be kind. Freely they had received; freely must they give. Ministration is enjoined upon the disciples on the ground that the Son of man himself had been sent "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." [38] Nor is the good will to be confined to tribe or class. Kindness is to be shown even to foreigners; to those, also, from whom no return is expected, and who may be far from meritorious, may in fact be one's enemies, the fundamental ground being, "that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven," "who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and the unjust." [39] With this spirit of good will, concretely manifested, were all the nations to be judged at the *parousia*.[40]

This Kingdom temper is sometimes referred to as *love*. When challenged to state the central principle of life, Jesus replied in the familiar words of the Jewish "shema," supplemented with Yahveh's far-reaching command to Moses: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. . . . And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets." [41] Much

[37] Mt. xxiv. 36; xx. 23. So St. Paul felt; *cf.* Rom. viii. 31 f.
[38] Mt. x. 8; xviii. 23-35; xx. 27 f.; Jn. xiii. 1-16; xv. 8, 12-14; Lk. vi. 27, 30, 35 f., 58; xv. 31 f.; xxii. 26 f.
[39] Lk. x. 25-37; xiv. 12 f.; Mt. v. 44 f.; xxii. 9 f.
[40] Mt. xxv. 31-46.
[41] Mt. xxii. 36-40; Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18.

has been written in the past generation about the social importance of love. It could be wished that more attention had been given to the ambiguities of the word, which are much greater in English than in the Hebrew and Greek originals. The term love in the Bible, *as applied morally,* does not necessarily connote admiration, liking, or even approval. It means an active human *regard for the interests of others.* To love one's neighbor as one's self is simply to put the neighbor's interests, or well-being, on a par with one's own. As an imperative it is a call to have the spirit of social justice. One controlled by that spirit may be solicitous in sympathetic interest in his fellows and broad in outlook, and so be a truly high-minded man; but even one who comes short of that excellence and is primarily occupied with egoistic ends, if nevertheless genuinely concerned not to trespass upon his fellows, nor in any way to ignore their proper human claims, is observing the law of love as Jesus used the term. Belief in the Kingdom of God by no means commits one to faith in a perfected humanity, nor in any social order in which every man shall *like* his neighbor. It does not appear that Jesus ever contemplated such a remarkable, and perhaps insipid, social situation. The spirit of the Kingdom is thus better designated by the term *good will* [42] than the English word love.

It is perhaps due to a neglect of this distinction that critics have so often pronounced Jesus' ethics impracticable. Magnificent, but not life, has been a not infrequent comment. A few religious zealots, it is admitted, may take it seriously; but for mankind in general it is impossible; for it ignores the inveterate egoism of human nature.

[42] Accordingly those political thinkers abroad who not long since declared that a supreme need in troubled Europe was a community of good will were committing themselves to one of Jesus' main principles.

5. JESUS' EGOISTIC DOCTRINE. But does Jesus make that mistake? The charge seems to spring from two things—the *fact* that Jesus' teachings are strongly social and the *assumption* that egoism and altruism are incompatible. If that assumption is correct, then Jesus' ethics will evidently appeal only to the "elect;" [43] but I am confident that Jesus did not believe it to be correct. He does not discuss the theoretical issue; but, along with his social teachings, he does enjoin a high egoism which is a kind of higher synthesis of ordinary egoism and altruism. *For him the highest development and welfare of the self is to be found in self-forgetful devotion to some worthy end.* In the world of affairs and social intercourse true personal success is conditioned upon social service. In his own case, with his healing gift, such service often took the form of healing; but that was by no means his only form of service. He was even more ready to teach, and finally he sacrificed all opportunities to heal in his supreme witness to his message. In principle his plan of action applies to all forms of service of mankind, including those he never dreamed of—that of the man of science, for example. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." [44] In what does it consist, then? In *losing ones life* (so to speak) in active service of an adequate cause.[45] The true goods of life are not *possessive*— to use Bertrand Russell's parallel distinction [46]—but *creative;* they are not exclusive, but capable of

[43] The "elect" for Jesus seem to have been those men of higher mind ("born from above," Jn. iii. 3; i. 12), who became citizens of the Kingdom in advance of its open coming (*cf.* Mt. xxiv. 24; Lk. xviii. 7 f.). It is a term derived from the second Isaiah (Isa. xlii. 1; xlv. 4; lxv. 9, 22), where in the R. V. it is translated "chosen." Of all men upon the earth the elect are most to be felicitated personally (*cf.* Mt. v. 3-12); and socially they are "the salt of the earth" (Mt. v. 13; Mk. ix. 50) and "the light of the world" (Mt. v. 14). They are, also, the faithful and vigilant servants of God, etc. (*cf.* Mt. xxv. 21, 23; xxiv. 45-47; xxv. 1-10).

[44] Lk. xii. 15.

[45] Mt. x. 39; xvi. 25 f.; *cf.* vi. 33.

[46] *Cf. Political Ideals,* p. 6 ff.

being freely shared. That is, true life is centrifugally, not centripetally, organized. It is properly the flowing, giving stream, not the all receiving and keeping marsh or Dead Sea.[47]

This is a wisdom that belongs to man in his *maturity.* It is so much above the elementary impulses of barbarian peoples and of our own immature days that each generation has to learn it afresh—often most unwillingly and imperfectly. Moreover, it is a teaching which the ascetic element in the church is wont to misconstrue into a doctrine of renunciation. "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister"! Is this saying an attempt to *guide* ambition or to *banish* it? Is its spirit ethical egoism, an appeal to that vigorous, self-assertive impulse in man which has carried him so far above the brutes, calling upon it to follow more generous courses and to seek a higher objective; or is it an indirect way of taming man's adventurous nature, checking his enterprise, and converting the church into a kind of hospital, "an ambulance to fetch life's wounded and malingerers in, scorned by the strong"? The latter is the traditional view;[48] but the facts require the former. Jesus himself puts ambitious ends before the twelve. Whatever sitting upon "thrones" and "judging the twelve tribes of Israel" [49] may mean, they plainly indicate positions of dignity and power; and these are held forth to the disciples as induce-

[47] The principle must not be applied in a narrow way, for then the requisite conditions may not be present. In the economic field, for example, if one happens to be dominated by acquisitiveness, he will not find it "more blessed to give than to receive;" quite the contrary. But in the larger sense of giving—of activities devoted to some suitable objective, say, the common good—the principle is continually vindicating itself in experience.

[48] Few seeds sown by the Master have fallen upon such stony ground as the one quoted above. The Greek and Latin churches, with their increasing ascetic bias, could see in it only an injunction to wholesale renunciation, a rhetorical way of saying, Do not seek to be great at all; renounce every ambition; quell every desire for possessions or attainment, and devote your life wholly to ministration. Protestants have commonly rejected this ascetic rendering, but have rarely found any meaning of their own, beyond the very general one that men should be kind to one another.

[49] Mt. xix. 28 f.

ments. The model put before them is the servant who is "faithful and wise" in his master's absence, and who will *as a reward* be set over all his lord's possessions.[50] As already noted, Jesus did not tell the sons of Zebedee that the foremost positions they asked for did not exist;[51] nor did he reprove them for seeking distinction. His reproof was directed to the *way* in which they sought it, the way of the world, the way of pushing solicitation regardless of fitness, the way of many a politician after an election, which is a way that is not good form in the Kingdom of heaven. And what are his frequent promises of reward,[52] the beatitudes for example, but egoistic premiums put upon the practice of the higher morality? In one of the beatitudes [53] the incentive (the inheritance of the earth) is of such a sweeping economic character that only unbelief accounts for the failure of the most self-seeking of men to act upon it.

No doubt certain of Jesus' sayings seem to have a world renouncing character *when taken in isolation,* as when he said, "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." [54] Hence some philosophers (Schopenhauer, Paulsen, etc.) have argued that at heart the gospel is other-worldly—an ethical asceticism, with the cloister, or some equivalent, as its natural outcome. But this interpretation is quite uncritical; for the saying in its context does not admit of this literal and extreme rendering. The discourse begins with the statement, "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not . . . his own life, also, he cannot be my disciple." [55] These words are quite as explicit as those quoted above;

[50] Mt. xxiv. 45-47.
[51] *Cf.* p. 49 *supra.* Mt. xx. 20-28.
[52] *Cf.* Lk. xxii. 24-30; Mt. vi. 6, 18, 33; Lk. vi. 38.
[53] Mt. v. 3.
[54] Lk. xiv. 33; xii. 33, 15; xviii. 22-25; Mt. vi. 19, 25; xix. 21-24.
[55] Lk. xiv. 26.

yet even ascetics find themselves obliged to take them hyperbolically. Literally they call for suicide!

So of the other passages cited for the renunciatory theory. They support it only by use of the discredited theological method of quoting passages without their setting. These sayings were evidently tropical, one proof being the fact that to construe them literally is to bring them into conflict with the equally explicit teachings regarding the elementary economic virtues—industry, prudence, etc.[56] They were parts of a warning, doubtless needful enough at the time, against superficial, easy-going discipleship. The Kingdom was not to be established so easily as many who flocked to the healer-prophet imagined. He who joined the company of the disciples must have a wholehearted allegiance, and subordinate all other things to the Kingdom—that is, the kind of allegiance that a patriot gives to his country in days of peril or a foreign missionary to his spiritual cause.

In general, in the renunciatory theory no sufficient allowance is made for the tropical character of Oriental speech, and in particular for one Hebrew figure for which we have no English equivalent—the trope, related to the hyperbole, in which some recognized good thing is disparaged without stint in order that by contrast another and better thing may be the more exalted. The user of this form of expression does not mean actually to condemn the lesser good—"his own life," for example. He does not expect to be taken literally, and would not be by an Oriental reader. When wisdom cries, "Receive my instruction and not silver," [57] she is not urging the hearer to refuse any silver that may properly come to him. When it is declared that "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," [58] there is no thought that the two

[56] *Cf.* Mt. xxv. 1-13, 24-29. [57] Prov. viii. 10. [58] Prov. xxii. 1.

goods are mutually exclusive, or that a great inheritance is to be rejected. So, when Jesus says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," there is only a relative, not an absolute, disparagement of money getting. As a matter of fact, Jesus had several men of property among his adherents (Matthew, Nicodemus, Zachaeus, Joseph of Arimathea, the centurion and the nobleman at Capernaum, Joanna—wife of Herod's steward—the rich young man, etc.), and of only one of these—doubtless for special reasons springing from the man's character—did he require renunciation of worldly goods. Though he offers himself as an example of ministration, he makes no claim to being a renunciator. Certainly he was far from being an ascetic. Participation at feasts was a customary thing with him.[59] He expressly contrasted the Baptist, who lived as a Nazarite, with himself, who came "eating and drinking."

Finally, the theory ignores the political and social conditions of the time, which presented special reasons for temporary non-resistance; it is blind to the fact that actually Jesus was criticized in his own day for lack of rigor ("a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber");[60] and it is opposed to the Jewish national temper and the prevailing Jewish type of the first century. The Jews have never been much impressed by ascetism. John the Baptist had indeed great vogue for a time because of his startling message; but his hold on the nation was brief. Herod, apart from his own conscience, had no difficulty in disposing of him.

Jesus generalizes his centrifugal principle of life and reiterates it: "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the

[59] Lk. v. 29-35; vii. 36-50; x. 38-42; xiv. 1-24; Jn. ii. 1-11; vi. 1-13; xii. 1-8; xiii. 2 ff.
[60] Mk. ii. 18; Lk. vii. 31-34.

gospel's shall save it." [61] That is, selfish egoism misses those satisfactions which make life real and valuable—the life of a man—but devotion to what Jesus stood for (some part or phase of the Kingdom of God) secures them—wins the values which make up the "life that is life indeed." [62] Stated in modern terms, the embodiments of Jesus' individual ideal—his "children of the highest"—would seem to be those whose enlightened egoism leads them to seek attainment and achievement in the service of the common good rather than in acquisition and lordship; whose joy is social progress and bestowal, discovery and creation. These are the elect, men who by choice are pioneers of humanity and provisional quasi-officers of the Kingdom.

Jesus Christ was not a pessimist, but an optimist. His summons to men was not to world renunciation, but to a new and *better* world and a new way of life, in particular to a subordination of those things *in the world*—possessions, interests, etc.—that, on the larger view and in the long run, were *lower* in value to those things which were justly esteemed as *higher*. He was not opposed to egoism *as such;* but he saw clearly what only the elect have been willing to learn from him, that *real* self advancement for the individual—the only kind of personal advancement that will harmonize with social welfare and that will win the cordial acquiescence, and perhaps honor, of one's fellows—is that which is *won through service*. Certainly it is the only kind that accords with organized and and successful democracy. Selfish egoism is a disintegrating agency, a caustic making for social chaos.

Does some Nicodemus inquire, "How can these things

[61] Mk. viii. 35-37; Lk. xvii. 33; Mt. xvi. 25-27.

[62] Mt. vi. 33; I Tim. v. 19; R.V. Life in these passages is not primarily the life of the body ("Is not the life more than the food?" Mt. vi. 25). Still less is it the soul. It is the sum of experiences which make up living, and especially those which make continued existence worth while, and apart from which the possession of the whole world would be of no profit to a man (Mk. viii. 36 f.).

be?" The answer, on the *theoretical* side, is that Jesus' program of self-realization through service is a policy that *accords with human nature.* It does not attempt the impossible (and undesirable) task of eradicating from man's nature that central individual impulse that has come up through all his past, human and brute, and lifted him above the beasts—the impulse of self-advancement, the craving for achievement and success. Rather does it seek to *redeem* that impulse, convert it into a moral force, and make it the dynamic of all-round progress. This it aims to do by developing, or "realizing," a self that is more and more like the Heavenly Father who is the universe's great source of progressive good.

On the *practical* side, the answer might well be, "Circumspice!" Survey the great names of civilization; and in proportion as those names are lastingly great and recognized today as truly worthy of honor, is it not because of their services to men? Two main paths to greatness have been found hitherto—that of selfish domination and that of contribution to the common good. The path trodden by Caesar and Constantine, Attila and Jingis Khan, Frederick and Napoleon, is certainly not to be denied; but neither is that followed by St. Paul and St. Francis, Galileo and Newton, Pasteur and Lister, Michael Angelo and Beethoven, etc. Even among men of arms those are held highest in honor by mankind with whom the cause bulked larger than private ambition—Charlemagne and Cromwell, Washington and Wellington, and their like.

No doubt there are moralists who find this principle distasteful. Men with absolutist theories of morals, and also those accustomed to identify goodness with altruism, will declare that social service rendered, not only for the immediate good done to others, but also in the consciousness that this is the path of one's own highest life and

joy, is more policy than morality, a kind of "refined selfishness," a counterfeit goodness.[63] But such critics are unsympathetic, and fail to appreciate the ideal advocated. Egoism is associated in their minds with sensuous pleasures and display, the love of which as a master motive is far from the spirit of the Kingdom of God and is branded by Jesus as a characteristic of the kingdom of mammon. The man who sounds a trumpet before him in his ministrations [64] is not seeking to be like his Father in heaven, but like some ostentatious magnate on earth. In reality he is interested, not in *being* high-minded and valuable to society, but in *seeming* so. The critics in question generally, also, assume the rightful primacy of the altruistic motive, an assumption which the careful student will not be able to support from the teachings of Jesus as a whole, and for which scientific ethics has no place. No aim of moral endeavor can be put forward equal to that of the all-round welfare of mankind, which in the last analysis consists in the development and normal functioning of high grade personalities; and why should a man's own personality be of less concern to him than the personalities of others? [65]

The natural correlate of Jesus' doctrine of service as the condition of the highest *individual* life would seem to be *mutual* service as the organic, *collective* principle of the Kingdom itself. How else can good will express itself in a society where all are animated by it? So we are prepared

[63] *Cf.* F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, p. 56 f. How will such fastidious objectors tolerate the doctrine in Lk. xiv. 7-11, where mere modest deportment is recommended as a *means* to social recognition?

[64] Mt. vi. 1-5: This practice, now becoming rare in religious circles, seems at present to be most in vogue among politicians.

[65] No doubt the question still remains whether the development of a man's own personality can properly be made a *conscious purpose* in his life. Space does not permit the discussion of this question here. My own view is that it can be, should be, and often is such a purpose; and that even the life best provided with moral interests will be more admirable and more effective if lived under the ascending star of a personal ideal. For the contrary view *cf.* Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, pp. 393 f., 382, 210.

to hear the Master contrast the Kingdom's organic law of service, each to each and each to all, with the spirit of mammon, and mammon's assumption that human intercourse is necessarily predatory. That note is not struck, however. Mutual service is, indeed, implied in various passages. Jesus restates the ancient maxim of reciprocity known as the Golden Rule, and declares that it is the substance of the "law and the prophets." [66] a remark which he makes, also, concerning the second part of his law of love. Again, the idea is, of course, present in his injunction of liberality, "Give and it shall be given unto you; . . . for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." [67] St. Paul, too, later urges reciprocity of service as fulfilling what was then recognized as "the law of Christ." [68] But the principle is not recognized as the Kingdom's working *law,* a law with great potencies for social welfare and progress, the loom for the weaving of a higher civilization, as industry and commerce are now beginning to disclose it.

We may, no doubt, attribute this lack in his teaching to the character of the Kingdom expectation that he inherited. The awaited Utopia was to come *from heaven.* Its power, its organization, its glory, were all from above. Its king was God, its law the will of God, and its pattern the way that will is done "in heaven." [69] The problems of ordinary society would not exist for it; for its wise and mighty monarch would solve them in advance; and "the kindly earth [would] slumber, lapt in [the] universal law" of God. The task facing its prophet was not the conduct of the Kingdom after its establishment; but its *initiation,* its *coming.* So this lacking feature of socio-industrial reciprocity seems to be another case (out of

[66] Mt. vii. 12; xxii. 39 f.
[67] Lk. vi. 38.
[68] Gal. vi. 2.
[69] Mt. vi. 10, 13.

many in history) where the magic wand of omnipotence drugged that useful scout of discovery and achievement, the constructive imagination. Jesus apparently held the key [70] of the world problem in his hands, but did not see it, owing to the glare of the current apocalyptic dream.

6. JESUS NOT A COLLECTIVIST. If we put ourselves back in Jesus' position, it will not seem strange that in his thought another principle quite overshadowed that of mutual service, namely, *the principle of personal loyalty.* When the heavenly King or his Vicegerent arrived, he would surely do as Archelaus had done on his return from his visit to Caesar—take account of his servants.[71] To make men ready for that accounting and to fit them to take advantage of the opportunities of the Kingdom when once set up—that was the work of the day for him: hence his emphases upon watchfulness and faithfulness and his reiterated warnings.[72] Loyalty to the heavenly Lord, rather than a working social arrangement, was the immediate need.

With this principle in mind, it will not surprise us to find that there is little enough truth in the claim that Jesus was the "first socialist." He pronounced a blessing upon the poor, it is true, and a woe upon the rich. Dives is located in hell, and the beggar in "Abraham's bosom." He bade one rich man sell his property and distribute to the poor, and added, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" [73] There can be no question that he sympathized deeply with the poor, and distrusted the effect of private wealth upon character; but there is no reason to think that collectivism made any

[70] Men are slowly learning that gain and power and progress on any large scale are possible only *as they serve one another.* This is the meaning of the specializations of industry, of the swift-speeding trains and far-sailing fleets of commerce, and of all the wonderfully extended organism of modern business.

[71] Lk. xix. 11-16 f.

[72] Mt. xxiv. 42-44; xxv. 13; Mk. xiii. 32-37.

[73] Lk. vi. 20 f, 24-26; xvi. 19-31; xviii. 18-25; xii. 33.

appeal to him. On the contrary, he stressed the very virtues that modern socialists are wont to disparage—individual foresight, thrift, and fidelity to employers [74]—and he scored severely not a few offences for which the proletariat champions have only a formal disapproval, such as wilful slacking and sabotage, impudent self-assertion,[75] and abuse of power.[76] On the other hand, he approved of payment in proportion to service,[77] and his broad generalization, "Unto every one that hath shall be given"—a principle which he found at work in the wide field of life and showed no disposition to antagonize—is apt to seem the quintessence of injustice to the modern radical.[78]

No doubt Jesus would have approved the general socialist aim of productive service *from* every man and a share in the product *for* every man; but he was far enough from the modern radical doctrines of class rights, group uniformity, and individual claim on society *de jure*. He had nothing to say in the direction of a democratic organization of industry. It is quite possible that, if the issue had arisen, he might have espoused some coöperative industrial cause; but actually all his allusions to associated economic

[74] *Cf.* Lk. xiv. 28-32 (xvi. 1-12); xii. 35-48; xix. 13, 15-26; Mt. xxiv. 45 f; xxv. 1-13, 24-30.

[75] *Cf.* Mt. xxii. 11-13. To appreciate the force of this feature in the story one needs to know that it was the custom then for the host to *provide* these garments for his guests. This man "was speechless" because he had *refused* to attire himself properly. Jesus' corrective for slacking, also, indicates how far he was from collectivism. It was through appeals to honorable ambition, either for distinction or for legitimate profit (*Cf.* Mt. 25, 19-30). The *incorrigible* slacker was not to be excused and coddled, but to be *cast out*—apparently the ancient ostracism!

[76] Mt. xxiv. 48-51 xxi. 33-41.

[77] Mt. xvi. 27; Lk. xix. 16-19; xii. 48. It has been held (by Ruskin, for example) that the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Mt. xx. 1-16) teaches the doctrine of wage uniformity regardless of amount of service; but the claim is very dubious. The messianic and apocalyptic background must be considered. The aim of the story was to show the essentially gracious status of the Kingdom's citizens (*cf.* Mt. xix. 27-30; xx. 16). The spirit of jealousy was to be excluded therefrom, because *all* were to be recipients of heavenly bounty. There is not a hint of equal *claim*. The social situation suggested is altogether aristocratic.

[78] Of this utterance Pres. H. C. King remarks, "It is really only Jesus' statement of the law of growth . . . and probably means that power in any line grows by exercise." (*The Ethics of Jesus*, p. 61.)

life assume its aristocratic character, with superiors and subordinates as its personnel. The only *claim* of the worker recognized by him as a matter of right is for faithful service rendered.[79] Whatever more he receives (which may be much) is a matter of favor, although the bestowal of additional rewards is actually, *by the King's grace, to* be proportioned to the faithfulness and capacity of the servant. It seems evident that Jesus had no social panacea and no class program. He was interested in men rather than in groups. Probably it did not occur to him that associated ignorances would result in collective wisdom, or massed passion fuse into collective self control. Even in his compassion for the common people they were sheep to him, as they have been also to the predatory classes always, the difference being that to him they were sheep to be *shepherded* while to the predatory mind they are sheep to be *shorn.*

The principle of loyalty thus underlies the economic system as Jesus conceived it; and it is this same principle that furnishes what little he has to say about *government.* In the Kingdom public office is to be, not primarily a public, but a *royal trust.* Administrative positions are to be filled by direct appointment of the King[80] and without reference to popular wish. It is the royal will, however, that they should go, not to those who have thrust themselves to the front, but to those whose services have proved that their rule will be for the common good.[81] That is, government is to be by the socially fit; but the character of their sway is to be Oriental in type, not Western and democratic. In place of powers limited and duties prescribed by law, the principle of personal trust with large discretion

[79] Even then he may be an "unprofitable" servant (Lk. xvii, 7-10)! How aristocratic!
[80] Mt. xx. 23; Lk. xix. 13, 27.
[81] Mt. xxiv. 45-47.

—opportunity joined to responsibility—is relied upon. "Trade ye herewith till I come," [82] is the only charge mentioned.

