RELIGION: ITS MODERN NEEDS AND PROBLEMS . . . No. 11

RELIGION AND ITS SOCIAL EXPRESSION

BY

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RELIGION AND ITS SOCIAL EXPRESSION

EDITOR'S NOTE

Each writer is responsible for the views expressed in his contribution to the series. No attempt has been made to limit freedom in the effort to impose an artificial uniformity. Yet a certain unity of outlook does make itself evident, and this is all the more valuable because unforced.

RAYMOND V. HOLT

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SYNOPSIS

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I. THE NATURE OF RELIGION: SOME RELEVANT POINTS 9

Religion, on its practical side, is a Quest for the Best—the best *life, fullness* of life.

The quest, though one, may be conveniently described as threefold—for Truth, Beauty and Goodness. The pursuit and the enjoyment of these lead to wholeness, holiness or health, and to true happiness.

Religion might also be said to be a Quest for Truth, using Truth in the broadest sense; it comes to much the same thing. The Quest is then for Truth of Thought ('truth,' narrower sense), of Feeling, and of Conduct.

All these values are self-vindicating, appealing, urgent.

Truth of Thought means (*a*) thought corresponding with fact, (*b*) an adequate representation of fact, as a guide for action. The Quest for the Best, or for Truth, therefore involves, when fully worked out, a *theory* of the ultimate nature of Man, the Universe, God.

Truth of Feeling and Conduct. Religion has always, long before it was *thought* about, (*a*) been felt to have relation to the conduct of life, (*b*) recognised the social nature of Man, the fact and the idea of kinship.

Religion, that is to say, has always found SOCIAL EXPRESSION, and that in three ways—in Worship, in Social Conduct, and in Social Structure.

In modern times, various departments of life have claimed autonomy, notably for our present purpose Politics, Economics, Practical Sociology. This claim has been pushed too far. Philosophy can only admit a limited autonomy; Religion is properly even more insistent on the limitations of autonomy.

If religion is what has been stated, it is obviously related to every part of life. As the crown and completion of life, it gives *unity* to the whole; or is *regulative* for every activity of life.

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The Quest for Truth is in *all* cases a *venture of faith*. Philosophy attempts a larger task and makes a bolder venture than 'science'; religion applies the same method over the whole field, and makes the boldest venture of all. *But faith, be its venture small or great, is utterly reasonable.* A mature and intelligent religion accepts and pursues these other quests, and co-ordinates them into a whole.

II. THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION: SOME OF ITS TEACHINGS WITH SOCIAL REFERENCE . . . 15

What has been said above applies to Religion, *i.e.* to all 'religions.' These differ in the adequacy of their theories and practices.

This essay starts from the position that the Christian religion is the highest, because it implies the most adequate, *i.e.* the most rational, ultimate philosophy.

What then are the leading ideas of a modern Christianity; what its account of Man, Society, the Universe, God?

Its philosophy is theistic. For it, God is ONE and transcendent, but also immanent. The immanence of God implies the unity of all things in God, the kinship of all things. The ultimate Creator is 'Father'; 'creatures' are also 'children'; 'all men are brethren.'

An immanent God is a revealing God, who is 'Word,' an operating God, who is 'Spirit.' Man, who is high enough in the scale of being to seek for God, has *within himself* the surest clues, the securest grounds for faith.

Christian theism cannot be content with any impersonal conception of God. Personality is the richest thing we know, and so the ground for it is postulated in God.

Personality as here understood is more than individuality though it includes this; it implies membership in a community. Persons are absolute ends for Christian ethics. Only in a community can true personality be developed; hence the form of the community is a prime concern for Christian thought. This is part of what is implied in the Kingdom of God upon earth.

The material and the spiritual wealth of the universe are inexhaustible. 'Hunger' and 'Food' imply each other, *i.e.* a hunger is the warrant of the existence of food, on any evolutionary theory and indeed on any truly rational theory.

Man's nature is social; he has many 'hungers' and

many 'goods'; his highest goods are those that are increased by sharing.

Man's quest is only fruitful when his practical endeavours energise along the lines of Faith, Hope, and Love. His fullest development, his fruition is found in Love, Joy, Peace.

His 'hungers' may be grouped as hungers for Power and hungers for Love ('and the greater of these is love'). As a spiritual being, he is free and creative and happy in proportion as he follows out his own true good, his own real nature, without inward or outward hindrance.

The removal of outward hindrances is one duty of a Christian community. The removal of inward hindrances is part of the work of Education, which is a vast corporate activity of crucial importance. It is essentially religious in its nature and aim, and needs the fullest co-operation of State, Church, and Family.

In the lower ranges, man's 'hungers' groups show themselves in the instinctive urges to (*a*) self-maintenance, (*b*) procreation; but man *as* man far transcends these.