7. Rigorous Side of the Gospel. If the Kingdom was a glorious objective to the Prophet of Nazareth, a "treasure" to be purchased even at the sacrifice of all else, it was not viewed by him as an easy achievement. That there was a price to be paid for it he was fully aware. The doctrine of vicarious sacrifice, when taken from the theatre of metaphysics and applied to actual life, is true enough—tragically true. Doing and suffering in behalf of others is part of the price of progress exacted by the brute inheritance and man's immaturity. In a sense the mocking Sanhedrists were right; Jesus could not save himself, and he knew it.[83] He looked for a "baptism" of pain, and was "straitened till it be accomplished." His own life would have to be a "ransom," as would also the utmost endeavor and endurance of his followers. In truth he had come "to cast fire upon the earth," fire which was "already kindled"—"not to send peace but a sword." [84]

As a consequence some of Jesus' teachings have a rigor which is calculated to shock prevalent religious optimism with its conventional soft figure of a mild and humble Savior who has most accommodatingly "paid it all." When he declared that he had not come to destroy the divine law but to fulfill it,[85] he was in earnest. The temper of Yahveh—an Oriental Sovereign—had not been banished by the new stress upon "Our Father which art in heaven." Divine judgment plays a formidable part in Jesus' teachings, though it is ethical, not metaphysical. There is no hint of mercy in the case of the gross and

[82] Lk. xix. 13.
[83] Mt. xxvii. 42; xxvi. 39, 42; xx. 22; Jn. xii. 23-27; Lk. xii. 49-53.
[84] Mt. x. 22, 24 f., 34-39.
[85] Mt. v. 17 f.

tyrannous servant, nor in that of the impudent and unprofitable servant,[86] while the enemies of the returning Lord are described as suffering execution in truly despotic fashion.[87] Even for disciples the requirements were strenuous. If Jesus' yoke was easy and his burden light, that was evidently on the side of the natural cares and sorrows of life, not on that of the Kingdom's demands. Of the disciple he demanded a seriousness of purpose, one which would not balk at self-abnegation and denial, and a sustained strictness and alertness of temper that were essentially soldierly.[88] And "he that *endureth to the end* [the *parousia*], the same shall be saved." [89] His follower must "see straight, . . . be vigilantly watchful, persistently earnest, and positively fruitful."

[86] Mt. xxiv. 48-51; xxv. 24-30. Nor could the "gentle Jesus" of current evangelical imagination possibly have uttered the stern order, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the age-long fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. xxv. 41).

[87] Lk. xix. 27. Due allowance in these and like passages must be made for Oriental hyperbole and the influence of historical parallels; but even then we feel a rigor in Jesus' penology which seems to be at variance with the best thought of today. In the coming Kingdom days, what was the new society to do with those who proved unfitted for it—the weak, the persistently heedless, and the incorrigibly wayward? Apparently they were to be peremptorily excluded. There is no provision for correction and reform after the *parousia*. Then, not only shall the tares and the bad fish be cast "into the furnace of fire" (Mt. xiii. 39-42, 47-50), but the idlers and pretenders, who talked but did not do, will be excluded (Mt. vii. 21-23) and the foolish virgins who meant well but slept at their posts (Mt. xxv. 1-12, 30)—indeed, all who did not think and heed will find themselves outside of theKingdom, with the door "shut" against them; and "there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." The procedure is like the ostracism of primitive communities and the European convict colony system of a century ago. These uncompromising teachings, with the curtain rung down on the poignant and seemingly final separation of the good and the evil, when joined with the spiritual interpretation of the Kingdom, are responsible for that nightmare of traditional theology, eternal punishment conditioned upon a terrestrial probation pitifully brief and difficult. Even with eternal horizons excluded, the judgments foretold involve a confession of God's partial failure in dealing with mankind. Grievous as is the problem of the debased and unsocial will, it seems better, rather than yield to pessimism, to think that under the stress of his gospel propaganda, with the hours of his seed-sowing day so few and the human soil so travel-beaten and thorn-grown, the seeking and saving Christ, like other preachers, unconsciously exaggerated the contrasts and the finality of the moral pictures he drew.

[88] *Cf.* H. C. King, *The Ethics of Jesus*, p. 29 f. Pres. King calls attention to the large proportion of Jesus' teachings that deal with "the simplest principles of the ethical and religious life." Concerning what Burkitt calls the "doubly attested sayings" of Jesus (*i.e.* found in both Mark and Q), King remarks, "They disclose an underlying but dominant sense of *law in the spiritual world* . . . a kind of feeling on the part of Jesus that can hardly be called less than instinctively scientific" (pp. 49 f., 73, 85).

[89] Mt. x. 22.

How the rigorous and the kindly attitudes (law and grace) were reconciled in Jesus' thought is not told us. Evidently neither he nor the evangelists were occupied with these theoretical questions.[90] But it is probably significant that his severer teachings occurred when he had to deal with the *froward will* of mankind—propensity heedless or defiant of reason, with its ugly manifestations in the way of greed and tyranny and arrogance, slacking and impudence and sabotage, etc. Men of this type ("children of wrath" [91] in the Hebrew idiom) were confronted with law; righteousness was put before them as an imperative, and an inflexible one. Those who in heart and purpose were opposed to the Kingdom must, unconditionally *must,* be born again (that is, "from above") or they shall not see the Kingdom.[92] The evil will can by no means enter it. Of that will are all those "things that offend," and that shall be cast "into a furnace of fire." [93]

On the other hand, when Jesus had to deal with human *infirmity* simply (weakness, folly, and even vice);[94] with men as ignorant and lacking in the control of natural im-

[90] In particular there is nothing to indicate that he resorted to the Pauline method of accommodation—preserving law as a sacred form, or ideal order, and introducing grace as a mediating agency which finds a way around the law (short circuits it!) so as to bless man while still maintaining the commandment's inviolability. Jesus shows no concern about a merely formal, or forensic, justification, if indeed such a thing ever occurred to him. In his picture of the Messianic judgment the tares are not bound up in fair-seeming wrappers and labeled wheat; *ther are burned up* (Mt. xiii. 28-30, 39-42). He did not come to *pronounce* men righteous, but to *make* them righteous, and so eligible to the Kingdom (Jn. iii. 3; x. 10).

Nor did he countenance the conception that the Old Testament is the domain of law and the New Testament the domain of mercy. He appealed to the former in support of his "words of grace" (Lk. iv. 17-22; Isa. lxi. 1) and certainly with abundant warrant; and he insisted upon the presence of law in his own time. The prophets seem to have had a better insight into the relation of these antitheses than the traditional theologians; for they appeal to men as though grace was God's personal attitude toward the repentant sinner's past, or record, while law represented the divine requirements to which he must conform in future—the ineluctable conditions of man's welfare (Isa. i. 15-20; Jer. xxxi. 31-34).

[91] Eph. ii. 3.

[92] Jn. iii. 3; Mt. v. 20; vii. 21-27.

[93] Mt. xiii. 41 f.

[94] He appears to have been more offended by the unbrotherliness of the elder son than by the coarse dissipation of the prodigal (Lk. xv. 28-32).

pulse [95]—especially when the spirit "is willing, but the flesh is weak"—then words of grace are at once forthcoming. Men as lost sheep and repentant prodigals call forth his compassion and his saving desire. It is they who are sought out by the free grace of God; no doubt because in them with kindly aid salvation appears to be possible.

The antithesis of law and grace is not, however, wholly one of different classes addressed. It finds a rational place in all human life. Some of Jesus' demands in the name of the Kingdom—fidelity, for example [96]—are among the imperative conditions of even tolerable associated life on the earth. These are *laws*—to Jesus Christ divine laws—and *from their imperatives there is no escape.* No civilized people, however mild in temper, can allow them to lapse with impunity; that way lies anarchy and social destruction. Owing to the lack of an outlook upon life as sane as that of Jesus, this side of his teaching is not likely ever to be acceptable to social visionaries.

Other teachings of Jesus, however, are not so urgent. They may be regarded as *counsels of wisdom* as to the best use of human powers and natural opportunities, so that men may win happy, progressive life. These may be neglected, as of course they usually are, and the results, though deplorable, still not be fatal. The pitiful thing—calling forth the sorrowing sympathy of the prophet of Nazareth—is that commonly men live so far below their privilege, and indeed ability. They are foolish sheep, lacking either a trustworthy shepherd or the power to recognize his voice [97]—adult children, craving happiness but thwarted by their persistent childishness. As such their need is not so much rebuke as sympathy and help.

8. THE MOTIVES OF JESUS. When we ask what were

[96] Lk. xii. 42-48.
[97] Cf. Mk. vi. 34.
[95] Mk. xiv. 38. What the Greeks called the "incontinent."

the *motives* of Jesus in espousing the cause of the Kingdom of God, in the main only very general answers can be found. That one prime motive was, as already stated, a strong interest in the welfare of men we cannot doubt. It is evident, also (at least if the fourth evangelist has reported him correctly), that another motive was that of divine service—fulfilling his commission as Messiah. "My meat," he said, "is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." [98] Was there a third dynamic—concern for self-realization? In pointing out to his disciples the one legitimate way to personal success he gives his own case as an illustration.[99] Did he feel, then, that in his career of Messianic service he was winning his own highest success, realizing his greatest possibilities? There were disciples of his who afterward construed his life in that way. St. Paul, in a glowing passage, tells us that "Christ Jesus" counted the being "on an equality with God" not a thing to be seized, but won it nevertheless by stooping to the lowliest service, etc.[100] The Epistle to the Hebrews, too, refers to Jesus as the great exemplar, "who for the *joy that was set before him* endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." [101] Was such a thought among those which swayed Jesus himself? We cannot be sure. It would be quite reasonable. Certainly he was well aware of the greatness of his rôle.[102] He does not appear to have been humble-minded, countless sermons (due to a misconstruction of Mt. xi 29) to the contrary notwithstanding. But that the motive of self-realization actually operated in his case is not clear.

Such in outline appears to have been the kind of life

[98] Jn. iv. 34; v. 30; vi. 38; vii. 29; viii. 29, etc.; Mt. xi. 25-27.
[99] Mt. xx. 25-28.
[100] Phil. ii. 5-11.
[101] Heb. xii. 2.
[102] *Cf.* Mt. ix. 15; xii. 41 f.; xxiii. 8, 10; Lk. xix. 38-40.

and character that Jesus looked forward to as a result of the advent of the Kingdom. Applying his ideal to the actual world as it was then, and very largely is still, we are not surprised that three short years (or less) proved insufficient to bring Israel to intelligent and appreciative acceptance of it, and that consequently the intrenched kingdom of mammon proved too strong for his attack. We shall appreciate better the odds against him if we consider more carefully the nature of that opposing kingdom.

CHAPTER IX

THE KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD

1. ORIGIN OF MORAL DUALISM. That there is a world-force, or system of forces, unfriendly to man has been the conviction of most of mankind's religious leaders—Zarathustra, St. Peter, St. Paul,[1] Augustine, Mahomet, Luther, Milton, etc. The roots of the idea run far back in human history, to the very beginnings of culture, in fact. The aboriginal Egyptian, meditating naïvely upon the antithesis and mysteries of day and night, and the Nile and the desert, construed them in terms of good and evil. Nature was his enemy, he felt vaguely, especially the darkness and the ever encroaching desert. It was Set—a vast, evil power, refractory, unreclaimed, mysteriously threatening. On the other hand, heaven (Re or Osiris), whether as the sun or the Nile, was his friend. Between these cosmic powers was ceaseless war.

On the plains of Iran this nature dualism was reinforced by a sharp cultural antagonism. The agriculturist, the developing, semi-civilized man, was neighbor to the nomad, the backward, unprogressive, clannish man; and as usual the latter, regarding himself as the defender of the old, and therefore right, ways, resented the prosperity, the refinements, and the social aims of the former. The cow-boy counted it a virtue to carry off the animals and the crops of the rancher and the townsman. His was a

[1] I Pet. v. 8; Eph. vi. 12; II Cor. ii. 11.

predatory orthodoxy like that of the papal crusaders that overwhelmed the developing and cultivated Albigenses in southern France in the thirteenth century. On the other hand, the townsmen with their cultivated fields, permanent homes, and progressive aims, regarded the wild clansmen and the older gods worshipped by them as the minions and impersonations of a far-reaching Power of evil. Qut of this combination of natural and cultural antagonisms arose the religion of Mazda (Zoroastrianism), in which the distinction of good and evil was raised to cosmic proportions—a kingdom of darkness and passion (Ahriman's) set over against a kingdom of light and wisdom (Ahura Mazda's) in eternal opposition.[2]

The captive Jews in Babylon, oppressed by a hostile power, found this metaphysical teaching of their Persian deliverers the key to their own tragic history. They too, had had experience of the encroaching desert and its barbaric inhabitants, and also with desolating Babylon. How they applied the new philosophy is dramatically manifested in the second Isaiah's description of the Jewish conqueror returning from Edom, the desert stronghold, with garments dyed with the life-blood of Israel's enemies.[3]

Jesus did not share in these naïve identifications of patriotism and righteousness. Nevertheless, his outlook upon life was dualistic. He accepted the view of his people that there is a spiritual kingdom of evil arrayed against the Kingdom of God—a kingdom of Satan or "mammon." When the disciples returned from a missionary tour, rejoicing that in the name of Jesus even the demoniacs were subject to them, he exclaimed, "I beheld

[2] These kingdoms do not fight each other directly; but each seeks dominance by bringing mankind under its control (*Cf.* Eph. ii. 23; vi. 12). Also p. 79 *supra.*

[3] Isa. lxiii. 1-6; *Cf.* Ps. cxxxvii. 7-9.

Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." [4] Evidently he regarded the kingdom of darkness as tottering. And he purposed to follow up their success; for he added: "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and *over all the power of the enemy:* and nothing shall in any wise hurt you."

2. THE LURE OF GAIN. A striking allegory of the way these conflicting kingdoms joined battle in Jesus' consciousness is given us in the accounts of his temptation in the wilderness.[5] That in these narratives Satan's supreme offer was worldly success [6] is significant; for, naïvely personal as were the powers of darkness to Jesus, his chief concern with them was by no means on the supernatural side. It was on the practical side, the side of human life and welfare. It was the campaign of evil in the world of mankind [7]—so widely successful, alas!—that aroused his concern and his devoted opposition. "No man," he insisted, "can serve two masters . . . ; ye cannot serve God and mammon." [8] "Mammon" was his term for two primitive dispositions of mankind that he regarded as strongholds of evil—acquisitiveness and display. The former is evidently the one foremost in the saying just quoted. The key word in it is "serve." Economic goods

[4] *Cf.* Mt. ix. 34; xii. 24, 26; xiii. 38 f.; Lk. x. 18 f.; Jn. xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11. *Cf.* the statement of a contemporary of his: "And then His Kingdom will appear throughout all His creation. And then Satan will be no more" (*Assumption of Moses*, x. 1). The author's attitude toward the Kingdom was intermediate between that of the Sanhedrists and that of Jesus.

[5] Mt. iv. 1-11; Lk. iv. 1-13.

[6] Mt. iv. 8-10.

[7] Theology has been persistently disposed to construe this campaign in terms of *intellectual* error, with a resulting laudation of orthodoxy and persecutions of "heresy." Even so independent a thinker as Hobbes writes that "the kingdom of darkness . . . is nothing else but a confederacy of deceivers that to obtain dominion over men in this present world endeavor by dark and erroneous doctrines to extinguish in them the light both of nature and of the gospel, and so to disprepare them for the kingdom of God to come:" These "erroneous doctrines" are the "tares of spiritual error" (*Leviathan*, ch. xliv.).

[8] Mt. vi. 24. It is significant of the strength of Jewish theism (and, also, perhaps, of the limitation of his horizons) that Jesus utters no word of warning against the all but universal polytheism of the time. The only alien power he feared was "mammon."

("treasures upon earth") are not fitted to be *the main objective of a human life.* The things upon which a man may profitably set his heart are heavenly,[9] and belong to the Kingdom. The true wealth consists in favor with God. Thus mammon for Jesus stood for *property too highly rated,* property regarded as *end* rather than means —its acquisition and enjoyment made the prime aim of life. The "deceitfulness of riches" [10] lies in the fact that their elementary and obvious appeals tend to invest them with this false importance.

Quite true, it may be objected; so true that one cannot be occupied habitually, or largely, with the pursuit of economic goods without being thus deceived. That was not Jesus' view. He evidently held that one can—at least *most* men [11]—if he will. Let a man resolutely regard his acquisitions as means to the ends of the Kingdom, that is, as goods held in trust, and forthwith property becomes his servant and not his master. *The principle of stewardship* [12]—private property held as a heavenly trust—is Jesus' "road to freedom" for the man of affairs. Some may regard this as a principle of little value for present day use, on the ground that it requires a higher pitch of religious consciousness and theological belief than most men possess; but as a matter of fact the principle is not limited to the religious-minded. It is applicable to all moral-minded men, however secular. What Jesus had in mind was the common good; and the use of possessions for that end is certainly a reasonable demand of all

[9] Mt. vi. 19 f., 33. The phrase "treasures in heaven" of itself might well suggest some kind of other-worldly or postmortem profit, but that meaning does not accord with the rest of the passage, which has to do with present behavior and interests, and especially with the Kingdom and righteousness of God. (vs. 33). This passing phrase may reasonably be explained by the fact that *as objects of present desire and hope* the goods of the Kingdom, which was looked for *from* heaven, were still mostly *in* heaven (*Cf.* Mt. vi. 10).

[10] Mt. xiii. 22; *cf.* xix. 23 f.; Lk. xii. 13-21.

[11] *Cf.* Mt. xxv. 14-17. Perhaps not the youth who figures in Mt. xix. 16-22.

[12] *Cf.* Mt. xxiv. 45-51; xxv. 14-30; xxi. 33-43; Lk. xii. 41-46; xvi. 10-15.

who recognize society's part in their production. To the socialist this arrangement is merely ethical feudalism; but feudalism must have contained elements of truth and sound policy to have prevailed so long as it did. To many other radicals, also, it is doubtless matter for scorn; but that may quite possibly indicate only how far Jesus Christ was from being a doctrinaire. As a matter of fact the principle is in operation on no small scale today among men of wealth, and has received high collective approval in the mandate feature of the League of Nations.

The other major primitive propensity included in Jesus' term "mammon" was the love of display—also a barbarian inheritance. "Take heed," he said, "that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them" [13]—self-righteousness being a common form of display at the time. "Ye shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men"—a warning which he proceeded to illustrate, also, in connection with charity and fasting.

In general terms, mammon appears to have been Jesus' name for the sum of the dominant aims and ideas of ordinary self-assertive men, the values and objectives of what St. Paul called the "natural man." [14] Its two leading factors—natural human dispositions manifestly, but full often ill-regulated and harmful—were, of course, not new discoveries of Jesus. Isaiah, for instance, knew them well; and not long before they had been pointed out by the Roman Lucretius under the picturesque symbols "gold and purple." [15] What is distinctive of Jesus' treatment is the position assigned them as the chief roots of an evil

[13] Mt. vi. 1.
[14] *Cf.* I Cor. ii. 14; xv. 44-49; Rom. viii. 4-8, 18-32.
[15] Long afterward as "gain" and "glory," they were accounted by Hobbes the mainsprings of man's activity.

social order—the dominion of Satan, which through them swayed human life in persistent opposition to the Kingdom of God.[16]

3. Good and Evil as Actual World-Forces. Stript of their mythological drapery, these two kingdoms appear to be real enough. Plato, in a famous metaphor, represents reason as a charioteer guiding more or less perilously the two steeds of man's life, noble passion and appetite—the one seeking to climb to heaven, the other ever ready to plunge into the abyss. The reflection of twenty-three centuries and the social sciences of today corroborate in the main his description. Blind impulse (instinct, habit, appetite, passion) constitutes far the greater part of human nature, and when unguided by reason—and as blindly impulsive it is naturally averse to guidance—much of it makes for excess and discord, for deterioration, and low-grade equilibration, and often enough for destruction.

Socially, also, and as we have seen from the very earliest days, there are factors in opposition to intelligence and progressive appreciation. Order, civilization, and improvement have always had to fight to maintain themselves against reactionary and more or less lawless and criminal groups. To complicate matters and make a higher issue more difficult, the distinction between the opposing parties has often been far from clear. Not only is the true cause not always evident, but generally there are men of honest purpose on both sides of contested issues, the efforts of one group offsetting those of the other.

[16] The opposition of the two kingdoms was not primarily one of time (present and future) nor of location (inner and outer), but of moral objectives, animating spirit, and social relations. In the literal sense the kingdom of Satan is spiritual enough; for greed and ostentation, with their envies, their suspicions and their hatreds, belong to the inner life; while on the other hand the Kingdom of God, however spiritual in source, is organized good will, and its aim (the common good) is in no small degree external to any one individual—*a system of social relations* producing human welfare.

Full often, too, there are men of intelligence on the wrong side. At times men of unscrupulous will have capable intellects which they drive to tasks abhorrent to the free and larger reason. Often has the predatory will through this cowed servant, this mental Janizary, usurped the authority of the state, and brazenly clothed itself in the robes of justice and civilization. Then for long periods history has been a melancholy succession of attempts, often pitifully unsuccessful, of the moral reason, to win lawless will over to the ends of the common good and a progressive civilization:

"One death grapple in the darkness, 'twixt old systems and the Word; Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne."

And the issue is still joined. Still the brute inheritance and barbarian atavism assert themselves as veritable kobolds of modern life; still the emancipator has to do battle with the slave-holder—industrially if not politically—and the prophet to sound the clarion against the exploiter, while recurrently among the masses lawless appetite and ignorant prejudice demand the fruits of reason and civilization without the trouble of becoming reasonable and civilized. Truly the antagonistic kingdoms are sufficiently in evidence, even if their boundaries are at times obscure. "Ethical nature may count upon having to reckon with a tenacious and powerful enemy as long as the world lasts," was the judgment of Professor Huxley.[17] In both kingdoms, that of light and that of darkness, happiness and honor, and even greatness, are recognized as legitimate life-objectives; but in one the means of

[17] *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 85. *Cf.* the famous lecture as a whole, and such passages as the following: "Cosmic nature [which includes primitive *human* nature] is no school of virtue, but the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature." "Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step, and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process." "The ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combatting it" (Id. pp. 75, 81, 83).

advancement are *services to humanity*—in philanthropy, in industry and government, in science and art, while in the other the means are predatory self aggrandizement and forceful domination—industrial, political, international—means so tragically manifest in the bitter years since that August day when the confident cohorts of imperialism broke over the Belgian frontier.

4. WHY EVIL IS A KINGDOM. Be it so; still, it may be be urged, is this persistent mass of animal and barbarian impulses, appetites, and ideas well designated by the word "kingdom"? Why use so imaginative a term, with its personal suggestions? The answer is, that even for sober secular thought the metaphor serves to represent a truth far too little appreciated, namely, that the foes of man's welfare are interconnected, and in a sense *organized.* Not from the ignorance and error of the individual and the moment merely, nor indeed, chiefly, do low and hurtful forms of behavior occur or persist; but rather from sources reaching far and wide in society and far back into the past. They are expressions of interests and psychic dispositions that have been handed down from generation to generation—the more elemental by *biological* heredity, the more complex by *social* heredity.[18] It is in this concatenation of the individual and the group, the past and the present, that the persistent power of evil lies. Barbarian ideas, interests, and institutions, incorporated into the mentality of large social groups and classes, and continuing with a certain immortality from age to age, constitute with their powerful prestige suggestion the matrix in which the plastic human material of today is shaped. It has been a great error of modern individualism to neglect these shaping factors (although some of them were

[18] That is, the influence of the family, and the rest of the social environment, in infancy and childhood.

pointed out by Bacon and Locke long ago), and to suppose that each human being is an altogether new and sovereignly free agent. St. Paul felt the contrary. Though he was not able to describe definitely the nature of the opposition, he had a veteran's acquaintance with it. "Our wrestling," he wrote, "is not against flesh and blood [that is, ordinary individuals] but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." [19] And Shakspere, if we may believe Professor Dowden, was impressed in much the same way. The malignant weird sisters in Macbeth stood for forces of "evil which are independent of the will of each individual man and woman." [20]

Assuredly the group functions in the individual, and the past in the present. In a real sense harmful influences are, or may be, organized groups, self-perpetuating systems, and collectively a kingdom.[21]

5. THE EVIL OF MAMMON. Is it asked what is so amiss in our present social order that Jesus should stigmatize it as the kingdom of Satan? Without attempting

[19] Eph. vi. 12.

[20] Edw. Dowden, *Shakspere—His Mind and Art*, p. 219. To the suggestion that the witches are simply the embodiment of inward temptation," Dowden replies, "They are surely much more than this. . . . There is an apocalypse of power auxiliary to vice. . . . The history of the race and the social medium in which we live and breathe have created forces of good and evil which are independent of the will of each individual man and woman. The sins of past centuries taint the atmosphere of today. We move through the world subject to accumulated forces of evil and of good outside ourselves . . . And between the evil within and the evil without subsists a terrible sympathy and reciprocity."

[21] Indeed, it may be argued plausibly that it is chiefly as organized that world-forces *are* good or evil. The single factors in themselves, especially the particular impulses and appetites, say, of the brute inheritance, are never *im*moral, but only *un*moral. They must be good *in some situations*, or natural selection would never have incorporated them in human nature. So they may be constituent factors of either good or evil lives. Why, then, are they so often accounted evil? Either, it would appear because they have run to excess, or because they were dominant factors in that barbarian order of life in which reason, when present at all, was a slave—an inversion of the right order of things. It is, then, the barbarian *system*, holding over in a better world in which reason has just claims to sovereignty—it is *that* that constitutes evil in society.

to recite all the counts against it, certain charges seem to be sustained:

(1) It is bad because it gives the position of advantage to animal and barbarian desires. It exalts the lower at the expense of the higher. The rule of "gain" and "glory" leaves scant room for refinement and sympathy, and it hears with impatience and often with scorn the claims of justice and liberty. If, as must no doubt be allowed, acquisitiveness, self assertion, etc., have their place in life, that place is by no means the first. To make it that is to enthrone an insatiable craving. As Hobbes said long ago, "Felicity [in this direction] is a continual progress of the desire from one object to another, the attainment of the former being still but the way to the latter, . . . a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death." [22] It is an evil system that gives these primitive interests the right of way, and recognizes them as the supreme ends of life.

(2) It is bad, because it is *naturally predatory,* and so productive—in so far as the influence of good will does not mitigate its effects—of anger and suspicion, hatred and war.[23] Its goods, "gold and purple," are *exclusive.* Owing to their nature they can never be shared to satisfaction by all who crave them. Not only are they limited in quantity, but often their value is due very largely to their scarcity, the glory of having what most persons desire but lack being precisely the end sought.[24] Competitive strife of man with man is the inevitable result, a strife in

[22] *Leviathan,* ch. xi. Hobbes is a good witness as well as a keen thinker, for few writers have been less sentimental.

[23] "Competition of riches, honour, command, and other power," Hobbes wrote three hundred years ago, "inclineth *to contention,* enmity, and war; because the way of one competitor, to the attaining of his desire, is to kill, subdue, supplant, or repel the other" (*Leviathan,* ch. xi).

[24] Witness the endless devices in the way of attire, pleasure, etc., resorted to by many rich men and women in their unceasing effort to difference themselves from the pursuing crowd of imitators!

which more or less failure and bitterness of spirit must always be the lot of the majority. The biological struggle for existence is carried up into the social field; and then at intervals the barbarian spirit reverts to barbarian methods, and the brutalities and desolations of war follow.[25] And this is its *natural outcome;* for mammon's clashing greeds are ever present Jasons sowing the highways of the world with dragon's teeth. And patriotism so-called (really truculent tribal prejudice and collective greed) broods over the new crop of fighters and chants paeans over the desolators, while mammon's captains rail at the friends of humanity as sentimentalists and internationalists.

(3) The system, furthermore, is *structurally unstable.* Its equilibriums, even when seemingly most firmly established—as by the two treaties of Versailles—are necessarily temporary. The very forces which produced them are soon at work sapping the edifice they have built. This is an ominous feature. In the past it has caused endless bloodshed and a long succession of revolutions, from, say, Absolom and his experienced adviser, Ahithophel,[26] down to this first quarter of the twentieth century; and its promise for the future is no better. The dominion won by force may with equal propriety be overthrown by force. Often enough "they that take the sword," or their successors, "perish with the sword." [27] And so the system's logical outcome is not orderly progress, but *turmoil.* The kingdom of mammon does not *in itself* include any synthetic, any progressively organizing and stabilizing factors, such as the developing sympathies and the expanding re-

[25] *Cf.* the appeal issued by the *World Alliance for International Friendship,* and signed by a hundred and sixty prominent Americans, in opposition to what it terms the *war system,* a system "which rests upon the assumption that the welfare of one people involves the ruin of another, and plans far ahead to compass that ruin."

[26] II Sam. xvii. 1-3.

[27] Mt. xxvi. 52.

ciprocal interests which play such a constructive part in the Kingdom of light; nor has it any large, endlessly potential objective like that of a progressive common good. Hitherto the perennial destructiveness of the kingdom of mammon has had some bounds set to it, not only by the efforts of good will, but by the limits of human *power;* but now the superhuman powers of nature are coming under the control of destructive men, who Samson-like are threatening to pull down the whole temple of civilization—all the more need for good will!

(4) The kingdom of "gold and purple" is bad, once more, because its *predatory profit,* whether in war, industry, or finance, *causes work to be avoided* and *despised* as the occupation of inferiors; and work is at once the great source of economic good, and a major component of human happiness. *Poverty,* too, *is condemned* as the badge of the unsuccessful or the slavishly submissive. *Caste* follows naturally, the unavoidable stratification of society being exaggerated and hardened, with strong-handed, law-fortified, haughty possessors on one side, and various servile or hostile groups on the other. This is a social situation as unfavorable to true economic welfare and a progressive civilization as it is morally obnoxious.[28] That these evil features are not even more in evidence in modern civilization is due to the fact that the Kingdom of good will, though roundly scorned by the unscrupulous, and much neglected by the church, has nevertheless maintained a real, if desultory, existence, and worked for the true ends of life.

Now, the desperate feature of mankind's situation, and the one which gives a certain excuse to the scorner, is that usually the individual has no power to change it. He

[28] *Cf.* II Tim. iii. 1-9 for the rule of mammon as viewed by St. Paul: "For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, . . . implacable, slanderers . . . traitors, headstrong, puffed up," etc.

has scarcely more control over it than the Asiatic has had heretofore over the despotism under which he was born and has lived. In greater or less degree the kingdom of this world has been a major agent in his making. It was shaping him before he could walk. In adolescence is impressed his immature mind through the masterfulness of its representatives, and it dazzled him with their seeming successes. In maturity it continually suggests its own ends to him, confronts him with its age-old standards, and demands of him conformity as a matter of course. Its sway is present in all his social contacts. It is intrenched in the economic life of his time and in the very institutions of his country. Manifestly, as Jesus was fully convinced, deliverance from it can come only through more than individual effort—through another, a righteous, Kingdom, contending with mammon and overthrowing it. In that overthrow, not in any weak, defeatist divisions of the field of life, such as that between the secular and the religious, the present life and the life to come—in that at first the coming of the Kingdom of God must largely consist.[29]

[29] So John the Baptist evidently thought; for of the Messiah he declared, "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor . . . the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire" (*Cf.* Mt. iii. 10-12; also, the parable of the tares, Mt. xiii. 24-30, 36-43).

CHAPTER X

THE APOSTLES AND THE KINGDOM

1. THE TRADITIONAL VIEW UNJUSTIFIED. What was the aim of the original disciples?[1] Did the tragic death of their Lord lead them to revise their ideas and set up a new objective? Not at first certainly. In an interview with the risen Jesus their inquiry is still, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?"[2]—manifestly the Kingdom of Messianic prophecy. The traditional Christian view is that this was a last naïve expression of their Jewish messianism, holding over after its time because the Holy Spirit had not yet been bestowed. At, and after, the ensuing Day of Pentecost, it is said, the baptism of the Holy Ghost so spiritualized and universalized their minds that all apocalyptic interests and expectations fell away and a new religion appeared in the world. Do the facts support this theory? Quite the contrary.

On the Day of Pentecost itself we find Simon Peter summarizing the argument of his sermon as follows: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified."[3] "Lord" and "Christ" are distinctly

[1] At first the disciples called their movement simply *"the way,"* of which "that way," "the way of the Lord," and "the way which they call a sect," were variations. The phrase suggests their Master's saying that "straitened is the *way* that leadeth unto life," and the Baptist's revival of Isaiah's call, "Make ye ready the *way* of the Lord." It appears to have been a common religious metaphor of the time, and to have meant nothing novel or radical, but simply the right kind of thinking and living religiously viewed. *Cf.* Acts ix. 2; xviii. 25 f.; xix. 9, 23; xxiv. 14, 22; Mt. vii. 14; Lk. iii. 4; *cf.* Mt. xxii. 16; Acts xvi. 17; II Macc. vi. 7.

[2] Acts i. 6-8.

[3] Acts ii. 36.

Messianic terms, and indicate no change in religious outlook. Nor does the appeal which follows, to repent and be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins;" for the summons is substantially identical with that of John the Baptist.[4] Still less does the reason given for the appeal, "For unto you is the *promise,* and to your children;" for to his hearers the promise could be only that of the prophets—"the hope of Israel." [5] A few days go by, during which there must have been ample opportunity for reflection; but Saint Peter in speaking to the people again uses the language of Messianism as readily and naïvely as ever. He urges repentance, partly, that the hearer's "sins may be blotted out" [6] and ecstacies enjoyed, and partly that God *"may send the Christ* [7] . . . even Jesus, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things, *whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets."* [8] "Repent ye, therefore, . . . that he may send the Christ"!—a plain appeal to the *parousia* as an incentive.

And this is characteristic of the apostolic preaching. Jesus' Messianic return at the imminent "day of Yahveh" is its unfailing assumption and frequent declaration. "Every day," we are told, "in the Temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ." [9] Confidence in Jesus as the Messianic Lord was the prime dynamic of the apostles. Repeatedly believers are exhorted to faith and patient endurance by the thought of "a salvation *ready to be revealed in the last time,"* with

[4] Mt. iii. 2, 6 f., 13 f.; Acts xix. 1-5. [5] *Cf.* Eph. ii. 12.

[6] This connection of forgiveness with the Messianic expectation appears again in St. Peter's address to Cornelius (*Cf.* Acts x. 42 f.). It is apt to seem a strange conjunction to minds swayed by the traditional interpretation; but it is by no means illogical, for according to the Messianism of Jesus (and the Baptist) no unrepentant man was fit for the Kingdom of God.

[7] The title Christ is, of course, the Greek form of the Hebrew "Messiah." The presence of the article (*the* Christ) indicates the Messianic theme.

[8] Acts iii. 19-21.

[9] Acts v. 42; *cf.* ii. 16-21, 34-36; iii. 21-24; v. 31, 41.

"glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." *"The end of all things is at hand,"* it is declared; to which is added, "Insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the *revelation of his glory,* also, ye may rejoice with exceeding joy." [10] The Epistle to the Hebrews urges patient endurance on the ground that, "yet a little while, and he that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry," and James calls upon his readers to "establish" their "hearts; for the coming of the Lord is at hand." [11] Naturally the Apocalypse is full of the idea.[12]

Evidently the Pentecostal experience was mystical, not theological. It kindled enthusiasm, but made no great change in ideas and purposes. In the Master's absence and until his glorious return the disciples felt it to be their mission to extend the company of believers [13] and so secure a worthy constituency for the coming Kingdom, or, as it came to be known, an "elect" company, or "church."

2. St. Paul a Messianist. With the appearance of Saul of Tarsus in the apostolic company new ideas and to some extent new interests are in evidence, but not as regards the fundamental aim and mission of believers. At Damascus, soon after his conversion, St. Paul contended for the Messianic faith, "proving that this is *the Christ.*" And such continued to be his message, albeit with certain personal additions.[14] Well on in his second missionary tour we find him arguing in the synagogue at Thessalonica [15] "that this Jesus . . . is *the Christ,*" and again at

[10] I Pet. i. 5, 7, 13; iv. 7, 13; v. 1, 10; II Pet. iii. 10, 12.
[11] Heb. x. 35-37; Jas. v. 7 f.
[12] Rev. i. 1, 3, 7; iii. 11; xix. 10-16; xx. 1-5; xxi. 1-3; xxii. 7, 12. *Cf.* also, Jn. xxi. 20-23.
[13] *Cf.* Acts x. 42.
[14] Acts ix. 22. *Cf.* the legalistic scruple in Acts xiii. 39, etc.
[15] Acts xvii. 3. It may be urged that St. Paul stressed the theological side only a few days before at Philippi, bidding the jailor believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and assuring him that then he and his house would be "saved." It may be, indeed, that St. Paul's redemption metaphysics is in evidence in this utter-

Corinth testifying to the Jews "that Jesus was *the Christ.*" It appears, too, to have been from his teaching indirectly that the Alexandrian Jew, Apollos, showed "publicly by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." Even his famous address to the Gentiles in the Athenian Areopagus has "the day of Yahveh" and the Messianic judgment as its culmination.[16]

The like is true in his epistles: the *parousia* is depicted as a near and vivid reality. *"We that are alive,"* he says, "that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in nowise precede them that are fallen asleep," but "shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." For him, as naïvely as for Peter or James, the great incentive of believers is the expectation of "the *revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven* with the angels of his power in flaming fire . . . when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at . . . *in that day.*"[17] To the Corinthians he writes of his pleasure that they "come behind in no gift, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,"[18] and bids them *"judge nothing* before the time, *until the Lord come.*" He warns them that the time is shortened . . . for the fashion of this world passeth away."[19] Concerning the

ance; for he was strongly affected by the sense of sin then common in the Mediterranean world. There is nothing in the account, however, that *requires* that interpretation. The jailor is not represented as affected with a sense of sin, but rathed with a fear of supernatural power. It is most likely, therefore, that the assurance of salvation as a consequence of faith in Christ meant, as it meant for Jesus and the twelve, *inclusion in the expected Kingdom.*

[16] Acts xviii. 5, 25-28; xvii. 31; *cf.* Phil. i. 6.

[17] I Thess. iv. 13-17; II Thess. i. 5-10. *Cf.* his "to which end we also pray always for you" (vs. II); also, II Tim. iv. 8.

[18] His form of address is, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, them that are *sanctified* in Christ Jesus, called to be *saints.*" As the epistle itself reveals plainly enough, the Corinthians were not men of superior character. The terms "sanctified" and "saints" meant simply *consecrated* in purpose—devoted to a high aim. Of course, that aim might be ethical perfection, but the texts cited above, and many others, show that the aim was primarily the Kingdom, and was ethical chiefly because righteousness was a necessary condition of entrance into the Kingdom. The earliest churches were groups of men called "saints" who were united in expectation of the Kingdom and in personal preparation for it. It was their attitude to it that marked them off as distinct from the world. *Cf.* I Tim. vi. 14; II Tim. iv. 1, 8; Titus ii. 11-15; I Pet. i. 5-7.

[19] I Cor. iv, 5; vii. 29, 31.

Lord's supper he explains, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death *till he come.*" [20] Deceased believers are to be "raised to life again at [Jesus'] coming," but in changed form;[21] for "as is the heavenly [*i.e.* the risen Christ] such are they [believers at the *parousia*], also, that are heavenly. . . . Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [*i.e.* in death], but we shall all be changed, in the twinkling of an eye," [22] etc. For this apocalyptic change the apostle himself groaned, "longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is *from heaven*" [23]—not, be it noted, *in* heaven.

It thus appears that Jesus' moralized conception of the prophetic Kingdom of God was the unquestioned assumption and dominating thought [24] of the first generation of Christian believers, and its realization their highest aim. Even at the end of the first century the author (or Christian reviser) of the Apocalypse represents the Christ of his vision as declaring finally, "I, Jesus, have sent mine angels to testify unto you these things for the churches. . . . Yea, I come quickly;" and then the writer adds in fervent response, "Amen: come, Lord Jesus!"

[20] I Cor. xi. 26. Does some reader urge that in this passage St. Paul has in mind, not Jesus' heroic devotion to the Kingdom, but his substutionary sacrifice for the sins of mankind? But has he, in fact? What, then, is the meaning of the words, "till he come"? And why should not the apostle, instead of emphasizing the remembrance factor, have indicated that the rite was a symbol of the participant's purification from sin?

[21] This appears to be a Pauline addition to the apostolic message, but there were not a few precedents for it in Jewish apocalyptic speculation.

[22] I Cor. xv. 22 f., 48 f., 50-53.

[23] II Cor. v. 2; Rom. viii. 22 ff. With this interpretive idea excluded the glowing passage in v.v. 16-25 becomes dark and cryptic. Note the "until now" in vs. 22.

[24] I Pet. iv. 7, 13.

CHAPTER XI

THE HELLENIZING OF THE GOSPEL

Probably no reader needs to be told that the Christian expectation sketched in the last chapter has long since ceased. Were it not for certain small premillennarian sects and parties, the New Testament Messianic hope would be about as obsolete as the worship of Isis or Jupiter. In the Gentile churches the New Testament Messianism did not long outlast the first generation of believers. It seems to have faded out. More or less unconsciously the church came to construe the Kingdom in other-worldly and mystical terms. Metaphysical salvation, conceived as effected by Jesus on Calvary, and a supernatural blessedness to be realized in a world to come, replaced salvation regarded as admission to a divine institution on earth.[1] In that so-called "Kingdom" Jesus Christ figured as a divine being (a metaphysical "culture hero") who had been sent to earth to deliver men, not from the actual woes of life, but from the speculative *guilt* of sin, which guilt was held to be the barrier between man and God, and man and heaven.

1. Different View-point of the Apostle's Creed. This shift from practical to social concerns, from the Jewish to the Greek outlook, is illustrated for us strikingly in the church's most ancient summary of belief, the so-called Apostle's [2] Creed. If the articles of this docu-

[1] *Cf.* p. 78 *supra.*

[2] This creed has, of course, no claim to apostolic authorship. It was a cumulative controversial statement of what the church, in the course of four centuries or more, came to insist upon as the apostolic belief. It was used as a kind of test oath of candidates for baptism.

ment are examined with reference to their historico-literary sources, it is instructive to note that only one of them, the second major division, and, one clause excepted,[3] only the historical part of that, is traceable in any distinctive way to the original gospels.[4] The remaining statements have to do either with beliefs which the church shared with orthodox Judaism (in opposition to radical Gnosticism) or with doctrines adopted after the death of Jesus. Any devout Jew of those early centuries would have joined heartily enough in affirming the almighty Fatherhood of God, the social character of life after death, "the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." [5] Indeed, the devout Jew might well have phrased the first article more acceptably to Jesus than does the creed, which represents God as "Father" merely in the sense of Source or Creator—a kind of cosmic Patriarch, not the ever near and gracious supreme Personality which was such a reality to Jesus Christ. The doctrine of Jesus as a supernatural person in the second article, with its virgin birth (a theological miracle), its ascription to him of sole divine sonship, and its account of his descent into Hades and future judgeship of "the quick and the *dead*"—this is the chief distinctively Christian part of the creed; *and it is new.* It is not found in, nor justified by, the original gospels,[6] though its roots are traceable in the teachings of the apostles.

The most remarkable feature of the creed, however, is

[3] Namely, the prophecy, "From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

[4] It may be urged that the doctrine of the virgin birth, also, is found in the original gospels; but the claim is a weak one. The passages relating it (Mt. i. 18-25, Lk. i. 26 ff.) have quite the look of later narratives prefixed as introductions to their respective gospels. In each case the body of the gospel shows no acquaintance with them (*Cf.* Mt. iii. 21, 31; Jn. vii. 3-6).

[5] Nor are the doctrines of the Holy Ghost and the Catholic church, in their earlier forms, necessarily in conflict with Judaism.

[6] *Cf.* the remark of Resegger, quoted by Foster (*Finality*, etc., p. 407): "The teaching of Jesus is one thing, the doctrine concerning Jesus another. There have been times when the church was the most dangerous foe of the gospel, and the gospel the most dangerous foe of the church."

its omissions—especially two. One of these[7] is the Kingdom of God. With all its ascriptions of supernatural dignity and power to Jesus, it has nothing to say about his supreme interest and aim! When we consider that the animus of the creed was conservative, that it was the matured expression of the beliefs insisted upon by ancient Catholicism in opposition to the pushing heresies of the times, this omission is very significant. Evidently the Kingdom of God (proper) was not a doctrine which the Patristic church felt called upon to defend; and this, not because it was unchallenged, but because it was no longer important.

2. CAUSES OF THE CHANGED VIEWS. For two reasons Messianism had died out in the church at large: The *course of events* seemed to deny it, and the *intellectual environment* was unfavorable. Despite the confident assurance of the Epistle to the Hebrews,[8] the expected Christ had not come, but had tarried. Meanwhile a multitude of believers had passed away without witnessing the *parousia* and its world-filling events. What place had these dead Christians in the gospel scheme?[9] As time went on and their number increased, this question became more and more difficult to answer. Under the pressure of such sobering facts, it is not strange that the Messianic program fell out of perspective and became merely a remote possibility, an occasional dream. Nor is it strange that in the desire to save Christian faith and hope, new meanings, other than apocalyptic, were found for the New Testament Messianic teachings.[10] This theological change was

[7] The other—St. Paul's atonement doctrine—will be referred to later.

[8] "Yet a little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry (Heb. x. 31. *Cf.* Hab. ii. 3.

[9] This situation had begun to appear in St. Paul's time. *Cf.* I Thess. iv. 13 ff.; v. 1 ff., 10; II Peter iii. 3 f., 9 f.

[10] It should not be forgotten that from the very days of Jesus in Hellenistic circles the influence of Philo of Alexandria had supported the allegorcial interpretation of the Scriptures.

quite natural, not wilful or heedless. On the contrary, the temper of the rising Catholicism was distinctly conservative. Rather did the new theology seek to be a deeper interpretation, rendering prophetic teaching credible in the light of new facts. No new divine order of things having issued from the heavens and established itself upon the earth, faith seemed shut up to the conclusion that the Kingdom must be either *in* heaven (that is, otherworldly) rather than *from* heaven, or else be of a character permitting its existence upon the earth *unseen,* that is, spiritual only, not institutional. In time both of these views established themselves in the church, the former becoming the ecclesiastical doctrine, the latter the mystic. A critical modern in making such a transition in belief would face the fact that his new view was different from the old one; but the church of the first five centuries, like humanity in general then and now, was not critical. Its method was to construe the New Testament teachings in what seemed the needful way, and to accept the result as their *original* and true meaning—a naïve course which probably a very large majority of Christian believers today would pursue under like circumstances.

3. St. Paul's Atonement Teaching. This striking change of view was facilitated by a leading teaching of St. Paul's, the doctrine of the atonement.[11] This famous theory turned the attention of his Gentile readers strongly in another direction. Saul of Tarsus was a foreign Jew of wider culture than his colleagues. On the one hand, he had been carefully trained in the Scriptures and the legalism of the rabbis; on the other, he had grown up in contact with the rigorism of the Stoics. Law for him was an eternal and inflexible thing. The prophetic view of divine forgiveness (so fully shared by Jesus) as primarily a mat-

[11] This is the other notable omission from the creed.

ter of *personal* attitude, did not satisfy his exacting juristic mind. Not only God and man were involved, but the eternal order of the universe. Before God could forgive, the divine law must be publicly vindicated by being executed punitively at some one's expense. If the wrong-doer was to escape punishment and yet the law not be dishonored, it could only be after a substitute had been found to expiate his sin for him. Paul found peace of mind himself in the thought that God had found such a substitute in the person of his divine Son.[12] Unfortunately he regarded this inner experience of his as a norm for "all them that believe, for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" [13]—a familiar Stoic idea. So for St. Paul the vicarious satisfaction of the divine law effected by Christ became *a condition of salvation in addition* [14] to the repentance and allegiance required by the original gospel proclamation.

This is evidently a very extensive modification of the original gospel invitation, one challenging scrutiny all the more because the added demand did not spring from the apostle's ancestral faith. The Jewish religion was not one of self-condemnation and self-abasement before a remote and offended Deity. It was one of joyous communion with a near and gracious Heavenly Father—one of *feasts,* not penances. Although consciousness of wrong-doing

[12] *Cf.* Gal. iii. 13; II Cor. v. 14, 18, 19, 21 ("All things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ . . . Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf"). *Cf.* also, Rom. iii. 24-26; iv. 24 f.; v. 1-18; viii. 3; Eph. ii. 16. This doctrine was evidently of great importance to St. Paul. It was the part of his theology that cleared the way for his religion—a means of removing an intellectual obstacle. His religion itself was essentially mystical, as we see indicated in the fifth chapter of Romans. After a reference to his justification doctrine in verse one, we find in verses two to five what religion really meant to him—not a mere acquittal, but a new life lived in communion with God . *Cf.* also, viii. 2-4, 9 f., 14-17, 35-39. In the next chapter this communion takes on a completely mystical form—a dying with Christ and rising with him to "newness of life" (Rom. vi. 3-13).

[13] Rom. iii. 22 f.

[14] It is to be noted that St. Paul did not *substitute* this metaphysical doctrine for the original view that salvation consists in admission to the Kingdom. No, he held that view himself (*cf.* Rom. viii. 11-25; I Cor. v. 5). This is *another condition of admission to the Kingdom* which his sense of sin imposed upon him.

was not wanting—witness its great fast, the Day of Atonement, with its impressive solemnities—yet not one of its great annual celebrations was predominantly penitential.[15] Israel's sorrow for sin was never a sense of *alienation of nature* from God. but of concrete particular disobedience and disloyalty. Even for the sternest prophets all that was needful to bring God and man together was true repentance on the part of the latter.[16] There appears to have been in Judaism no notion of a God who himself makes a sin-offering for mankind or exacts it from "his only begotten Son." [17]

Nor did Paul derive his doctrine from the teaching of Jesus, according to whom God is more than ready to receive the repentant offender, and to rejoice over him regardless of any "satisfaction." One cannot insert Paul's atonement theory into the parable of the prodigal son without contradicting its teaching as well as destroying its beauty.[18] Jesus was far from increasing the rigor of the Old Testament's demands upon penitent men. So far as he departs from Jewish religious thought it is in the direction of divine *grace,* not of divine *stringency.*

4. HELLENISTIC[19] PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCES OF REDEMPTIONISM. Shall we say, then, that St. Paul's atonement doctrine was a new and direct revelation to himself?

[15] They were as distinctly festive as the American Thanksgiving and Christmas and Easter.

[16] *Cf.* Isa. i. 10 f., 16-19; Jer. iv. 14; Ps. xxxiv. 11-14, 18; li. 16 f. Much the same is to be said of the Temple worship. Most of its offerings were non-penitential. Even in the sin offerings it is doubtful if the idea of vicarious expiation was present.

[17] Jn. iii. 16. A phrase of Philo's long antedating the Fourth Gospel. If it be thought that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is opposed to this claim, it should be remembered that criticism is now agreed that the suffering servant of Yahveh described in that chapter is not any individual, still less a supernatural man, but is the "remnant" of Israel itself, which was then enduring the consequences of national transgression. Vicarious suffering is in mind plainly enough; but it is of the kind so often exhibited in this tragic world, the suffering of the relatively guiltless for the wrong-doing of others.

[18] Lk. xv. 1-32; vi. 35 f.; Mt. vi. 12, 14; xviii. 21-35.

[19] The term Hellenistic is to be distinguished from its sister word Hellenic. The latter means Greek in the original racial and national sense. Hellenistic, on the other hand, means affected by Greek culture and so is a term applicable more or less to most of the ancient lands around the Mediterranean.

That is not a tenable hypothesis. As we have seen,[20] historical criticism cannot recognize a supernatural explanation of an event until all other explanations fail, and indeed, continue to fail.[21] This is by no means the case as regards this doctrine. On the contrary, a natural explana- is at hand in St. Paul's intellectual situation. He acquired the idea by living in an environment strongly imbued with the Hellenistic (or Mediterranean) thought of the time, which was then deeply religious. By that environment Paul's vigorous mind, at once speculative and devout, could hardly fail to be greatly affected.

If the apostle, roaming through the streets of Athens, found occasion to pronounce that philosophical center "somewhat religious," the like could be said in much stronger terms of the other cities around the eastern Mediterranean, and not least certainly of the Greek city of Tarsus, with its philosophical schools and its Hellenistic religions. The serious thought of the time was quick with a sense of divine alienation and craving for atonement;[22] and those philosophies and religions, old and new, which ministered to that craving had wide hearings and large followings. Since Aristotle's death the main interest in philosophy had been, not nature, but man—his true policy, his destiny, and his escape from the evils of life. For many generations the problem of the successful conduct of life through wise self-guidance had occupied the ethical schools of the Epicureans, Stoics, and Skeptics. Their success was very limited on the popular side; for their schemes of life were much too intellectual, and too remote from ordinary experience and capability.

[20] *Cf.* Chap. I *supra.*

[21] Furthermore, it would be strange indeed if such a remarkable function as metaphysical Savior of the world were not revealed to the agent himself (Jesus), but only to one who became his disciple after his death.

[22] The key to this word lies in its structure. It is either a state of *at-one-ment* with God, or a process toward that state.

Avowedly they were intended for *wise men,* or those capable of wisdom, and in every generation these are few.

Then in the first century before Christ the longing for escape from evil, both physical and metaphysical, took the channel of religious hope; and naturally enough. When ordinary life is burdensome and its outlook dark, shall not man grope about for help from the unseen?[23] The age was one of submission for most men—unavoidable submission to the all powerful military empires and to nature and fortune. The self abasing, not the self assertive, instinct was in control; and is it not better to submit to God than to man?

As a consequence thought, philosophy included, had been religious for two generations or more before the time of St. Paul. Platonism, for example, which was then regarded as the religious philosophy *par excellence,*[24] had long familiarized men with the idea that God is far removed from them, so exalted, indeed, as to be "beyond existence" and "above knowing." On the other hand, the human soul, by becoming embodied in "this muddy vesture of decay,"[25] had fallen much below the state of true Reality, although of its knowledge thereof in a former existence it had dim and fleeting reminiscences. Man's salvation consisted, on the metaphysical side, in deliverance from the body, and, on the ethical side, in the victorious dominance of the spirit, and consequent union with God.

Stoicism had likewise become in large measure a re-

[23] This change in attitude and interest has been called "the failure of nerve," by Prof. Gilbert Murray (*Four Stages of Greek Religion,* p. 103 ff.).

[24] Says Prof. G. F. Moore, "Plato . . . is the founder of theistic philosophy . . . and all the theologies of the Western world, Jewish and Moslem as well as Christian, derive in the end from him" (*History of Religions* I:499). Indeed, II Cor. iv. 18 might well be called the core of Platonism.

[25] Compare with this phrase of Plato's St. Paul's terms, "body of our humiliation" (Phil. iii. 21), "body of this death" (Rom. vii. 24), and his frequent disparagements of "the flesh" (Rom. vii. 25; viii. 12 f.; xiii. 14; Gal. v. 16-21, etc.).

ligious system of thought,[26] and many parallels to its teachings may be found in St. Paul's writings.[27] It, too, stressed, while it deplored, the gap between God and man, and regarded the soul's confinement in the body as a separation from God. Indeed, death was a deliverance, though salvation was not to be secured short of full ethical union with God. To reach this high goal a heavenly Mediator was necessary, a Mediator which the Stoic theologians found in Hermes, the mythical messenger of the Gods.[28]

New philosophies, also, were in the field in St. Paul's day, which were even more pronouncedly religious, philosophies which crystalized various theological ideas then in quasi-suspension throughout the Empire, the idea of some kind of atonement being usually included. One of these, *Philonism,* arose within the Jewish "dispersion." About the time that Jesus in Palestine was talking about God as a near and personal Friend, Philo of Alexandria was expounding to his Hellenistic fellow countrymen the remoteness and ineffability of the Deity, a remoteness so great and a holiness so complete that all contact with matter, including man in the flesh, was impossible. "The divine realm," said he, "is truly untrodden and unapproachable." Yet indirectly this fastidiously holy Being had created the world, that is, through his Agent, the

[26] As represented, say, by St. Paul's contemporary, Seneca. Plutarch represents much of the religious Platonism of the time.

[27] Not only did Paul in his Areopagus address quote from the Stoic Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* (Acts xvii. 28), but we find him expressing many Stoic sentiments. Compare, *e.g.* Rom. vii. 14-25 with Seneca's "I am a higher being, and born to higher things than to be a slave to my body, which I look on as naught else than a shackle laid upon my freedom . . . in so miserable a habitation dwells the free soul." Prof. Pfleiderer in his *Primitive Christianity* (i. 42-53) presents an impressive survey of these parallels.

[28] They seem to have regarded Hermes as the Philonic Logos personified, much as the Fourth Evangelist afterward regarded Jesus. *Cf.* Aliston, *Stoic and Christian in the Second Century.* Says Prof. Murray, "In almost all the [Hermes] liturgies that I have read the need is felt for a Mediator between the seeker after God and his goal." The goal itself is plainly mystic: "I in thee, and thou in me," is the ecstatic cry of one of the Hermes liturgies" (G. Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion,* p. 131). *Cf.* Jn. xvii. 21-23.

Logos [29]—an expression, or emanation, of Himself. Other names applied by the philosopher to this heavenly Mediator were "Second God," "Son of God," and "First Born." Salvation, for Philo, consisted in escaping the snare of the material body—what St. Paul called "the flesh"—and coming, through "hungering and thirsting after the pure and noble," to share in the purity and elevation of God, as revealed by the Logos. This seems to be essentially the moral mysticism of St. Paul.[30] Philo agrees with Paul in stressing faith and love, but in place of hope he exalts mystic insight as the greatest and most beatific of spiritual functions.[31]

Neo-Pythagoreanism, the other new philosophy, was the Gentile counterpart of Philonism. Its best known teacher was Apollonius of Tyana, a Cappadocian contemporary of Philo and Jesus, who was regarded as inspired and as a worker of miracles. His image, along with the images of Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus, was placed by the Emperor Alexander Severus in his private temple.

It thus appears that in the first century of our era the dominant philosophies in the Gentile world contained many ideas akin to the atonement doctrine of St. Paul. Other elements of the doctrine, such as the hopeless debasement of the human will(original sin),[32] the perpetual mediation of life by death,[33] and the vicarious expiation of man's sin as the necessary condition of his salvation [34]—

[29] Logos is the Greek term for "word," and so meant primarily an expression of thought; then, by an easy metonymy, the thought itself. Through Stoic influence it came to stand for cosmic reason as manifested in the world. *Cf.* Jn. i. 1-5. According to Hatch the Stoics conceived the Platonic Ideas as self-operative causes, calling them Logoi, and then came to view them "as the manifold expressions of a single Logos. . . . It is at this point that the writings of Philo become of speculative importance. They gather together the two dominant theories of the past (Platonic and Stoic), and they contain the seeds of nearly all that afterwards grew up on Christian soil" (*The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church,* p. 182).

[30] *Cf.* Phil. iii. 8-14.

[31] *Cf.* I Cor. xiii. 13.

[32] *Cf.* Rom. iii. 9, 19, 23; v. 12; vii. 13-24; Gal. v. 17.

[33] Rom. vi. 3-11; viii. 17 f.; I Cor. xv. 54; II Tim. ii. 11 f.

[34] Rom. iii. 24-26; v. 1, 2, 9; Heb. ix. 22.

these were also at hand and plentifully in evidence in St. Paul's mental environment, though more in the popular religions and theologies than in the accredited philosophies.

5. HELLENISTIC RELIGIOUS SOURCES. *Orphism,* for example, the theology of the Dionysus, or Bacchus, religion, and largely also of such kindred cults as those of Cybele [35] and Isis—Orphism is a case in point. The worship of Dionysus (mythical son of Zeus and Semele) originated in Thrace [36] as an orgiastic nature cult, the productiveness and self renewals of life, at first mostly vegetable life, being its main object of veneration—the undying life of nature persisting through all seeming deaths. The wandering Orpheus was the minstrel and prophet of the cult, and at length its martyr, being torn to pieces by frenzied Bacchantes. For Orphism the bull was at once a sacred and a sacrificial object. It was slaughtered by its worshipers and its flesh and blood eaten while still warm, in the belief that the god incarnate in the animal (Dionysus) would thus enter into them.[37] A similar idea prompted their copious wine drinking, the stimulus of the liquor being identified with the presence of the god.[38]

Nor was Orphism the only theology of the first century

[35] The "Diana of the Ephesians" acclaimed in Acts xix. 24-28, 34.

[36] The cult was well known in Asia, also. It is referred to in the Apochrypha (II Macc. vi. 7); it flourished at Caesarea, Damascus, and in the Hauran, and it enjoyed the favor of the Ptolemies. The Syrian general Nicanor actually threatened to pull down the temple at Jerusalem and rear one to Dionysus on its site. At Alexandria Orphism merged with kindred Egyptian elements, and in Greece hymns expressing it were used in the Eleusinian as well as the Orphic mysteries. Indeed, its vogue was immense, from the Euphrates to the Pillars of Hercules.

[37] *Cf.* Jn. vi. 35, 48-58. It should be remembered that to the original readers of this passage the rites referred to above were quite familiar. They were vehemently condemned, however, by orthodox Judaism.

[38] Orphism's leading philosophical teachings were four: (1) the homogeneity of all living things—men, beasts, and plants; (2) the hereditary character of moral evil; (3) the transmigration of souls, each incarnation being in the nature of an imprisonment; and (4) ultimate perfection as the result of the long series of incarnations, each of which had its sacrificial side. The first and second of these ideas have standing in modern thought; the third made as little appeal to the early church as it does to the thought of today; but the fundamental conception, that man is under an age-long spiritual thraldom from which escape is possible only through great sacrifice, evidently impressed early Christians strongly and St. Paul not least. *Cf.* Rom. v. 12-19; vii. 5, 8-25; I Cor. xv. 21 f.; Gal. v. 17.

that stood for the idea of a metaphysical salvation to be achieved through sacrifice, or shed blood. The *religion of Mithra* had a like theme.[39] Originally a Zoroastrian divinity—the god of the day-time sky, or heavenly light—Mithra, through western Asian influence, came to be regarded as the Mediator between the far-withdrawn Ahura Mazda and the human captives of Ahriman. In the course of its Western movement Mithraism came into contact with the Greek mystery cults and the Orphic theology. From them it received a rite of which it made much, the *taurobolium,* or mystic sacrifice of the bull—the symbol of the renewal of life through suffering and death. The bull was slaughtered upon a perforated platform through which its blood streamed down upon the religious devotee who stood naked underneath. When the latter came forth, bathed in blood from head to foot, the witnesses saluted him as "born again"—*a new man.* In the course of time the rite was theologized. It was held that the victory of the good in the age-long cosmic struggle with evil was possible only through perpetual trial and suffering; that Mithra himself participated in the sacrificial process; and that all seekers for salvation must share in his task. Only thus was escape and union with God possible.[40]

Now, not only was the vogue of Mithraism great in St.

[39] So had the religion of *Attis,* a fair young god associated with Cybele. Attis like Orpheus, met a violent death. In Rome the twenty-fourth of March (the "day of blood") was celebrated with frenzied mourning for him; and the day following (the beginning of spring) by ecstatic rejoicing; for Attis had risen from the dead. This nature myth, under the fashioning hand of the theologian, became an allegory of the soul's victory over death and entrance into new and happy life. St. Paul seems to have been familiar with these teachings. *Cf.* Rom. vi. 4 f.; Col. ii. 11-13, 20; iii. 1-4.

Another of these nature religions with mystical interpretations was that of Adonis (the Hebrew Tammuz; *Cf.* Ezek. viii. 14), which prevailed in Syria and Cyprus in early times. Still another was the *Isis* worship of Egypt, long the leading foreign faith in Rome. It, too, witnessed to a god who had risen from the dead, and disclosed to men the way to a happy immortality.

[40] The cult offered many striking parallels to Christian customs, some of them so close that church fathers denounced them as demonic anticipations of their own rites. Says Prof. G. F. Moore, "There were baptisms in water which not only purified the body but removed sins; Mithras sealed his soldiers as Christians were sealed with the sign of the cross; there was an oblation of bread which corresponded to the Eucharist" (*Hist. of Religions,* I, 596).

Paul's time, but for a century prior thereto Tarsus had been one of its leading centers. Is it strange that, with the Gentile environment quick with these ideas of Mithraism and Orphism, and the like, that a vigorous and original thinker like Paul of Tarsus should have been influenced by them? It would have been passing strange, had it been otherwise. As a matter of fact before the advent of the gospel [41] a process of mutual assimilation of religious views had been going on in the Hellenistic world, an eclectic theological movement, seeking to combine the most promising speculations in a satisfactory system of belief. This was known later as *Gnosticism,*[42] and was a natural product of the combination of eclectic philosophy and another major factor in the Hellenistic consciousness, namely, *mysticism.* That mystic (often called "spiritual") experiences are perfectly real in many cases, it seems unreasonable to doubt;[43] but their explanation is another matter.[44] To what are they due, and what do they signify?

[41] *Cf.* G. Murray, *Four Stages,* etc., p. 143.

[42] The Greek word "gnostic" was akin to the older term "sophist." It meant "one who knows."

[43] *Cf.* Wm. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience,* "Lects. 16, 17;" Récéjac, *Bases of Mystic Knowledge;* and E. Underhill, *Mysticism* and the *Essentials of Mysticism,* etc.

[44] For the purposes of this inquiry mystic experiences may be defined as *actual* experiences that are *due* (apparently, at least) *to other than sensory stimuli.* They are independent of the percipient's will—*i.e.* coercive—and yet their source is purely conjectural; for they cannot be reproduced at will and tested out experimentally like scientific phenomena, nor verified by appeal to other observers like historical facts. They are a natural form of human functioning, but private, like love, and grief, and artistic appreciation, or indeed any appreciation. Dramatic instances of mystic experience are doubtless to be found in Jesus' "temptations" in the wilderness, in the three figures on the mount of transfiguration, in Jesus' walking upon the water, and in his resurrection appearances. Usually, however, mystic consciousness is much more vague—as elusive often as Wordsworth's "felt" "presence,"

> "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns. . . .
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

It has vindicated itself in the persons of the prophets and saints (and in the hymn books) of all faiths as a prime factor, perhaps *the* prime factor, in religion; but it is an intoxicating draught for unstable minds. The most serious count against it for men of sober judgment is its proneness to self-repetition (being highly enjoyable. *Cf.* Lk. ix. 33) through use of artificial means, in which case it may be mere auto-suggestion and self-delusion. Though St. Paul was apparently a natural mystic, he was alive to this danger, and warned his converts against it. *Cf.* I Cor. xiv. 1-5, 18 f.; II Cor. xii. 1-6.

To the subject himself, especially when they are strong emotionally but vague intellectually, they are apt to seem cases of conscious contact with an invisible and higher person—usually God. In the first century Gnosticism took that explanation for granted, and made it the initial spring of winged speculation. Thus gnosticism was a kind of corona around the mystic sun.

In its more intellectual and respectable forms gnosticism is found in the writings of Philo, in the "inspired sayings" of Apollonius, in the course of time in the Neo-Platonic philosophy, whose chief teacher, Plotinus, was accounted an incarnation of the divine, in several epistles of St. Paul, in the Fourth Gospel, and in the works of those noted early fathers of the church, Clement of Alexandria and Origin. Clement explicitly avowed the title of gnostic, regarding it as the mark of Christian knowledge and insight. Christian gnosticism at that stage was essentially "systematic theology," and needed only the approval of the church to become orthodoxy.[45]

Another stage ensued, however. Less trustworthy minds took to speculation, also, and before long a wide variety of "winds and doctrine" [46] came to blow in the churches, raising clouds of theories made up of far-fetched inferences, remote analogies, and fantastic combinations —a kind of Christian mythology.[47] From this extreme gnosticism the more serious and ethical part of the church withdrew itself, thereby stigmatizing it as heresy and

[45] Other names for it have been "philosophy" (a New Testament use), "dogma" and "sound doctrine." The term in vogue at present is "fundamental truth."

[46] Eph. iv. 14.

[47] Thus they held that the God of the Old Testament (Yahveh) was identical with Plato's Demiurge. He made the world, and then in an age-long cosmic conflict disputed its control with the heathen demons. In the fullness of time the highest God—far above Yahveh—appeared in the person of Jesus Christ, and overcame both parties! The object of this theophany was the salvation of mankind. This appears to have been the first attempt at a philosophy of history! A common claim with them was that Christ's body was an illusion.

initiating the age-long movement known as Catholicism.

Our review must now have made it plain that the causes of St. Paul's atonement theology, and of the early church's radical shift in interest and outlook in general, are to be found in the intellectual and religious environment on the time, and not in any natural development of Jesus' teachings. Not that Paul deliberately borrowed from pagan sources; he was at once too original a thinker and too sturdy a Jew for that. But his active mind in its theological construction found, more or less unconsciously, many suggestions in Hellenistic religious thought.

One question remains unanswered—the omission of his atonement doctrine from the Apostle's Creed. This at first seems surprising in view of the fact that the doctrine so early became dominant, and remains a bulwark of orthodoxy to this day. On reflection, however, that fact itself offers an explanation, and a very significant one, namely, the absence of any opposition to the doctrine in the creed's formative period. That document arose in the post-apostolic centuries, not at all as a comprehensive confession of faith, but as the Catholic witness against the "heresies," as one after another these appeared in early Christianity. Differ as the fathers might, and did, on other points, there appears to have been no sect of importance that denied the "spiritual" character of salvation and the metaphysical mediatorship of Jesus; so there was no call to include these doctrines in Catholicism's test oath. *The objective of Jesus Christ had actually been forgotten,* so great was the change of theatre after the disappearance or radical disfellowship of the Jewish-Christian churches!

Thus, by natural human causes, it came about that the gospel was Hellenized, and became a Hellenistic rather than a Jewish message—no longer the proclamation of a movement toward an actual ideal Kingdom in the vivid

world of present reality, but a scheme of private salvation in an unseen future world of speculative faith. The "day of Yahveh" had ceased to be "at hand." It was to come (if at all) only at the far-off end of time; and in the long intervening ages the church had other affairs to occupy it.

6. HELLENISTIC IDEAS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. It was a part of the same process of progressive accommodation of the gospel to its Hellenistic environment that new titles, corresponding to the new Hellenistic functions and dignities discovered, came to be assigned to Jesus. One of the earliest of these was "Son of God." St. Paul writes to the Galatians, "When the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son," [48] etc. Again, he refers to "Jesus Christ, our Lord," as God's "Son . . . who was declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection of the dead." [49] This new phraseology was doubtless due to the fact that the term "Son of God" was as familiar to his Gentile converts [50] as the term "Messiah" was unfamiliar. The idea proved a fertile seed. In the next century the Fourth Evangelist represents Martha of Bethany as saying to Jesus, "Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art *the Christ, the Son of God,*" [51] where the latter term seems to be an explanation of the former. Such uses of the term occur repeatedly in the Johannist writings.[52]

[48] Gal. iv. 4, 6.
[49] Rom. i. 3 f., 9; *Cf.* Heb. i. 2, 5 f., 8; v. 5, 8.
[50] It appears only when the environment of the speaker is foreign. *Cf.* Acts viii. 37; ix. 20; xiii. 33, etc. The conception itself—of a superior man of divine paternity and a human mother—was an old one in Greek thought. It may well account for the stories of the virgin birth prefixed to the first and third gospels (Mt. i. 18-25; Lk. i. 26-35). Nor was it confined to Greece. Belief in such demigods (the "culture heroes" of the anthropologist) is quite common among primitive peoples. Compare the many and independent myths of Prometheus, Osiris, Gat, Maui, Yehl, etc. Of the North American Indians A. T. Chamberlain says, "Widespread is the idea of a culture hero or demi-god . . . who is born of a human virgin, often by divine secret fecundation, and growing up frees the earth from monsters and evil beings, or refashions it in various ways, improves the bread and perfects the institutions of mankind, then retires to watch over the world from some remote resting place" (*Encyc. Brit.*, art. "Indians").
[51] Jn. xi. 27.
[52] Jn. iii. 16, 35 f.; v. 23, 25; vi. 40; x. 36; xii. 45; xiv. 6 f.; xv. 26; xx. 28, 31; I Jn. iv. 9; i. 3, 7; iii. 23; iv. 14 f.; v. 20.

A companion new title for Jesus was that of "Lord," or "the Lord." [53] This word in Jewish usage was a divine name—a substitute for the covenant word, Yahveh, which had become tabu. In the Hellenistic religions it was a common title for a *manlike divinity*. Largely parallel is the use of the term "Savior." Jesus did not assume it, nor does it appear in the earlier epistles. It was a title of many Hellenistic divinities,[54] however, and at length found its way into the New Testament—"our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." [55]

In the course of time extensive new ideas became associated with these titles. As the figure of the actual Jesus receded into a past more and more dim, and was supplanted by that of the theological Christ, it was not hard (as we see in the preface to the fourth gospel),[56] for speculative theologians (lovers of "gnosis") to connect the Christian "Son of God" with the Philonic "Word of God," and so reach the doctrine of the incarnation—what more natural than that the Son of God should express God?—whereupon the vast structure of Catholic dogma was well begun. Thereafter the theology building went on apace, with Hellenistic religious metaphysics as the structural material. In the later epistles we find the "Son . . . through whom God made the worlds," becoming "the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation," and are assured that "in him dwelleth all the ful-

[53] Acts ii. 36; Rom. i. 3; II Cor. iv. 5; iii. 16-18; I Cor. i. 2; vii. 25, 39; viii. 5 f.; x. 21; xi. 26 f.; II Pet. i. 2; iii. 18.

[54] Says Gilbert Murray, "There were Gnostic sects scattered over the Hellenistic world before Christianity as well as after. . . . Their Savior, like the Jewish Messiah, was established in men's minds before the Savior of the Christians. 'If we look close,' says Professor Bousset, 'the result emerges with great clearness that the figure of the Redeemer as such did not wait for Christianity to force its way into the religion of *Gnosis*, but was already present there under various forms.' He occurs notably in two pre-Christian documents . . . the Poimandres revelation . . . and the sermon of the Naassenes in Hippolytus . . . which is combined with Attis worship." *Four Stages*, etc., p. 143 ff.

[55] II Pet. i. 11; ii. 20.

[56] Jn. i. 1-5, 9-14.

ness [57] of the Godhead bodily." He is the mystical "head" of the church; and at the same time, as the "effulgence" of the divine "glory and the very image of his [God's] substance," he is the ethical good, or personal ideal for all true believers—the type of character towards which they aspire.[58]

[57] "Fullness" (*Cf.* also, Eph. i. 23, iii. 19; iv. 13; Jn. i. 16) was likewise then a familiar term in Hellenistic philosophy. It arose from the theory, stressed so much by Neo-Platonism, that perfection was a matter of *quantity* of being rather than of *quality*.

[58] *Cf.* Heb. i. 1-4; Col. i. 15-19; ii. 9; Eph. iv. 13; Phil. ii. 5-11; iii. 8-15; I Jn. iii. 2, 3.

CHAPTER XII

ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

1. RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL BY THE WORLD. It would be a mistake to infer from the gospel's early accommodations to Hellenism that its missionaries were more interested in philosophy than in human life and welfare. The accommodations seemed to them the true development of the gospel. Looking backward now, the Hellenization seems the church's first important aberration, its great historic loss of nerve; but it did not look so at the time. It came about through two motives, each proper enough in its place—the Christian preacher's own craving to rationalize his faith and religious experience, and the need of making the gospel intelligible to the critical Gentile world. It was natural enough when, in the second century, rising Christianity was assailed by Greek culture as a superstition—it was natural that Justin Martyr should defend it, not as the fulfillment of the hopes of Israel, but *as the true philosophy,* or simply *the Truth,*[1] and cite noted philosophers—Plato, Philo, etc.—in support of his claim. It was by no means strange that he should seek to meet his opponents with weapons which they would respect. That this course would breed a habit of interpreting their essentially Jewish message in Greek terms and would also exalt far too much the theoretical side of Christianity—these were outcomes

[1] This term "Truth" in Hellenistic philosophy meant much the same as the older Greek word "Reason" in the cosmic sense. It occurs with characteristic Gnostic vagueness repeatedly in the fourth gospel. *Cf.* Jn. i, 14, 17; viii. 32; xiv. 6, 17; xvi. 13; xvii. 17, 19; xviii. 37. The Roman Pilate's question (vs. 38) has quite a modern sound, and seems reasonable enough.

which probably no one in their day could have foreseen.

The Christian-Hellenistic rapprochement was facilitated by the fact that the intellectual opposition to the gospel, while real enough for a time, was not truly radical. There was much in Christianity to appeal to the Hellenistic mind. Serious men then were longing for some evidence of Divine interest, or at least of Divine accessibility and for some assurance of life's ascendancy over death. When, therefore, a new religion appeared promising these great consummations and offering mystic experiences for the human heart and high ideals for the human conscience, and withal advocated by devoted men of transparent sincerity, it is no wonder, no miracle, that it won its way steadily, and penetrated the Empire more and more deeply. No doubt the "offence of the cross" was very real. That Christianity's Savior of men should be a Jew, and should have died a criminal's death at the hands of all-dominating Rome, was a heavy handicap, indeed. But the Hellenized gospel itself—that God in his grace had provided a Mediator, "who gave himself a ransom for all," and that "death is swallowed up in victory . . . through our Lord Jesus Christ"—that in the first two centuries was very welcome tidings to multitudes of religiously minded men.

Even the organization of the early churches was suited to Hellenistic ideas and ways. Under the pressure of misrepresentation and danger it passed from the original Jewish synagogue type to that of a semi-secret, *quasi*-esoteric body, that is, to the type of the familiar Greek organization known as a "mystery."[2] As such it was

[2] It was a natural consequence of the craving for mystic experience which characterized ancient religious philosophy that long before our era many societies with distinctive cults were formed for the purpose of inducing them, especially visions and ecstasies. Prominent among these were the Eleusinian and the Orphic mysteries of Greece. A "mystery" in this concrete, institutional sense was a secret religious organization with initiations, purifications, a special rule of life, symbols, sacraments, and scriptures alleged to be inspired, the aim of all which was the attainment of immediate contact with Divinity. Two main stages in this process were recognized: "The union of God with man," says

comprehensible and interesting to Gentile observers. "It was, indeed, only in its guise of a mystery that Christianity could present itself in that age as a universal personal religion. Its success . . . was due to the fact that it thus offered men the highest good they could conceive—the assurance of immortality—in the form they could best understand—by union with divinity. Not that Christianity borrowed its ideas and rites from the mysteries, Gentile Christians necessarily conceived the gospel and the distinctive observances they received from the missionaries as a "mystery." [8] And a mystery it became virtually, and a mystery more or less it remains, especially in the Catholic churches, to this day; that is, a self-perpetuating organization for the cultivation of character and the solace of the heart by means of Gnostic beliefs. Its sacraments became Hellenistic mystic rites; and the Pseudo-Dionysius, who in the fifth century identified them with Neo-Platonism's exercises for liberation and uplift of spirit did little more than describe and rationalize what had already taken place.

Christianity was thus a religion river that rose in Palestine, but received large confluents from the pagan world into which it issued. From these two cultural sources it has derived, on the one hand, its concern for human wel-

Prof. Murray, "came regularly through *ekstasis*—the soul must get clear of the body—and *enthusiasmos*—the god must enter and dwell inside the worshiper" (O. c. p. 130). "The religions which professed to have the secret of a blessed immortality all made salvation depend on initiation into a cult of a particular saving divinity, and the Christian churches seemed to Gentiles to be mysteries of his kind" (G. F. Moore, *History of Religions*, II, 121).

[8] G. F. Moore *History of Religions*, II, 128. The reasonableness of this identification is pointed out, also: "Paul calls his gospel a mystery . . . (I Tim. iii. 16; I Cor. ii. 7-10; iv. 1; Eph. iii. 3 f., 912; v. 32; Col. i. 24-27; ii. 2 f.) . . . It had its sacred legend of a divine being who met upon earth a tragic fate, and by his triumph over death opened the way of immortality to men. Salvation was by union with him in his passion and his resurrection, and could be achieved only by those who confessed Christ as Lord and became members of his church. The form of initiation, baptism, was common in the mysteries. The sacramental eating of the body and blood of the Lord which made men partakers of the divine nature and so insured them immortality also had analogies there" (*ibid.*). As to esoteric doctrines, *cf.* also, Rom. xvi. 25 f.; I Cor. xv. 51; Eph. vi 19; Col. iv. 3.

fare and its ethical conception of God; on the other its ideas of spiritual salvation through a divine Mediator and its mystic interests.[4]

2. JESUS NOT THE FOUNDER OF THE CHURCH. This conclusion forbids our regarding Jesus Christ as the founder of the Christian church. No doubt he was the initiator of the movement which later became Christianity; but that he was the author of the teachings and institutions of which in its history the church has made most is quite evidently not the case. Indeed, were he to return to earth with no more knowledge of mundane affairs than he possessed at his death, the church called by his name and its theology would probably be as foreign a system to him as, say, Buddhism is to the ordinary Anglo-Saxon.

Religiously Jesus seems to have been a true Jew, and his religion the higher Judaism[5]—prophetism brought down to the first century. One searches his accredited sayings in vain for any indication of an important doctrinal departure from the best thought of his people,[6] or for any suggestion that he had founded, or was about to found, a new religion. No doubt on one occasion (for-

[4] If any reader is loath to think that pagan ideas were so potent in shaping early Christian beliefs, let him picture to himself the situation of the original Christian groups—small, completely immersed in Gentile society, and in touch constantly with systems of thought of immense vogue and authority. That individual men are largely the creatures of their time and place—their environment—is today a commonplace; and the intellectual environment of the early churches was Hellenism, the philosophy of which had a prestige equal to that of science now. Moreover, after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 the church's new adherents were almost entirely of Hellenistic antecedents, whose inherited pagan ideas naturally continued to sway them when not in clear conflict with their new faith. Even in St. Paul's day these factors were at work, as we see in his first letter to the Corinthians; and his reaction to them was essentially that of the apologists later—not a falling back upon the original evangelical sources, but the teachings of a *higher* "wisdom" (*i.e.* philosophy); "the wisdom of God in a *mystery*"! *Cf.* I Cor. ii. 6, 7, 12, 13; Col. ii. 8 f. Evidently the apostle himself was not reared in a Hellenistic philosophic center without being affected thereby.

[5] As, indeed, appears to be more or less the case with many Christians still. Witness, for example, the large place in Christian worship occupied by the Psalms.

[6] His theoretical agreement with the rabbis, whom he regarded as sitting "on Moses's seat," has been referred to already. *Cf.* also, Mt. xxiii. 23; v. 17-19. It is significant that his opponents did not accuse him of heresy, though they were on the watch for points of attack. *Cf.* Mt. xxii. 15 f., 23 f., 34 ff.

tunately for the ecclesiastical dominion seated by the Tiber) he made an obscure remark about building his church (ecclesia) on something connected with Simon Peter [7]—rocklike loyalty probably. The Greek word *ecclesia,* however, means simply congregation, assembly, or company,[8] and so in this case naturally suggests the body of Messianic adherents whom he was to leave behind him. These he doubtless did expect to carry on his Messianic propaganda during the interval preceding the *parousia;* but to infer from that expectation that he regarded himself as in the act of founding a new religion is to import into a common Greek word a meaning which there is no good reason to assign to it, and to convert the Master into a speaker of riddles.

The common notion that Jesus was the founder of the church appears to rest entirely upon vague inference and traditional assumption. Of course, Christianity must have had a founder, and who so likely as Jesus himself, after whom it was named? [9] But it is not at all difficult to suggest other and more probable founders,—men who actually did talk about the church. The apostles, for example, were manifestly engaged in founding the church. So were the other original missionaries, and the apologists, and the early "fathers," though perhaps they were little aware of all the work they did, building more largely than they knew.

The process was a gradual one. At first Christianity for them was simply a "Way" of life which would realize the great hopes of Israel. If Gentiles wished to share in that realization, it was incumbent upon them to become Jewish proselytes. St. Peter was led to a broader view, and

[7] Mt. xvi. 18.
[8] The word is used by Jesus but twice, the other time (Mt. xviii. 17) quite obviously in the ordinary sense of company, or organized (local) congregation.
[9] The name, by the way, seems to have originated as a Gentile nickname. *Cf.* Acts xi. 26.

succeeded in bringing his fellow apostles over to it,[10] at least in substance, it being agreed that Jewish initiation and the ceremonial law were not to be required of Gentile converts. With this decision—soon used on a wide scale by St. Paul—Christianity as a separate movement, and at length an organized religion, may be said to have begun.

Other steps in the gradual emergence of the new faith *as new* are conservative Judaism's persistent rejection of Jesus' Messiahship, the increasing success of the gospel propaganda among the Gentiles,[11] so that ere long the church came to be recruited chiefly from foreign sources, the tragic fall of Jerusalem, embittering orthodox Jews against their Christian compatriots, and of course the increasing accommodation, outlined above, of Christian thought to religious Hellenism.

3. Distinctive Feature of Christianity. If the primitive church became an extended body of "mysteries," that was by no means its sole or most important character. It was, also, *a brotherhood of hero-worshipers.* If Jesus was not its founder, none the less was it properly named for him; for he was its acknowledged Lord, its ideal, its hero. At its best Christianity has always been an ethico-mystical hero-worship. The distinctive thing about it as it emerged from Judaism was not its rites nor its metaphysical doctrines—none of these was novel or truly essential—but the personality of its Lord. He was its inspiration from the first, and in the course of time the core of its gospel. Its vital doctrines have always been conceived, in one way or another, as teachings about Jesus. St. Paul, quite as truly as the most unphilosophical disciple, has but one essential message—"Jesus Christ and him crucified." [12] The noble dynamic personality of the

[10] *Cf.* Acts x. 1-48; xi. 1-26; xv. 1-31.
[11] *Cf.* Acts xiii. 44-51.
[12] I Cor. ii. 1-5; Phil. iii. 7-14.

Master has dominated the feelings and ideals of all earnest believers even when their ideas have strayed far from his. However mythically or metaphysically conceived, his figure has been the object of their worship, the theme of their hymns, and often the recipient of their prayers.[13] Far too often has their idealizing reflection wandered through dubious domains of speculation; but even so the disposition to honor Jesus has rarely failed.

At times, especially in the Middle Ages, this devout personal loyalty has taken the form of devotion to a divine and captivating *Friend* who was to be known immediately in mystic experience.[14] At other times the hero-worship has been more ethical, Jesus dominating the horizon as spiritual liege *Lord* and glorious *Leader*—an embodied personal ideal. St. Paul conspicuously illustrates both types of loyalty, as in an inchoate, adolescent way chivalry often did also. Protestantism's devotion has generally taken the ethical form. It has the distinction of producing the greatest number of high-minded men who do homage to Jesus Christ as their personal ideal, and the natural leader of all human progress.

4. Origin of the Christ-Fealty. At the beginning this hero-worship was evidently the reappearance of the disciples' *Messianic* faith and loyalty.[15] When at the Pentecost following Christ's death, Simon Peter in the name of his consenting fellow disciples declared the mission and dignity of the crucified Jesus, it was still Messianism which was speaking, though Messianism with a new inclusiveness and time-outlook. But how did Messianistic devotion manage to survive the ignominy and ruin of the

[13] Early in the second century the younger Pliny in Bithynia found them singing antiphons to Christ as a God (Ep. x. 97; *cf.* Jn. ii. 28).

[14] *Cf.* for example, the ancient Palestinian hymn of Stephen of St. Sabas, "Art thou weary, art thou languid," the mediaeval "Crusaders Hymn," and Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*.

[15] Acts ii. 36; viii. 5, 35; ix. 20.

Messiah's public execution? The answer is written on the face of the New Testament: to the disciples the crucified Jesus was not dead. They had seen him and heard him since his entombment.[16] "This Jesus," St. Peter declared, "did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ." [17] A living, *not a dead, Christ was proclaimed.*[18] *That Peter was able* to make this proclamation within ten days after seeing his Master die on the cross is certainly remarkable. The age was uncritical, of course, but the first disciples do not seem to have been men of easy credulity. They were charged with being "slow of heart to believe." [19] We can hardly doubt that a prime cause of their revived faith was the commanding personality of Jesus. With the figure of the Master, so admirable and so dynamic, vividly in mind, the disciples not only could not think of him as non-existent (few then went to that extreme), but they found it hard to think of him as separated from his life work, the initiation of the Kingdom. So far as they were not mentally stunned by the crushing disaster of Golgotha, their inner attitude in the hours of strain following the crucifixion was probably one of amazed expectancy—What next? When the "next" proved to be accounts by some of their number of actual face to face meetings with Jesus still alive, and when soon they, too, had such encounters, doubt naturally was swept away as darkness before a flood of light. Thus the new Messianic expectation, and later the Christian church itself, was founded,

[16] These resurrection encounters were very real to them, and yet evidently they were not the same as those of ordinary life. Non-believers when present were not aware of them, and in some cases even disciples doubted. *Cf.* Acts xxii. 9; Lk. xxiv. 33-37, 49-51; Mt. xxviii. 17.

[17] Acts ii. 24, 31 f., 36; iii. 15, 26; iv. 10; xxii. 6-10; I Cor. xv. 5-8, 20; I Jn. i. 1 f.

[18] Acts iv. 2; xvii. 31; I Cor. xv. 12-20; I Pet. i. 3.

[19] Lk. xxiv. 25, 11; Mk. xvi. 11, 14.

not on any metaphysical doctrine, still less on any rite (such as the Eucharist), but *on a signal experience event* —Jesus' survival of death. Independently of all historic accretions, theological and ecclesiastical, Christianity at its best is the impress made upon the world of a high dynamic personality—a prophet of spiritual insight, of mighty faith *for* man, and of unfailing devotion *to* man's cause.

CHAPTER XIII

CAN A MODERNIST BE A CHRISTIAN?

1. THE ERRORS IN JESUS' MESSIANISM NATURAL. Can critical thought follow the developing faith of the centuries in that idealization of Jesus just outlined? The Christ of intelligent faith today may be an elevated and helpful ideal; but can we connect it rationally with the actual Jesus of Palestine? Can we put our trust in a man who made such an error of chronology, who cherished confidently an expectation which history has so tragically and persistently disappointed? The Kingdom of God "at hand"?—alas! At hand, with Annas and Pontius Pilate awaiting developments in grim disdain, and with the long and evil line of the Caesars already intrenched by the Tiber? Did the Prophet of Nazareth, as orthodoxy claims, visualize the future? Did he see the bloody barbarians of the Middle Ages (from northern forests and southern deserts), the religious tyrants and desolators (Torquemada and Alva and their ilk), the unfailing line of self-aggrandizing and man-destroying war-lords, and that latest apocalypse of evil, the World War? Today Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom seems so naïve and his Messianic expectation so baseless that we scarcely wonder that his followers have sought some meaning of his words other than the natural and historical.[1] And then

"He cometh not, a king to reign;
The world's long hope is dim," etc.

[1] *Cf.* Whittier's *Our Master:*

his naïve supernaturalism! How can a man speak with authority to the modern mind, with its Copernican and Darwinian horizons, who believed that he was to be sent down through the sky as heaven's earthly lieutenant in the pomp of an Oriental potentate?

The question is a serious one. From a purely historical point of view the easiest way would seem to be to leave him in the first century, in which he lived and died, and make no attempt to connect him with our own time. But the easiest way is by no means always the best way. As it happens, the fortunes of intelligent religion are largely bound up with the standing of Jesus Christ in modern life. Yet one thing seems clear: the traditional doctrine of Jesus as an infallible authority in religion and ethics cannot stand before sober criticism. Of course, he never made such a claim on his own part. It should no longer be made for him. With this concession made unreservedly, the way is open for the appreciation of certain considerations going to show that Jesus' (few) mistaken ideas affect but little his main message and service to mankind, which were those of a prophet for all time:

(1) Confident and matter of fact as Jesus' apocalyptic beliefs were, there is no reason to think that (apart from the secondary inference as to his own second coming) they arose from original insight and reflection on his part. They appear to have been a religious and patriotic heritage. They were integral parts of "the hope of Israel," and were virtually inevitable in a pious Israelite of the first century. That is, they were not erroneous insights on his part, but prevailing beliefs uncritically accepted. In the course of his short life Jesus had no occasion to challenge them; and it is hard to see why he should not have acted upon them in default of that superhuman prevision which he was far from claiming. Not even the best

prophet can detect all the errors of his time; as to some things even he sees "in a mirror darkly." [2] This fact should not discredit his seeing when it appears to have been clear and true. Jesus' picture of the Kingdom as a social ideal may be admirable and trustworthy even if its apocalyptic frame proves to be tinsel.

(2) What is known as the imperfect "perspective of prophecy" is also to be taken into account. The prophet sees things pictorially and vividly, but not analytically. Often vistas are foreshortened and time gaps as little perceived as spatial gaps in the scenery of arid countries. Conceivably Jesus was right in looking for a real Kingdom of God on earth, and yet quite mistaken in thinking that it was "at hand." If "the world's long hope is dim," it need not therefore be vain.

(3) Jesus' messianism may have had a deeper logic than appears to most of us moderns. He is reported to have told Nicodemus that "except a man be born *from above*,[3] he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Generalizing this statement it seems to mean that men are dependent upon agencies higher than themselves for development and progress. That this is a widely prevailing law, or principle, in the domain of life will hardly be disputed, especially by those at home in the field of education. The higher potencies of mankind do indeed require the stimulating and guiding influence of more developed personalities and forms of society for their release and successful development. We cannot, and need not, attribute to Jesus any knowledge of social psychology; but he may have divined the truth involved. He may well have seen little prospect of social improvement in any melioristic factors then in the field. It may have appeared to him, as it cer-

[2] *Cf.* Mk. xiii. 32; I Cor. xiii. 12.
[3] Jn. iii. 3; marginal and literal rendering.

tainly appears to the present writer, that so long as the most impressive life factors, whether men or institutions, known to the people are those of mammon, so long will the masses of men be its subjects, even if discontentedly. To them the Kingdom of God can be only a fond dream until it actually appears in prevailing power and shining superiority. Only the elect can really believe in it in advance.

If this was his thought, we can see how his inherited messianism might have seemed to meet man's need. The Kingdom must first come, and with heavenly prestige, before men could know it and believe in it enough to support it. And if this was his thought, there appears to be an important truth in it, despite the erroneous supernaturalism associated with it. It is well, no doubt, to urge men to "fly the reeling faun, the sensual feast;" to "move upward, working out the beast, and let the ape and tiger die;" but the ape and tiger do not die, as every generation gives sorrowful witness. So far as men actually do "move upward" and escape "the beast," it still appears to be by influences "from above"—superior personalities, great shaping institutions, and world movements, and (in the case of the elect) ideals visioned and trusted. And still the need (as will appear in the concluding chapter) is of some convincing disclosure of the power and value of the Kingdom.

2. The Historic Continuity of Christianity. The difficulty of connecting Jesus dynamically with our own time is only partly met by what has been said above. There remains the fact that the church has abandoned his aim, substituted another of its own choosing, and ascribed to Jesus rôles that are metaphysical or mystic more often than ethical. Can the Hellenistic "Son of God" be identified with the prophet of the Kingdom? Can even

the ethical hero of Protestantism be connected with the herald of a higher social order? How, too, is a unitary conception of Christianity, with its very diverse racial and cultural sources, possible? If it is not possible, what has the church of today to do with the actual Jesus of Nazareth? Has he not really been left behind in the first century, and must he not be allowed to remain there? [4]

I think not. The religious figure and the historical figure are not necessarily incompatible. The issue is clouded by the traditional bias—which may unconsciously be shared by the critic—in favor of Scriptural as opposed to pagan sources. The former enjoy an undue prestige owing to the traditional belief in their inspiration. Greek conceptions, not being credited with a heavenly origin, are full often disparaged as either false or mere speculation—as though all gnosticism were not that! Often more or less Jewish nationalistic prejudice is absorbed by Western readers of the Bible, and ancient Gentiles are regarded as inferior. In fact, however, in the first century there were Hellenists [5] who were quite as earnest in seeking the truth of life as the better sort of Jews, and quite as capable of recognizing it and evaluating it; and not a few of their teachings have won age-long approval. If we free our minds from *a priori* and immature bias, and recognize that the real test of a religious or ethical teaching is the way it works in human experience, not any marvels related of its proclaimer, it will soon cease to be a disconcerting feature that historical Christianity has drawn its ideas from more than one racial source. Perchance it is all the richer on that account.

Moreover, the wrong kind of unity is apt to be looked

[4] That is Schweitzer's conclusion in his *Quest of the Historical Jesus*. The gospel story then, of course, becomes a pitifully ineffective historical episode that faded out and died in a single generation.

[5] Plutarch, for example, and Seneca, and, somewhat later, Epictetus.

for. The unity of a historic religion is of the vital kind, not artistic or formal, and still less mere identity. The unity of living things—which assuredly Christianity has proved itself to be—consists primarily in dynamic continuity and a flexible, self-accommodating persistence of type. It permits, and commonly includes, extensive changes of interest and objective.[6] As suggested in the last chapter, such a dynamic unity with underlying persistence of type is to be found in historical Christianity in its undying loyalty to Jesus—a reverence and love and service that has not only united believers with him, but bound the generations together through the centuries, that accounts for the first disciples' jubilant belief in their Lord's resurrection, and that later made the Gnostic doctrine of the incarnation plausible. In our own day it is Jesus as a higher personality that is still the believer's object of loving contemplation, the goal of his aspiration, and his unceasing incentive to social service.

As just remarked, a vital unity does not require the dominance of a sole single interest. Assuredly a human being is an organized unity, a true individual; yet his life is not only partly physical and partly mental, partly social and partly individual, but is swayed by both the major interests affecting historic Christianity—collective betterment and other-worldly salvation. In his everyday life his terrestrial fortunes naturally occupy most of his thoughts and energies. These fortunes are inextricably interwoven with those of his fellows, so that, generally from early in life, he becomes interested in social affairs, also. The more rational he is, the more social welfare interests him and social ideals appeal to him. At the same time he cannot forget, at least not for any very long

[6] Often it is far from obvious externally, as in the successive stages of the ontogeny of any animal (of insects most of all), or in the transitions from childhood to youth and then to maturity.

period, that he is a sojourner on the earth; that one day he will pass on, and cross that "bourn" from which "no traveler returns." So far as his situation goes, it matters not an iota what his metaphysical view is—spiritualistic, materialistic, or agnostic. He is one of a procession the forefront of which is continually falling and vanishing. If he reflects at all, he cannot but have some concern as to what will happen to him when he reaches that vanishing line. The religion that can bring him assurances on that point that seem credible has, as a matter of course, a message of interest for him, and it may be a message of power. Is it a defect in Christianity that it has recognized this natural interest, and sought to meet both of man's needs, the present and the future, the ethical and the religious?

Nor can religion afford to neglect either of these objectives; for neither can be adequately secured without the other. Much, often very much, self-sacrifice is needful for real social reconstruction; and this is rarely available in the absence of personal religion. If, as Lowell said, it is "only for great stakes" that men can "be sublime," a religion that in some way offers personal salvation appears to be in the long run the sole source of adequate "stakes." On the other hand, the melancholy history of nineteen centuries is witness to the fact that a religion which appeals to men in an unsocial way will sooner or later stand impeached before the conscience of the world. Thus the course of true religion seems to be elliptical, with social welfare and individual salvation—a better opportunity in the present life and a continued and enlarged opportunity in a life to come—as its foci.

3. The Reality of the Unseen. This brings us to a further difficulty in the Christian message. The whole question of the supernatural is involved. If on full reflec-

tion the issue as to miracles is not very important, the like is not to be said of the doctrine of immortality. As we have seen, this was the key-note of the apostolic proclamation; but now it is gravely challenged, not infrequently with disdain. Some critics today are as little disposed to take it seriously as the ancient philosophers who listened to St. Paul in Athens.[7] What, it is demanded, are its proofs? Is it the resurrection of Jesus? But what is the proof of that? Nothing but the testimony of uncritical witnesses who have been dead nearly two millenniums! That is no proof for the modern mind. No, it is not, it must be admitted; yet it is evidence, and real and honest as far as it goes. It also opens the way to larger grounds of faith which may well be sufficient for minds at once open and earnest.

In other fields (the administration of justice, for example) acceptance of the testimony of honest and intelligent witnesses *as to the facts*[8] does not involve belief in the witnesses' *interpretation* of the facts. Why should it in religious history? May not the original followers of Jesus have had experiences which they construed in a naïve way impossible to critical thinkers, but which experiences were nevertheless genuine and in a way disclosures of objective realities? Such a view of the events of the first Easter is suggested to us by the records themselves; for even among the original witnesses ideas as to the *nature* of Jesus' resurrection appear to have varied not a little. With some it was as completely a resurrection of the "flesh" as the circumstances permitted; with others it was evidently a mystic or spiritual return. St. Paul, for example—apparently quite as a matter of course—classes

[7] *Cf.* Acts xvii. 31 f.
[8] This word is used here in the common scientific sense of *experiences* as opposed to *ideas* of any kind—inferences, theories, laws, etc.

his vision of Jesus [9] on the road to Damascus with the appearances to the other apostles; and the evidence certainly seems to justify him. That is to say, *all* the resurrection appearances of Jesus are to be regarded as mystic, not physical.

To those who regard "mystic" as synonymous with "illusory" this conclusion amounts to pronouncing the resurrection appearances unreal; but that is a faith (or unfaith) judgment, not an intellectual one. On the other hand, to one who admits that mystic experience *may* have objective validity, it will be evident psychologically that if the first disciples did come into actual, albeit non-physical, contact with a risen Jesus, their minds would automatically in those unpsychological days construe, or image, his presence in the familiar forms of prior experience. They would naturally *think* that they saw and and heard their Master in the physical body. It follows that to individual (and reasonable) faith the risen Christ, if not a historical fact, may be in a sense more than a historical fact; he may be a *religious fact*—a reality to be accepted on another ground than the results of expert inquiry governed by purely historical canons—the ground, namely, of a mystic experience *repeated* generation after generation; as actual for, say, St. Catharine, George Fox, or Whittier,[10] as he was to St. Paul on the Damascus road.

It is easy, no doubt, for a modern critic with interests

[9] *Cf.* I Cor. xv. 4-8. That he regarded this as mystic is evident from his reference to it as a revelation of God's "Son *in* me," not to me. *Cf.* Gal. i. 11 f., 15 f.; I Cor. xv. 8; ix. 1.

[10] "No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years;

"But warm sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is he;
And faith hath still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee."——Whittier: "Our Master."

mostly intellectual to shrug his shoulders over these possibilities. They lie outside the field of his concerns. Not so is it with one who has the welfare of mankind deeply at heart; for apparently it is only such an instrumental, or moral, mysticism, one in which inner awareness of supra-physical facts is the dynamic of high ethical endeavor and endurance, that can enable any religion to function effectively in this stormy world. No Christianity of mere creed and cult, even though supplemented with esthetic emotions, can hold the allegiance of reflective thought and guide the achieving will. The need is for an ethico-mystic hero-worship—an organized devotion to an ideal that is felt to be a living personality, a Christ with whom unity is secured, not by a surrender of individuality,[11] but by a free and admiring identification with him in interest and purpose. Indeed, ethical Christianity at its best might be described as the religious response of morally minded men with mystic susceptibilities to the personality of Jesus Christ.

4. BASES OF RELIGION. It does not lie within the province of this inquiry to discuss the *sufficiency* of the

[11] Such surrender is the ideal of *metaphysical* mysticism, which is to be distinguished carefully from *moral* mysticism. Originally—before the foggy winds of Gnosticism came to prevail in the church—approved Christian mysticism was *moral*. It served an ethical purpose, confirming faith in Christ and desire for the coming of the Kingdom. Its usual service was to bring the believer into worshipful and enthusiastic apprehension of the gospel, in which cases it was known as the gift of the Holy Ghost. *Cf.* Acts x. 44-47. Occasionally at a heightened stage it produced vivid concrete "appearances," especially of the risen Christ. *Cf.* II Cor. xii. 1 f. Such experiences were *means* to ethical ends (*i.e.* instrumental), not ends in themselves. *Cf.* Acts vii. 55 f.; x. 44-48; xi. 15-18; Eph. i. 13 f. Note the "earnest of our inheritance." When not thus morally serviceable, they were to be suppressed. *Cf.* I Cor. xiv. 1-6, 19 f., 23, 33, 40. Hellenistic mysticism, on the contrary, was *metaphysical*. Its aim was the beatific merging of self in the Deity. With Philo, for example, the mystic state (ecstasy), was not a means to a larger good, but *itself the end*, the culmination of existence. Righteousness was merely one of the means or stages of approach to it. Not so with St. Paul; with him the end was an ideal state of things at the parousia. *Cf.* I Thess. i. 5 f., 10; ii. 19 f.; iii. 13; iv. 3, 15-17; v. 23; Phil. ii. 1 f., 5-12, 15 f.; *cf.* i. 10 f., 27; iii. 20 f.; iv. 5, 8. This moral mysticism was the apostle's most original contribution to Christianity. It was the essence of his religion, his theology serving chiefly to clear the way for it. To share with the Son of God in suffering, and achievement, and ultimate glory was his life ideal. *Cf.* Rom. viii. 10-18; I Cor. xv. 47-53; Phil. iii. 8-14; Col. ii. 6 f., 12; iii. 1-4, 9 f.; Eph. iv. 13, 15, 24, etc. It was self-realization inspired and guided by a sublime historical figure.

grounds of Christian faith—a matter which will always depend largely upon the personality and experience of the inquirer—and yet some indication of the quarter in which the real Christian evidences are to be sought seems in place.

Regardless of their sources, Jewish or Greek, ancient or modern, religious beliefs are essentially *hypotheses*—interpretations of life and the world that may be true and may not be. Certainly they are not all true; for not a few of them conflict with one another. As hypotheses their only adequate justification is their superior usefulness in explaining the world and guiding life successfully; that is, their *working value*. They differ from scientific hypotheses chiefly in that their experimental tests are ethical and mystic rather than physical.[12] If it is urged that such inner verifications do not yield certainty in the scientific sense, the point must be frankly conceded. That is nothing new, however. The great religious leaders in all ages are a unit virtually in recognizing that religion is a matter of *faith*, not of (scientific) knowledge.[13] Is this its condemnation? By no means, for most of our life is guided by faith rather than knowledge, practical faith with its implied venture, that is, by assumptions that cannot be proved in advance of the events to which they refer. Life is a Columbus-like voyage of discovery. The only way to prove our great practical beliefs is to live by them and so test them.

Certainly no religion was ever founded (nor greatly furthered) by rational conviction alone. Religion springs from deep inner experiences issuing in a strong urge

[12] Of course, this is not the view of traditional theology, which will have it that a religion to be true must be independent of earthly causes, and come down from heaven, duly stamped with miraculous certifications. If such was indeed the heavenly plan, Providence seems to have been careless in the choice of its witnesses. Not one of them was of critical temper, or in any degree a historical expert.

[13] *Cf.* II Cor. v. 7; I Cor. xiii. 12 f.

toward a vaguely conceived goal. Only after the mystically initiated movement has won a channel for itself and gathered momentum does the common-sense believer, and finally the traditional and conventional adherent, have part in its maintenance. Not in any reported magical occurrences in ancient Galilee or modern Lourdes, not in the word of tradition or the conventions of respectability, nor yet in the tenuous results of *a priori* metaphysics has religion hitherto found its true authority and persisting dynamic, but in the appeal and urge of *empirical facts of the day.* Such facts appeal to us in three ways (at least), and largely according to the field in which they belong.

(1) The oldest and most elementary way is that of *mystic experience.* This was present in primitive man as he stood awed by the sublime processes of nature—the rising of the sun, the sweep of the starry heavens, the rage of the storm,[14] etc. It may be equally present in the modern philosopher, poet, or man of science, as we see in Spinoza's *Intellectual Love of God,* Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey,* and Tyndall's "Belfast Address." The natural outcome of this appeal in a mature mind, as the intellect awakes to construe and the will to act, is a new inner attitude toward the universe, and a new interest in it as the dwelling-place of a mind greater than ours. Job's escape from a ruthless External Power to an internally manifested God, in communion with whom all life's tragedies and cruel antinomies are dissolved in trustful submission, has been repeated by religious minds times without number. Today believers, Protestants especially, are less mystically inclined than the Christians of former times; *partly,* no doubt, because science has pushed nature's awe-inspiring features back farther from common life, or rather

[14] Note the emotional response of the Hebrew psalmist as he watches a thunderstorm sweep down the gorge of the Jordan (Ps. xviii. 7-15; *cf.* also, xix. 1-6).

from every day appreciation; *partly* because the prevailing religious motive now is less one of fear than formerly and more one of craving for *ethical* harmony with God. The Protestant mind seems to be coming around to the very practical view (essentially the view of Jesus) that the higher morality is itself spiritual salvation, and that he who loyally espouses the ethical program of Jesus Christ need not worry about his soul. None the less is present-day religion, if real, mystically based; for one of the main roots is a *feeling* of inner harmony with what is best in the universe and trust in it—*a filial attitude toward something conceived as divine.* If any man lacks this feeling, it is to be feared that at best he has a philosophy, not a religion.

(2) The second form of appeal is *intellectual.* This is the one oftenest considered; but is doubtless the weakest of the three, religion being a matter of the heart rather than the head. Nevertheless, the hypothesis that, beneath and beyond all the amazing complexities, the sheer impulsiveness, and the distressing discords of the world, there is somehow an Agency of order and harmony, beauty and joy, is one that meets a deep need of the intellect, which is too much impressed with the manifold eivdences of reason in the universe to believe readily that the fundamental cosmic fact is blind impulse. No doubt Darwinism, by sapping the bulwarks of the argument from design, has left the old theism exposed to the attacks of unfaith—a kind of broken mediaeval stronghold of theology. But when one makes a sober survey of faith's situation after the long strife of theories, the victory won by the evolutionary view appears to be metaphysical rather than religious. Doubtless with good will but not with good judgment, the traditional theologian built his credal edifice on much too scanty acquaintance with nature and life. The

interests of faith are not bound up with his metaphysical theism, which after all depends more upon Aristotle than the Bible. If its failure leaves God shrouded in mystery, that is nothing new for religion, nor even for philosophy.

Meanwhile, as the cloud envelopes Mount Sinai, faith may justifiably pursue its course, amidst the awe-inspiring mystery round about, on *the working hypothesis that religious ideas are symbolical,* not descriptive. They are provisional conceptions standing for what appear to be realities, but not disclosing much of the character of those realities. One may well believe, for example, that there is a supreme Being corresponding to the term God; for the belief accords with our conviction—whether intuitive or generalized from our total experience—that somehow the universe is an organized system, and organized more or less morally as well as physically; but as to the nature of that Being metaphysically, although private speculation may surmise, only dogmatism at present can declare with confidence.

(3) Religion's third form of appeal is *ethical.* For the man of moral interests ethical religion, and especially the Jewish-Christian, has strong claims arising from mankind's age-long practical situation. No doubt Confucius, Aristotle, and the Stoics made notable contributions to ethics; but these sources were all *philosophies.* They furnished ideas, not forces and working agencies. When one looks for an agency actually seeking to make ethics *control* life on anything like a world-wide scale, he cannot overlook ethical religion. And this is true however discontented he may be with it. Indeed, the greater part of the criticism of the Christian church appears to be based upon the recognition of its ethical leadership. The critic assumes that it has in hand the moralization of mankind, and blames it for not getting better results. Nor is this

situation peculiar to Christianity. The alliance between religion and ethics is a very ancient one, though it is not inevitable. Many low forms of religion have existed with no interest in ethics, and of course non-religious systems of ethics have been numerous enough; but for the best interests of the two—for ethical effectiveness and religious dignity and refinement—the alliance between them has been needful and natural. If ethics is light, religion is power; and neither can afford to dispense with the other. No doubt there are thoughtful men who will dispute these claims, but their dissent is based on the shortcomings of organized religion, not on the satisfactory working of unorganized moralism. If ethical religion ceased to be, these very objectors would be faced with the need of organizing new ethical movements, and finding new dynamics for the huge task of the world's moral salvation.

Meanwhile, be the church's defects what they may be—and the present writer will probably not be charged with minimizing them—Christianity offers mankind moral teachings of the highest order, and fine moral examples, culminating in that "unfinished life that sways the world," and a world-wide and largely flexible organization. It would be the height of doctrinaire folly to scrap this deeply rooted, evolutionary product of the centuries in favor of some untried new and artificial device.

The ethical appeal of Christianity is thus in its intimate organic relation to human welfare. Representative of that appeal stands the inspiring figure of its greatest prophet, who strove so devotedly for a high ethical civilization. That figure has but to be known better by men of social interests to be revered more. Its message is far from being out of date; for it was precisely in the field of mankind's persistent problem of social welfare that the hero of the gospels led his forlorn hope.

Can a man with modern standards of thought, then, be a Christian? Yes, if one is a Christian who recognizes in Jesus Christ two forms of high leadership:

(i) The persisting historical witness to, and inspirational source of, the true objective of humanity's "elect" —namely, the Kingdom of human weal with its necessary foundation and structure of social righteousness—the prophetic leader who first visioned the goal clearly and adequately, who initiated the chief organized movement toward it, and who remains its dramatic symbol.

(ii) The evidence (for those with mystical corroborations), and the most signal instance, of the persistence of life after death and the reality of a higher order of existence—the high-souled servant of God who in his own victory over death most vividly disclosed the power and possibilities of the human personality, and who as the risen Christ is logically the *foundation,* though not the founder, of the Christian religion.[15]

[15] This was manifestly the view of the first disciples, St. Paul by no means excepted. *Cf.* Acts ii. 24, 32 f., 36; xvii. 30 f.; I Cor. xv. 20, 49; Eph. ii. 20, etc. That Jesus' function as foundation of the church was distinct from his mission as conceived by him prior to his death is shown, not only by the lack of evidence of it in the gospel accounts and especially in the teachings of Jesus, but also by the fact that St. Paul is all but indifferent to the work and teachings of the actual Jesus of Nazareth, declaring explicitly, "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more" (II Cor. v. 16 f.; Rom. i. 3 f.). With the exception of the reference in Acts xx. 35, the Jesus that Paul talked about was not the human figure of the gospel story (*Cf.* Gal. i. 16-18), but the risen and ascended Christ of his mystic experience—a theological rather than a historical person.

CHAPTER XIV

THE NEGLECTED EUCHARIST

A generation ago, before a great international religious gathering, a prominent American divine raised the question, What was the duty of his denominational body. His answer was—to stand where it has always stood. A rabbi in the year 30 might well have said the same of the Jewish church, and with an approval of the governing classes quite as general. "Where it has always stood!" The speaker doubtless did not refer to the church's age-long position as dispenser of mystic magic by creed and sacrament and ritual; for he was a Protestant. Rather was he thinking of it as a quasi-insurance concern, issuing, after satisfactory theological examinations, policies of salvation payable after death—a magic of juristic metaphysics replacing that of cult. Bu can the church any longer be content with such an artificial policy and such a supine motto? Has the religious mind learned nothing through the swelling centuries? It would seem that it has, else would it be vain to pen these pages. In not a few churches today the presence of the twentieth century is conceded, and the main stress is laid upon the life and conduct of their members. It is still, however, generally simply as *individuals dealing with individuals.* Does this more ethical course measure up to the church's real obligation? Is its duty to society and the world merely incidental?

1. Need of Return to the Historical Christ. Still the Lord's Supper is celebrated with careful regularity,

and in Protestantism celebrated as a personal memorial, not a magic rite; but a memorial of what? "In remembrance of me," was Jesus' parting request, as he distributed the Passover bread and wine. Whatever of ancient national deliverance the simple rite might symbolize to the twelve thereafter, its main significance was to be their slain leader and his cause; for, as St. Paul afterward explained, "as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup ye proclaim the Lord's death *till he come.*" [1] Should these familiar eucharistic words mean no more to us than if they were mumbled in Latin at the miracle of the mass? What are we but superstitious traditionalists if we keep repeating these words and ignore their meaning, the meaning they had for the departing Lord himself? What is it but to confess that Jesus Christ was a failure when a church is willing to remember him only in a sentimental way—usually some Gnostic way—and persists in ignoring the cause for which he laid down his life? To do "this"—*i.e.* keep the new feast—"in remembrance" of Jesus would seem to mean returning in sympathetic personal interest to the Master's thought and purpose when he spoke the words, expanding and enriching his aim withal with whatever trustworthy insights and values Christian experience and the Christian consciousness have discovered since. Just this is the contention of the present volume. Christianity is at best but groping its way, and not truly conscious of its mission in the world, until it gets into real appreciative and dynamic contact with its great leader, the Prophet of Nazareth.

Is such a return to the actual Jesus possible? There are those who deny it. Schweitzer, in concluding his book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus,* insists that the results of that quest are mostly negative, and that scholarship's

[1] I Cor. xi. 26.

effort to bring Christ "straight into our time as a Teacher and Savior" must prove vain. The historical Jesus, though at first he may seem to be coming toward us, "does not stay; he passes by our time and returns to his own." Whether this pessimistic conclusion holds true or not will evidently depend upon whether the churches which call themselves by the name of Jesus are willing to go back to him for their ideal. Have they in their theological wanderings found a goal of life so superior to that of the historical Jesus that they can afford to sacrifice dynamic contact and continuity with him?

I am far from believing such a return to the faith of the first eucharist impossible. Already there is a movement in the churches wide and strong setting in this direction,[2] the movement that on its theoretical side is called modernism and on its practical side humanitarianism. As a matter of fact loyalty to Jesus Christ, however unintelligent in many cases, is one of the great world forces of the day, and the one with most promise of saving progress.

The implication of Schweitzer's statement [3] is that the issues of the first century, and Jesus' treatment of them, are so different from those of the twentieth as to make his aim anachronistic for our day; but, apart from the apocalyptic features, this assumption has no warrant. Wherein has man's fundamental life problem changed? It is still the problem of social welfare, and still the necessary foundation is social justice; and the issue now is by no means less grave. If Jesus' ideal is vain, how cheerless is man's outlook! John Morley has somewhere said that since the war the world is like a black, shapeless hulk drifting

[2] When not long since the pastor of a large city church prayed at the communion table that all present might "have the spirit of Jesus Christ, and be ready to do *whatever is necessary to make this a better world*," he was speaking in the spirit of the first eucharist and introducing into that traditional preserve of mystic interests a social factor which would hardly have been understood, or perhaps tolerated, a generation or two ago.

[3] In which Prof. Kirsopp Lake concurs. *Cf. Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1924.

through the night without a steersman! Shortly before his death Frederic Harrison, despite his Positivist faith, avowed himself a pessimist, adding, "the immediate future of this kingdom—nay, of Western civilization—is in real peril of collapse," with "revolution, anarchy, and famine" threatening. Professor Huxley pronounced history the most disheartening of all fields of inquiry, because it laid bare man's undying disposition to thwart and even destroy his saviors, a disposition which was not hidden from Jesus Christ.[4] Truly

"Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word."

And who shall dispute the record? Through the weary centuries the evil survivals of barbarian times—selfish passions, brutish and blind, prejudices and hatreds, individual and tribal—relentlessly dog the steps of groping, climbing humanity, and with senseless divisions and wars pull down full often man's works before they are completed;[5] and still after four years of world destruction new Annases and Pilates and Caesars rise in hostile array against counsels of peace and plans of world-brotherhood and sow dragon's teeth for fruitage in the next generation. Indeed, no experience of adversity seems sufficient to teach the restless will of man any *permanent* lesson—no, not even the well disposed will. Still unhappily it is true that "the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of light"—as when the idealist is more concerned to keep his rainbow visions intact than to put

[4] *Cf.* Mt. xxiii. 37.

[5] How far from cheering is it to learn that forgery in its various forms costs this country a hundred million dollars a year, and to discover from newly unearthed tablets that in Nippur some 5000 years ago there were social regulations some of which were more reasonable and humane than some that obtained in this country within the memory of men now living.

them into effect at all.[6] Manifestly the urgent problem of our time is the same as that of Jesus' time, namely, to find a just (and happy) way to live with one another and with the rest of the world.

Did space permit, it would be interesting to sketch imaginatively the very different and much better world which would now exist, had the ancient church but held loyally to the aim of its Lord; had it, for instance, persistently placed its bans where Jesus placed them, upon inhumanity and oppression, disloyalty and slacking, rather than upon doubt respecting metaphysical statements of the creeds.[7] We cannot ravel the web of history and reweave it; but it is probable that then the ruin of the ancient world and civilization's thousand years of medieval eclipse would have been averted. Certainly it is incredible that then a rational order of society and life—a higher civilization—would have been so far to seek as it is now, and the actual world such a sorry welter of warring prejudices and competing greeds as today affronts our eyes.

Of course, our proper concern is not with an opportunity lost long ago, but with the opportunity before us in our own day. As we consider it we are doubtless unlikely enough to become religious adventists, absorbed in apocalyptic dreams; but is it much better to be social doctrinaires, offering nostrums to society, and with them as criteria condemning sweepingly, not only other plans of progress, but the whole social fabric produced by the

[6] The distrusts and divisions and dogmatisms of doctrinaire reform constitute a field too large for description in these pages. Nor is there space to tell of the general indifference to the common good in city and nation and world, the dominance of gain and glory in national counsels, and the consuming popular appetite for pleasure (the modern "bread and circuses"), the readiness of public men to play the politician rather than the statesman, the strength of old, intrenched wrongs, the ruthlessness of the predatory classes high and low, and the foolish disposition of ordinary Americans to ignore dire perils when these do not at the moment tower so as to shut out the sun.

[7] *Cf.* the anathemas annexed to the Athanasian creed, one of which declares, "which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly."

human forces of the centuries, or, still worse, to join the ranks of the disillusioned, find only despair in the tragedy of the past, and resort to "the seat of the scornful"? Is it not rather in the modern disciple the dictate of reason to recognize that "new occasions [do] teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth," and conclude that not only the *preparation* for the Kingdom but the *initiation* of it is the task of the elect through the generations? As we follow the actual devoted course of that outstanding figure in ancient Palestine and ponder his conservative but flexible ethics, surely the conviction must arise that to carry on his movement is to act the part of the sane idealistic opportunist, espousing the cause of human good in every way that opens, working persistently toward a nobler civilization, and showing a deep enthusiasm for humanity guided withal by scientific respect for the facts of life.

In the tragic war days Mr. Bernard Shaw was quoted as saying, "I am ready to admit that, after contemplating the world of human nature for nearly sixty years, I see no way out of the world's misery but the way that would have been found by Christ's will if he had undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman." This confession of faith by the noted satirist may be taken as the theme of our concluding chapter, with the natural corollary that it is the duty of the church—the imperative of life laid upon it as the great historic institution in unbroken continuity with Jesus Christ—to adopt the aim and take up the task bequeathed to it by its Lord, and so long scandalously neglected. What the world needs above everything else is a new and real triumphal entry of Jesus, resulting in the Kingdom for which he died. Now *this ideal is not to be reached by mere abstract principles.* The world shows no signs of *drifting* into the Kingdom. On the contrary, the great consummation waits upon highly intelligent and con-

certed leadership and adequate *institutional* furtherance—an organized movement for its effectuation.

2. Opposing Views. The obstacles to such a movement are not to be ignored, of a truth. In the main traditionalism still holds the field in the churches. Gnosticism, though no longer a matter of interest in the pews, is still identified with the gospel, and Jesus' social ideal is retired to the remote sunset days of mankind.

Idealistic philosophy, too, is unfavorable to concrete social goals. Its bias is for the universal and the abstract. Its religion is Stoic, and in its interpretations of Christianity it repeats perpetually the ancient shift of interest from the ethical to the metaphysical.[8]

Perhaps the most adverse of all to the Kingdom ideal is the easy-going optimism [9] prevalent in so many religious circles, an optimism which assures us that the Kingdom, or so much of it as is to be expected in the present life, is on the way already, and in course of time—no doubt a remote time—will prevail through the operation of impersonal social forces, supplemented by "the preaching of the gospel." A rising tide of human betterment is setting in, we are to believe, a tide pushing steadily toward "one far-off, divine event," namely, an ideal civilization. Despite the evils of the time, despite the black menace of many a post-war situation, the world is really improving. All the spiritual side of our civilization, religious and educational, literary and artistic, has, it is claimed, the inner uplift of

[8] Prof. Pfleiderer, for example, after saying of the Fourth Evangelist that "of course his historical narrative was wholly subordinated to his theological thesis of the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus," concludes with the statement that an "unreconciled collocation of the traditional eschatological conceptions with the Hellenistic Gnostic mode of thought, *which moved on a much higher plane*, is preëminently characteristic of the author's tendency to mediate between Gnosticism and orthodox church belief," and adds approvingly, "He has everywhere adopted what is sound in the Gnostic-Hellenistic idealism." (Italics mine.)—*Primitive Christianity*, iv. 131, 242). Prof. Royce, likewise, finds it the great merit of the early Christian church that it converted the Messianic Kingdom into a spiritual community, and concludes that an attitude toward life that is virtually Stoic is the essence of Christianity (*Problem of Christianity*, vol. i. ch. viii, etc.).

[9] *Cf.* Mt. xxiv. 37-39.

humanity and a just and happy social order as its logical outcome; and in time it must prevail. As men with ideals multiply, they constitute a widespread leaven, which will yet permeate and transform the world. *It will because it must!* "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world."

This theory springs from the wishes of its proponents rather than the facts of life. It conduces, no doubt, to mental ease; for the task of the world's salvation is turned over to God, and the "divine event" is made so remote that the comfort of the possessing classes is not disturbed nor vested interests threatened. It would doubtless have been popular among the Pharisees of Jesus' day, if they had had any interest in the rest of the world. The doctrine has little enough bearing upon conduct, however, and little enough relation to the world as it actually is. Do men of ideals multiply? What is the rate of increase of the selfish, the sordid, and the brutish? And what about society's inveterate habit of dying at the top?

Against such sentimental optimism serious thinkers lift their voices in protest; but full often in vain. It is rooted, not in reason, but in man's childish hopefulness, renewed with each new generation. Facts affect it little. Europe's headlong plunge toward ruin under the victorious recrudescence of the brute inheritance is a shocking accident, of course, but an exceptional thing, to be forgotten as soon as possible. The present reign of ignorance and brutishness in the main seats of ancient culture and the appalling fact that on a former occasion civilization suffered eclipse for a thousand years, are things dim and unreal; why think of them? Doubtless some optimist will urge that at least it is better to cherish hope than despair. Be it so, it is better still to find one's way to a reasonable rather than a foolish hope, to one consonant with experience rather than with mere childish wish.

The ideas underlying sentimental optimism, so far as there are any, are chiefly two: First, the notion that "if God is for us, who is against us?" [10] True enough; but is it needless to inquire whether in a given, self-chosen course God *is* for us? Have we a right to choose *the path of least resistance,* and then claim that we are the agents of Providence and covered with a divine guarantee? Was God with the ancient church when, under the influence of an other-worldly and ascetic philosophy, it abandoned all effort toward a terrestrial Kingdom of God, and devoted itself to metaphysical soul saving? Let the devastating inroads of Goths and Vandals and Huns and a thousand years of barbarian passion and turmoil make reply. Was He with the churches of the nineteenth century as, in one way or another, they acquiesced in the enthronement in the state of the principles of tribalism and mammon? The years since 1914 seem to answer sufficiently.

The other supporting idea is less juvenile, and is true enough in its proper field. It is the conception of the leaven [11]—the transformation of an organized whole through a multitude of like changes in the constituent parts. It is far from new, and not distinctively Christian. Thus in the sixth century B.C., Confucius declared, "When the father is father, the son is son, . . . the husband is husband and the wife is wife, then the family is in proper order. When all families are in proper order, all will be right with the world."

Can we trust this principle as a sufficient guide for moral progress? Assuredly not. Although it has often vindicated itself when the task was the increase of popular interest in a cause, it comes short, often grievously short,[12]

[10] Rom. viii. 31. [11] *Cf.* Mt. xiii. 33.

[12] *Cf.* the peace propagandas of the century preceding 1914. Nor did Jesus rely upon it for the establishment of the Kingdom, but only for the preparatory work.

when constructive achievement is demanded. It is easy to apply it fallaciously. What is true of most, or possibly all, of the parts of an organized whole may not be true of the whole itself.[13] Each soldier in an army is a conscious being, but the army is not a conscious being—nor is a nation. A mass of leavened dough is not *as a mass* organized any differently from what it was originally; and as it was weak and shapeless then, it is weak and shapeless still. Slavery is still slavery and despotism is despotism even after the individuals involved are morally improved. No doubt the evils of slavery would be greatly lessened in the most unlikely event that all masters and all slaves became truly good men; but even then it would be a *bad system.* It would still remain fruitful soil for the tares of elemental passion. What is required for any adequate social betterment is much more than the mitigation of evils. It is, on the one hand, the removal of the *causes* of the evils, and, on the other, *scope for human activity and development.* For such great advantages not only individual improvement of citizens is needful, but also *a new and better organization of society,* an organization with institutions and laws *favorable* to developed character and self expression and *conducive* to economic and cultural welfare.

Nor does the leaven theory of world salvation take into account the disheartening and paralyzing postponement of the better day which it involves. If nineteen centuries of Christian propaganda preceded by seven centuries of prophetism, could produce no more improvement in man's social condition than is in evidence today, what ground have we to expect a materially better world within, say, the next five thousand years? Enthusiasm for humanity

[13] This is, of course, the fallacy of composition, well known to students of logic.

sinks and fails and faith itself droops before such a prospect.

3. THE NEED OF ADEQUATE ORGANIZATION FOR PROGRESS. For the establishment of the Kingdom of God a more comprehensive and a more constructive program is demanded. Reflection, reënforced increasingly by the social sciences, urges that though the human world does change through the interplay of natural forces, it by no means always improves. For improvement actual and adequate melioristic forces must be at work, and these must be supported by suitable economic arrangements and intrenched in wise laws and institutions. That is, social progress is conditioned upon social organization.

There are very real obstacles to the sway of even the best principles when merely *individually* seated. Full often high-principled interests are checked, offset, and frustrated by lack of mutual acquaintance, lack of a common objective, and a consequent absence of massed force—a truth with which astute politicians are well acquainted. Who can believe, for example, that the policies of this country, federal, state, and urban, are the net expression of the intelligence and preferences of American citizens in general? And, if the contrary is so often the case, who can doubt that the reason is that American intelligence and conscience are less organized politically than American self seeking? More than two thousand years ago wisdom was depicted as standing "where the paths meet" and "crying aloud in the street," [14] expostulating with passion and folly, but with all too little success. So it has usually been. In the popular forum wisdom is commonly at a disadvantage in any contest with primitive impulse and prejudice, as the persistent dominance of the demagogue makes plain. And so it is likely still to be, so long as wisdom is

[14] Prov. viii. 2; i. 20.

unorganized and folly is supported, not only by natural appetite, but by time-organized social suggestion and the systematized pressures of an unethical social system.

Then, unfortunately, the complexity of the problems of civilization increases much faster than individual enlightenment and competence. More and more society finds itself obliged to trust to experts rather than to popular judgment. What is the rational value of individual opinion and individual propaganda—the vehicles of the leavening process—when most persons cannot comprehend the facts and situations involved?

Another great and persistent obstacle to social progress on the leaven plan is that individual moral opportunity is brief at best. When, in the slow school of experience, men do acquire some measure of wisdom, their capacity for effective *action* has usually become impaired, if not lost. They have become elderly, and the personal dynamic surplus, which is the power source of social progress, has become depleted. A new generation, too, has arisen, eager to push the elders aside, a generation freshly endowed with just those elementary appetites and impulses of which the kingdom of mammon is the outcome. The new arrivals on the scene, being adolescents, are naturally more impressed by the self assertion of the exponents of will than by the temperate counsels of reason, whose experienced exponents easily seem to them slow and timid, even when intelligible. Reason is cautious, at times self distrustful, given to seeking and waiting for facts, and prone to qualify its statements—all of which is most tiresome to eager immaturity.

No wonder, then, that Jesus Christ looked to divine intervention, rather than to any natural increase of popular enlightenment, for the coming of the Kingdom. To have trusted to the latter would have been to leave the

kingdom of this world meanwhile *in control of the very factors*—social relations and political institutions—*which are most potent in shaping the ideas and interests of men.*[15]

To recognize the far-reaching effectiveness of these obstructive factors, articulated as they are with the forces of mammon, is to discover that the metaphor, "kingdom of this world" is a very apt one, and at the same time to confront a very sobering prospect. Are the brute inheritance and primitive barbarism kobolds that are sure to assert themselves in a new place when suppressed in an old one? Is social progress indeed an "irridescent dream"? Is an easy-going pessimism, flavored with private cynicism, the true philosophy for one who faces life's facts without blinking, and Stoic acquiescence the utmost rational attainment for a "tender-minded" observer? Not so; as little as blind optimism is pessimism a rational interpretation of life. It ignores the prime biological fact that *man is an educable being.* His plastic nature is not in itself depraved. The so-called heredity which plays so potent a part in his moral shaping is not chiefly biological, but *social.* That is, it is really early *environment,* and therefore within the power of society to change for the better. This most important truth is quite neglected by pessimists and apologists for world evils. The evil kingdom is powerful indeed; it is most strongly entrenched in custom and prejudice and superficial philosophy; but it is not impregnable. On the contrary, it is the despairing feeling (moral unbelief) that it is so; that at bottom it is man's essential nature—this is one of the chief sources of its strength.

If Jesus Christ did not trust to undirected social forces for the coming of the Kingdom, quite as little was the actual historic course of Christianity on the horizons of

[15] *Cf.* p. 117 f. *supra.*

his thought. Not for him was the Kingdom of God to meander dubiously through the centuries, hiding mostly in the timid longings of the pious. It was to overcome and destroy the kingdom of darkness, and to do it speedily and dramatically. Social support would follow rather than precede its institution. When once manifestly sanctioned by heaven, it would have no difficulty in securing the willing submission and support of mankind—a conclusion which may be justified in modern terms by the consideration that its evident services in lines of just and helpful government, fraternal industry, and generous human fellowship, would win for it power and permanence.

For the pious Israelite of that day this eschatological program was a reasonable one,[16] a divine intervention being the accepted national expectation. Now, after the relentless denial of the centuries, it is no longer reasonable. What, then, for us is the Kingdom ideal for which Jesus gave his life? Are we necessarily out of all dynamic connection with it? If we cannot believe in the *parousia,* now so long overdue, must we conclude that the Kingdom itself is hopelessly lodged in the world's long limbo of lost causes—another case of the futility of imaginative longing? Not yet; for we have not inquired whether there is not possibly some other external sanction, one credible to the modern mind—some feasible system or movement, which when substituted for the apocalyptic "coming" may win sufficient support among men to enable an actual Kingdom of God, a new social order progressively righteous and beneficent, to appear upon the earth, and *then by its works justify its claims.*

The weakness of Jewish messianism was its visionary

[16] It should be added, however, that even at best apocalyptic belief is an anodyne to thought. It offers no field of inquiry. The believer can do nothing but wait. Sometimes, no doubt, that is all that is possible on any view; but it should not be taken for granted. Divine aid is a legitimate hope in man's extremity, but not in his indolence or mere perplexity.

character. Deduced at first from a few patriotic and ethical intuitions or visions, it was reënforced as time went on by deep national longings and confirmed by iteration generation after generation. Today such a basis is far from sufficient for intelligent faith, which requires that the Kingdom of human welfare be based upon critically tested experience. It must justify itself by its fruits as it goes along and as the time of its sway extends—a test which Jesus himself would have been quick to accept.[17] The sound and lasting support of a better order of society will thus be the general recognition by mankind that it *is* better.

But how can a provisional sanction for the initiation of such a higher order be secured? A generation or more may be needed to demonstrate its superiority. In that experimental period whence shall it draw authority sufficient for a genuine trial? Not from ordinary popular approval. In the case of any broad and rational reconstruction the most that can be hoped for is that popular approval will follow the trial, not precede and accompany it. The foes of the new order, we may be sure, will represent it as the quintessence of greed or tyranny or folly; and the undeveloped (the young, the ruder classes, and the uncivilized), ignorant ordinarily of their own true welfare, are more likely to heed such unscrupulous abuse than the reflective arguments of its advocates.

Often in the past this seeming impasse has been avoided by the aristocratic path, the capable few imposing their more enlightened will upon the many by force—sometimes the force of swords and bayonets,[18] sometimes of fear of the supernatural—and by the pomp of courts and pre-

[17] *Cf.* Mt. vii. 15-20; xii. 33.

[18] In the autumn of 1914 the noted chemist, W. Ostwald, publicly proclaimed this as Germany's European program. Of course, by means of economic force, the like is done at times in the field of industry.

lates. Whatever the possibilities of this policy at this late day, one radical defect is evident, the promise of *moral* progress is not in it. If still able possibly to *control* the brute inheritance, it cannot *redeem* that inheritance and convert it into true good will. So Jesus perceived evidently in his prolonged wilderness meditations. He saw that to resort to force and display was in effect to do obeisance to the kingdom of Satan, since that would be to adopt its methods.[19]

Yet that the enlightened will of the few (the elect) should prevail is the very thing needful for progress. Why should it not prevail by *persuasion,* however, persuasion joined to prestige suggestion? The influence of a large, widely extended organization of men is great. If the hundreds of millions of the Christian church united in determined organized demand for a certain social improvement, —say, the abolition of war—it is most unlikely that they would fail to secure a fair trial of their plan. Indeed, if there are only enough men of good will and ability seriously devoted to a forward movement toward an improved industrial, political, and cultural system, it does not appear why, supposing the system to be well conceived, they may not establish it lastingly in all but universal popular support, through the increased benefits to all concerned that it would confer. The American people seem to have effected such a result in the case of the federative principle of government, and Washngton to have acted upon the kind of faith required when he said to his colleagues in the constitutional convention, "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and the honest can repair. The event is in the hands of God."

In some cases, no doubt, "the common sense of most" would at first have to "hold a fretful realm in awe;" but

[19] *Cf.* Mt. iv. 8-10.

in time the dissenters and objectors would dwindle to a negligible minority.[20] Ultimately it is not too much to hope that under the brooding impressiveness of the higher order so established and approved, children should grow up with as little disposition to overreach and prey upon their fellows, or upon neighbor peoples, as most of them now have to pick pockets or lie in wait with bludgeons. The requirements for the realization of these great possibilities are chiefly two: a sufficient body of capable men of high and persistent purpose, and a suitable continuing organization as their bond of union and means of operation. Of these the former is probably present, or procurable, already; it is the latter that is lacking.

4. "FOLLOW ME." Be it so, it may be replied; is not that sort of thing, that is, a rational progressive civilization to be achieved by enlightened experimentation, already precisely the goal and the policy of moral idealism? What is there about it that calls for a return to Jesus of Nazareth or the Kingdom of God? The answer is that such a civilization *is* the Kingdom, the Kingdom realized under modern conditions. The general aims of intelligent moral idealists are not under criticism in this discussion. It is assumed that those aims are good, or capable of being made so by advancing experience. The need is that they should be made more commanding to men in common life and be more systematically, more widely, and more impressively supported.

If the higher civilization is ever to come, it must be

[20] Where now are the successors of Patrick Henry and the other eighteenth century opponents of the United States constitution? Another illustration of such self-justification in collective life is afforded by the popular success of physical science. The common man is not by nature any friend to close and sustained thinking. Few terms convey to him more of reproach than the epithet "high-brow." Nevertheless, the practical services rendered by thinkers in the natural sciences—especially the new powers they have conferred upon mankind —have won his respect for that part of the realm of thought. Compared with this position of well earned honor the situation of the social sciences in popular esteem is poor, indeed, almost abject.

through the whole-hearted coöperation of the "elect," the men of good will and breadth of view, in the church and outside of it. These men, in preparing the way of the Kingdom and making the rough places smooth,[21] must assuredly be men of *faith*—faith in man at least; preferably faith in God, also. No mere *observers* of human affairs, whether scientific or literary, will possess the hope and zeal, and contribute the patient effort, needed for the demonstration of the Kingdom's possibility and superiority. And they must share Jesus' breadth of interest, his enthusiasm for *humanity*. No social programs rooted merely in class or tribal interests, however coöperative in type, will bring in the Kingdom and realize mankind's dim hope. In other words, they must be men of far-seeing yet practical organizing idealism—a type of mankind found most often in organized Judaism and Christianity. The movement for a higher civilization must be religiously based; for only in the religious mind can a dynamic sufficient for its needs be found.

Especially must the appeal of the better day be brought home to that world-wide company which logically constitutes the great body of its advocates, namely, *the convinced adherents of Christianity,* the men who feel the spell of Jesus' personality and Jesus' ideal, and respond to his call. At present they furnish much the greatest contingent of disinterested servants of human welfare; yet full often the larger aspects and conditions of that welfare are hidden from their eyes. The Christian philanthropist often shows little enough concern about removing the *causes* of man's woe. He may be a good Samaritan, but is rarely an apostle of the Kingdom. He may give

[21] *Cf.* Lk. iii. 4-6.

generously for the relief of sufferers from war, and yet not lift hand or voice to deter tribal leaders from setting the stage for a new Armageddon. He knows the *pity* of Jesus, but not the socially constructive *purpose* of Jesus. Other Christians of wider outlook feel the need of improving the conditions of life, but not as a primary obligation of their faith. It is a secondary matter with them. Their salvation philosophy does not look in the direction of world-betterment and uplift. They see, at least at times, that the obstacles to human progress are now ethical far more than physical; that it is prejudice, predatory impulse, and vindictive passion that misplace the switches and tear up the track in humanity's course; but what has that to do with trusting Christ to save their souls? Although society as an organism is becoming a reality to them, religiously they remain extreme individualists. Indeed, but for natural sociability and the requirements of public worship, most Protestant Christians might well be as unknown to each other as the members of an insurance company.

In that crisis in human affairs which persists so tragically from generation to generation it is of utmost consequence that all believers, from statesman to day laborer, should understand that their Master's supreme interest was in saving the *world,* in transforming it into an ideal home for man—a Kingdom of God; and that the believer cannot consciously sidetrack this supreme interest without proving recreant in his allegiance. They need to face the historical fact that the movement of Jesus early left the channel of his purpose, and through long centuries has been pushing, often deviously and sluggishly enough, through the alien regions of supernatural self-seeking, metaphysical speculation, and ecclesiastical dominion; and

that the prime Christian duty [22] of our time is to return to the aim of Jesus Christ, and seek to realize the opening petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

The result of this inquiry is already evident, namely, the present need that the Christian church address itself wholeheartedly to the task bequeathed to it by its dying Lord. Still the Master's figure commands, "Follow me." It is not for the church to reply, Yes, if you are going our way. They shall never travel together thus. Rather must it make his way its way. Upon its response to that high call depends in large measure the future of the world, and in still larger measure its own position among men, its historical dignity—whether it shall carry the standard in the van of human progress, or be but a "hospital for superannuate forms and mumping shams," or a "parlor where men issue policies of life assurance on the Eternal Mind," or, at best, an "ambulance to fetch life's wounded and malingerers in, scorned by the strong." [23]

Is it asked, What of the *parousia?* is there any truth in it? Yes, or there well may be; but in an ethical, not a supernatural, sense. Let the church turn from her traditionalism and gnosticism, and resolutely espouse the cause of humanity *in the present world,* and the Kingdom, as it is put into effect, and increasingly proved to be a developing and beneficent reality—*that* will constitute a virtual return of the Master in power and glory; and if the "clouds" and the trumpets of the sky are lacking, only the immature will miss them in the "tumult of acclaim" which the tribes of men will raise in honor of the supreme prophet of the new order.

An old hymn inquires and answers as follows:

[22] It is not meant that this is the only duty of the church. The importance of the functions of public worship, religious instruction, and private consolation is recognized. But these functions are in no way inconsistent with its championship of the Kingdom. On the contrary, they may well all be reciprocally helpful.
[23] Lowell: "The Cathedral."

"When shall the voice of singing
Flow joyfully along?—
When, hill and valley ringing
With one triumphant song,
Proclaim the contest ended,
And him who once was slain,
Again to earth descended,
In righteousness to reign."

Even so, provided the descending is of the *mind* of Jesus Christ—his interests, his aim, his social ideals realized in social practice.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Let Plato be precedent for a mythical ending:

Dr. Moderate in his handsomely appointed study meditated over his theme for the coming Sunday. Doubtless most of his parishioners would approve if he criticized the Modernists again; but he thought that sort of thing had gone far enough. The popular rector of All Saints was no bigot. An inviting subject was still to seek when a caller was ushered in. As the visitor seated himself at his invitation, the clergyman found his indifferent glance arrested. This was no ordinary caller; and yet it was hard to tell in just what his air of distinction resided—perhaps in the look of intelligent self-command and repose, perhaps in the calm penetration of the earnest eyes.

"I was in your congregation yesterday morning," said the stranger; "and, hearing your invitation to inquirers, I thought I might venture to ask you a few questions."

"Oh, certainly, certainly; what can I do for you?"

"I was struck by your text and your treatment of it—'When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?' [1] You contended that he would, if he came today; because Christianity is the most numerous and widespread of all religions, and is still extending itself year by year, and further because, with all its doctrinal divisions, there was almost universal belief that Jesus was in some sense the Son of God."

[1] Lk. xviii. 8.

The clergyman bowed his head, and said smiling, "You are a good listener, I see."

"May I ask why the Son of man should regard this prevalence of Christianity—and many evil things are prevalent, you know—as constituting faith in the meaning of the text?"

"Why should he not?" was the somewhat startled reply. "Faith—Christian faith, at any rate—is belief in Jesus Christ."

"Perhaps; but belief in him in what way? Your text was part of certain remarks of his about social justice and the near approach of the Kingdom of God for its vindication and establishment. But there is nothing in the doctrine of Jesus' divinity that bears upon social justice."

"Oh, my dear Sir! I can't agree with that. Surely if men believe that Jesus is the Son of God, they will do what he enjoins."

"No, I cannot discover that that is true. I do not find that, say, sixteen centuries of orthodoxy have had much effect in the way of practical working acceptance of Jesus' social teachings—the kind of faith he doubted about in your text. Wherein have the orthodox shown more concern for social justic than the heterodox?"

"Well, of course I can't cite instances right on the spur of the moment; but I certainly believe they have."

"I see." After a pause the stranger continued, "May I ask what grounds you have for your severe condemnation of the ancient Pharisees? Of course, I see certain shortcomings in them, and why in the first century they were fit subjects for rebuke. They virtually held the fate of Israel in their hands, and yet were too much concerned with worldly matters and petty ceremonial to see that a world crisis had come, and a great opportunity faced the nation. But why rebuke them nineteen centuries after

their decease when there are so many Pharisees today in the church doing precisely the same thing?"

"Ah, now, really, I can't admit that. Now it is your turn to justify your words."

"Very well. Recently I asked a certain manufacturer if a Mr. Blank had a mortgage on his works. He replied in the affirmative, adding, 'And the devil's got a mortgage on him.'" Now the speaker was a church member of prominence, as is Mr. Blank, also. Indeed, the latter has an almost saintly reputation in his own tabernacle; his phylacteries are very broad. What is your own observation, Doctor Moderate? You live on the edge of the commercial currents of this great city. Do you find that social justice is a live interest with most church members in the business world? Are they careful to place their neighbor's interests on a par with their own, or are they disposed to sit comfortably among the economic 'ins' and oppose any modification of the social order in favor of the 'outs'? Are they any more concerned about an early coming of the Kingdom of God than were the Pharisees of old?"

"Yes, I know; there are defects in our church members, sometimes serious ones. I have often deplored them; but really in this imperfect world one must expect more or less of such things."

"Alas, yes. Until the 'imperfect world' is greatly improved the predatory impulses will dispute every inch of ground with the humane impulses. But it hardly looks as though the 'faith' the Prophet of Nazareth had in mind were greater now than in the first century."

"Oh, well, it's all very fine to criticize; but how would you better things? You can't make human nature over. The days of miracles are past."

A twinkle showed in the stranger's eyes as he replied, "I'm afraid you are tinctured with Modernism, Doctor.

It is usual for men in your position to claim that miracles of that kind are common occurrences in the churches. How would I better things? Perhaps by preaching a crusade, not for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre, but for the recovery of the aim of Jesus Christ.

"I have visited many churches in many lands—of late those in this country; and, I am glad to say, not without finding many things to approve. In the main they seem to be really seeking to deepen men's spiritual life, which is doubtless a prime duty of true religion of whatever kind. Then, their teaching is becoming more ethical; systematic theology, too, is being retired from the pulpit to the study, which is well; and in the more enlightened Protestant churches other-worldliness is perhaps reduced to proper proportions. What I have looked for largely in vain is any adequate recognition of the church's duty in furthering social welfare and progress, without which individual improvement is at best a continually repeated task of doubtful issue. I did find such a recognition, however, this past week among one of your neighbors. Have you seen the confessional statement of the Church of All Souls?"

"I think so—something radical, as I recall."

"Jesus would not have found it over radical. It holds forth as part of the mission of the church, the laboring 'for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human brotherhood;' adding, 'We work and pray for the transformation of the world into the Kingdom of God.' "

"Oh, well, you know that sort of thing is impossible, that is, practically—as anything more than a high-sounding sentiment. Can't you see that our membership has not been recruited on a basis of social reform, but of individual salvation, and that the moment we put social welfare to the front, our church members will fall away from

us? I can hear now what they will say—'Give us the old, simple gospel.'"

Slowly the visitor inclined his head.

"Yes, I can see that you are right—in part. What is not clear as yet is how large a proportion of your people would react in that way, and how long it would take to build up a new constituency of *genuine* believers—with less childish ideas and a higher type of interest."

"Ah, one must be an optimist, indeed, to believe in that program."

"No doubt," said the other thoughtfully; "but optimism may be cautious and sane, and then it is what Jesus meant by faith. Your skepticism recalls to me the views of an interesting but depressing acquaintance that I made recently in the national capitol. We happened to be seated side by side in one of the galleries. At my request he pointed out to me a prominent senator; and when I remarked that the senator had recently pronounced a correspondent an 'internationalist' on the sole ground that the latter had urged the application of the Golden Rule in international affairs, he replied,

"Oh, of course; the tribal god demanded that." As I looked at him inquiringly, he went on, "Don't you know the tribal god?—just the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar, the effigy of Caesar, and, yet, Moloch, too, brought down to date. All of us, high and low, ancients and moderns, reify and deify our tribal interests and prejudices, and make the service of them the greatest of virtues. We are very like the Romans of old; patriotism, *tribal* patriotism, is our real religion."

"And yet," I returned, "I am told that nearly all the members of Congress are church members."

"Oh, heavens, yes; that has nothing to do with it. Politics is politics, just as business is business; and religion—

well, if you mean the religion of the common run of practical men, that is just the sentimental fringe of life."

"Pardon me," said I, "but how can you know that about these Congressmen?"

"Oh, I know well enough. I was a senator myself for many years, and had any number of church members among my constituents."

"We left the chamber together, and then he continued, "I fear I have scandalized you; but you can take it from me that the whole notion that the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount have anything to do with the great affairs of life is fantastic—mere popular humbug. The purification of politics is an irridescent dream. The yoke of the beast is on us all, and not least when we are pluming ourselves on our high principles and purposes. At most, reform movements but change men from one kind of beast into another; and all the Utopias of prophets, philosophers, and poets are mere rainbow gold. Nothing more than a makeshift civilization is possible. The Christian church has generally had dreams of being a moral power in the world; but they are perfectly vain. It is an accidental product itself—named for an ancient fanatical reformer whose ideas it soon abandoned, but whose figure it continues to exalt in the usual blundering human way. Its successes have come from pagan and secular factors which joined up with it in very early times; and whatever the outward guise of these factors, their inner reality has always been just primitive, barbarian impulse and appetite—"

"What abominable unbelief!" exclaimed Doctor Moderate, breaking in. "Why the man must have been blind. What was his name?"

"That he declined to say. He laughed, and said I might call him Mephistopheles. Yes, he was blind enough on one

side; but on the other he saw things in their naked truth. Sir, is it worthy of intelligent men in this age to go on masking facts with pretences, and viewing a tragic world through colored spectacles?"

There was an imperious ring in these words which made the clergyman stare at his guest, whose upright form seemed to dilate and glow as he spoke. Then, with an authoritative look he added, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" [2]

A moment later the minister found himself gazing at an empty chair, and naturally concluded that he had been dreaming, but in his deepened seriousness thereafter he was never sure that that was the whole story.

[FINIS]

[2] Lk. vi. 46.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

SURVEY OF THE REMAINING SAYINGS OF JESUS ABOUT THE KINGDOM

Jesus' Kingdom-teachings have been examined many times, and with various and often conflicting results. Commonly these inquiries have been so selective—so occupied with the evidence favorable to the idea in mind—and so neglectful of what the man of science calls the negative cases, that they fail to convince real inquirers. So it seems worth while to examine *all* of Jesus' statements about the Kingdom that have come down to us. It will be convenient to follow the order of Matthew first, with the exception of those already considered in Chapter V, and then to add such other sayings as are recorded only elsewhere, classifying them all according as, (a) their meaning is indeterminate, or (b) appears to require the institutional view, or (c) points to a purely spiritual interpretation.

In the *first* group—the indeterminate sayings—will naturallly be placed Jesus' original proclamation, "The Kingdom of God is at hand," and the enjoined prayer, "Thy Kingdom come." Since nothing is to be learned from this group as to the question before us, it will be sufficient to mention them and leave them for private examination.[1]

In the *second* group—those indicating an institutional situation of some kind—must be placed the following:

The beatitude pronounced upon the meek[2]—long a hard saying for spiritualizing interpreters. The meek are to "inherit *the earth*," not heaven, and how, pray, if not in some institutional or political sense?

[1] *Cf.* Mt. iv. 17, 23; vi. 10; Mk. i. 15; Lk. iv. 43. The remaining Kingdom references of Jesus that will generally be regarded as indeterminate appear to be the following: Mt. v. 3, 10, 19 f.; vi. 10, 33; ix. 35; xi. 11 f.; xiii. 11, 19, 52; xvi. 19; xviii. 23-35; xix. 12, 23 f.; xx. 1-16; xxi. 31; Mk. xii. 34; Lk. vi. 20; ix. 11, 62. The very number of these, however, suggests that Jesus was in the habit of using the term in a sense that required no explanation, the sense current at the time, the ordinary prophetic and Jewish meaning.

[2] Mt. v. 5.

The warning against being mere professors of loyalty, and the association of his own rejection of such men with the apocalyptic [3] "that day." The judgment referred to is evidently a matter of a particular time and place, a place *from* which in *that day* the workers of iniquity shall *depart*.

Jesus' encomium on the centurion,[4] and prediction "that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down . . . in the Kingdom of heaven; but the Sons of the Kingdom shall be cast forth," etc. Who are these sons of the Kingdom if not the Jews? And how on the spiritual view can such "sons" be *cast forth?*

The charge to the twelve (and also the seventy)[5] as Jesus sends them forth to heal and to proclaim the imminence of the Kingdom. Here the usual apocalyptic viewpoint is taken, and quite as a matter of course. Of any place refusing to receive them it is declared that "it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the *day of judgment* than for that city." Again the apocalyptic "day" appears. And why did he pronounce such a severe judgment for refusing to receive missionaries, especially as the unfriendly populace might come to a better mind later? Evidently because there was to be no later opportunity. The case *was* like that of Sodom and Gomorrah. The day of judgment and of the Kingdom's coming was *"at hand."* In this case an apocalyptic and institutional background is necessary to make Jesus' charge and prophecy coherent and ethically justifiable.

Jesus' claims, in reply to Pharisaic criticism, that his cure of demoniacs is evidence that the Kingdom of God had "come upon" them.[6] The argument means little to the modern reader. Not so was it then. The demented were then universally regarded as under the power of Satan. The argument that in curing them he wielded a greater power than Satan's was unanswerable in those days. The significant thing is that Jesus identified his manifestation of it with the actual presence of the Kingdom—in a small way, of course. How, then, could the Kingdom have meant for him a state of mind? Whose state of mind was the victorious agency? Not the recipients', for their recovered sanity was evidently the *effect* of the Kingdom's coming upon them; not the triumphant power itself.

[3] Mt. vii. 21-23.
[4] Mt. viii. 10-12.
[5] Mt. x. 1, 7-15, 23; Lk. x. 1-12.
[6] Mt. xii. 28.

The parable of the tares.[7] The apocalyptic reference here is obscured in the English version by a misleading translation. The word "world" in vv. 38 and 39 is used to represent two different Greek words, *kosmos* and *aion*—correctly in the first case, incorrectly in the second. *Aion* does not mean world in the cosmic sense, nor yet the inhabited earth; it means age or time or order of things. So vs. 39 should read, "And the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest is the consummation of the age,[8] and the reapers are angels." With this correction Jesus' interpretation of his parable becomes apocalyptic and Messianistic throughout. Such a distinction of the time that then was from the Messianic time (by no means so remote as our "end of the world") when God's purpose was to be fulfilled, and such a separation of the good from the evil upon the advent of the Kingdom. were entirely in accord with the Jewish Kingdom expectation.

The briefer parable of the net,[9] which calls for much the same comment.

The dark passage in which St. Peter is promised the "keys of the Kingdom of heaven." [10] This suggests some external or official function, if anything at all; while, of course, the concluding verses of the chapter about "some of them that stand here 'not tasting' of death till they see the Son of man coming in his Kingdom" [11] is altogether Messianistic.

The discourse in the eighteenth chapter concerning greatness in the Kingdom and the childlike attitude.[12] This is, of course, primarily ethical, and metaphysically indeterminate, yet references to apocalyptic features appear, and in such an incidental, matter of fact way as to suggest that those features had an unchallenged place in Jesus' thought. Evidently even for the twelve entrance into the Kingdom was still a future event, and while entering "into life maimed or halt" may be figuratively construed, its natural suggestion is of an earthly, not a heavenly, nor yet a purely spiritual situation.

The promise in the nineteenth chapter that the apostolic group "shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," and receive "an hundred-fold" reward of

[7] Mt. xiii. 24-30, 36-43. *Cf.* p. 59 *supra.*
[8] *Cf.* margin of the R. V.
[9] Mt. xiii. 47-50.
[10] Mt. xvi. 19.
[11] Mt. xvi. 27 f.
[12] Mt. xviii. 1-10.

"houses," etc., "in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory." [13]

The parable of the laborers in the vineyard.[14] This is evidently meant to teach that the Kingdom is so entirely a divine gift that the efforts of men in connection with it are a minor and virtually negligible matter; but if the Kingdom is an inner religious and ethical attitude, is it good ethical teaching? In that case it would seem that man's part—his high striving and patient endeavor—should be stressed, not minimized.

Jesus' acceptance of the title "Son of David" from the two blind men, as related in the close of the twentieth chapter. Also, his acceptance of the Davidic acclaim of the highway throng and the children in the Temple.[15]

The parables of the vineyard and of the marriage of the king's son—evidently both moralized applications of the current Messianic expectation.[16] The Sanhedrists are to be condemned and deposed by the interposing King because they have been unfaithful in their trust. But what trust had they *as husbandmen* of the vineyard other than the care of God's people, which was an *official* and *collective,* not a private, matter? Again they are condemned in the story of the feast; and for what? For putting their private affairs before those of the Kingdom—a collective, not a spiritual, reference.

Jesus' impeachment of the Pharisees as "shutting the Kingdom of heaven against men," *neither entering themselves nor suffering others to do so.*[17] In this incident only a politico-institutional reference will fit. How could they hinder men from entering a better spiritual state? Only, it would seem, by false teaching; and of this possible charge he expressly acquits them.[18] Israel should do what these men enjoined, but not imitate their *practice*—especially their lack of the social righteousness which was to characterize the Kingdom and their opposition to the popular hopes of its early coming.

The prophetic discourses of the twenty-fourth [19] and twenty-fifth chapters. At the coming "consummation of the age" therein described "shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the

[13] Mt. xix. 27-29.
[14] Mt. xx. 1-16.
[15] Mt. xx. 30; xxi. 9, 15 f.
[16] Mt. xxi. 33-45; xxii, 2-4; Lk. xiv. 15-24.
[17] Mt. xxiii. 13.
[18] vs. 2 f.
[19] Mt. xxiii. 34-39; xxiv. 1-51.

clouds of heaven with power and great glory. . . . This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished"![20] How unreasonable to affirm that Jesus was speaking of a remote cosmic catastrophe at the end of the world! For him the events were near enough to call for *watchfulness*—that is, preparedness for a taxing emergency—on the part of the twelve themselves.[21]

Chapter twenty-five, with its parables of the wise virgins and the talents, together with the account of the Messianic judgment. The Messianistic character of these teachings is too evident to call for comment.

Jesus' response to the High Priest's adjuration: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."[22]

Three Kingdom passages are peculiar to Luke; and these also belong in the *second,* or institutional group:

The direction to the would-be disciple to "leave the dead to bury their own dead" and go "and publish abroad the Kingdom of God."[23] This saying on the spiritual view seems to be needlessly exacting, even after we have allowed for Oriental rhetoric and the length of Eastern obsequies. What was the urgency about taking up the rôle of spiritual evangelist that should require neglect of that primary form of piety, respect for a parent? In fact, would not the candidate be a better spiritual teacher—certainly a more acceptable one socially—if he performed the usual funeral rites? Surely only a social crisis regarded as imminent can account for this summary demand. *The Kingdom Jesus had in mind would not wait.*

The parable of the pounds.[24] As a bit of universal ethics, illustrating the need of faithful and intelligent stewardship, this parable loses much of its point; for it was spoken in proximity to the palace of Archelaus, whose course—well known to the people—in appealing to Caesar for the succession to his father's (Herod) throne, is closely paralleled in the story. And surely verses 11, 12, 15, and 27 are strongly Messianistic and institutional in suggestion.

The lesson drawn from the budding of the fig tree. This is another warning of the imminence of the Kingdom, and the need of *watchfulness on the part of the twelve.*[25] If Jesus

[20] Mt. xxiv. 30, 34; *Cf.* xvi. 28.
[21] vs. 42.
[22] Mt. xxvi. 63 f.
[23] Lk. ix. 60.
[24] Lk. xix. 11-27.
[25] Lk. xxi. 31-36.

thought of the Kingdom as the reign of God in the heart, is it not strange that he should bid the disciples *beware* lest its coming should find them unprepared?

Our survey of the synoptic gospels thus reveals to us that all the definite sayings of Jesus regarding the Kingdom recorded by them require the prophetic and institutional interpretation. It is not until we pass on to the gospel written two or three generations later that sayings about the Kingdom are attributed to Jesus that require a spiritual rendering, and so fall into the *third* group.

One of these is the statement to Nicodemus "that except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." [26] This seems to involve a conception of the Kingdom as a mystic situation wherein a new inner life in man is produced by vital contact with God—an idea which is confirmed by the reference to baptism and the endowment of the Holy Spirit which follows.

Again, Jesus' reply to Pilate, "My Kingdom is not of this world," [27] etc., is, in view of the strong mystic tendencies of the author, probably to be construed as indicating a like spiritual view of the Kingdom. Jesus is made to insist that he is a king because he had come into the world to bear witness to the truth! There appears to be no institutional reference, nor, for that matter, *any* definite meaning.

The remaining sayings supposed to favor the spiritual view have already been examined in chapter five. It transpires therefore that the only two passages in the four gospels that require a spiritual conception of the Kingdom were written down from sixty-five to a hundred years after Jesus' death!

It is true that some of the indeterminate sayings might be construed spiritually if the term Kingdom of God had been a new one, originated by Jesus himself. It would then have only such meaning as he gave it; and that would be open to surmise on the spiritual side as well as on the institutional. Even then, however, the term would be indeterminate, and not *require* a spiritual interpretation. For example, the first beatitude (upon "the poor in spirit") [28] might be understood as referring to a spiritual Kingdom without doing violence to the passage. We could think of inner humility before God as an attitude needful for the coming of divine "grace" and

[26] Jn. iii. 3 (R. V. margin). [27] Jn. xviii. 36-38. [28] Mt. v. 3.

for individual spiritual growth. *But such humility may equally well* be needed for ready admission to a Messianic institution, since that institution is a Kingdom of *God,* in whose presence self-esteem and self-assertion may well be a hindrance.

In view of this overwhelming accord of the real sources with the prophetic and popular expectation, it is surely unhistorical and dogmatic to import into Jesus' Kingdom conception ideas which arose in later generations and amidst Gentile surroundings.