In practice the obstacles to self-preservation can only be overcome by co-operation; but by intelligent and willing co-operation they can now be practically annihilated. Over-emphasis on power, possession, self-interest, destroys love; unchecked, it can lead only to war and social disaster.

Procreative activity pursued as a mere self-gratification, also, and even more quickly and completely, destroys love. The only Christian standard for the relations of men and women is purity of heart in the sense of a complete and delicate respect amounting to reverence. This applies to *all* personal relationships and is very far-reaching.

The hunger for love is the highest hunger and leads to all the best goods of life. It involves the desire to give rather than to get; to share life, not merely to preserve it; to be freely creative and fruitful in all the highest ranges; to be therefore in realised harmony, in equal fellowship, in fruitful co-operation, with all other human beings; and finally, in harmony with the will of God, and in communion with him.

The social reference is plain all through; man's good can be realised only in a community; the kingship or rule of God must be 'within us,' but must also be *realised*, 'on earth as it is in heaven.'

The Kingdom of God on earth is a society in which there are the fewest obstacles, and the fullest opportunity and

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stimulus, to the realisation of man's true good, of personality and fellowship in the largest sense, in every member of the community.

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(*a*) That social service is not religion, which is something quite other than morality of any kind;
(*b*) That the account given of religion, and especially of the Christian religion, is inadequate;
(*c*) That a 'Christian Social Order' is impossible; and that even if it could be established, it would merely lead to moral slackness and degeneration.

IV. Converging Lines of Thought. Conclusion 48

So far, the attempt has been made to follow one main line of thought. Several collateral and converging lines may now be noticed.

A Christian cannot be indifferent to realised suffering or wrong; but he is often very blind. Wider conceptions and applications are needed.

We must learn to recognise corporate sin and disease. Cure is not enough; prevention is of even more importance, in this corporate as in the personal sphere.

The Lord's Prayer is one of the great 'words' of Christianity. All its pronouns are plural; each clause has a social reference as part of its meaning; prayer is among other things an act of consecration to service.

The Christian is told to preach the gospel and to heal the sick. Many new meanings and methods have to be included in thought and practice now.

Christian principles, in the life of to-day, call for Simplicity of Personal Life; Generosity of Public Life; and, from many, for Social Self-sacrifice.

Every Christian is called to be a minister of God, engaged in some specific way in the great enterprises of Healing, Teaching, Friendship, and Public Service, undertaken with a view to the Kingdom of God.

The City of God has its pattern laid up in heaven, but revealed in the mount of vision. We are builders of that City.

RELIGION AND ITS SOCIAL EXPRESSION

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF RELIGION: SOME RELEVANT POINTS

We are to-day very familiar with such phrases as 'Christian politics, economics, and citizenship,' 'A Christian order of society,' the 'Social implications of our religion'; and it might be supposed that the ideas behind these phrases had gained universal recognition. This, however, is by no means the case. Many thousands of religious people have not yet awakened to the idea of a social expression of religion at all, or think of it only in terms of drink, gambling and 'immorality,' or confine it to rescue and ambulance work of one kind or another. The very notion of 'Christian politics' and, still more, 'Christian economics,' excites either ridicule or strong opposition, and that from two angles.

Religious teaching and preaching, it is said, should meddle with these practical matters, if at all, only to the extent of enunciating general moral principles. It should inculcate truth in one's dealings, faithfulness to one's pledged word, and the golden rule; but anything more specific it had better let alone. Preachers and teachers of religion are usually children in these matters, it is said, and practical details must be worked out by practical men. The extent to which practical men are likely, in the nature of the case,

to be dominated unconsciously even more than consciously by material interests or party prejudices which have never been examined in the light of Sunday's teachings, is forgotten.

More formidable opposition comes from another side. Religion, we are told, is concerned not with the making or mending of social institutions, but with the making of the right sort of men and women to run any kind of society, whatever its method. Further, and more important still, these critics say, religion is an intensely personal matter; it is an affair between a man and his Maker. Its highest joy is communion with God. The practical effort of the Church and of religious people should be directed to the conversion of sinners, the redemption of the lost, the bringing of individual souls into right relations with God. It is feared that what is specific and most vital and precious in religion will be dissipated and lost in much fussy concern with social and practical problems.

For these and other reasons the plain fact is that many, perhaps most professing Christians are not yet convinced that religion in its very nature must be concerned in the way we manage our daily-bread activities, the way we govern ourselves and train the citizens-to-be, the way we conduct our dealings with other peoples the world over. Practical proposals for social changes which to some of their fellow-Christians seem obvious corollaries from religious teaching are apt to leave them cold or hostile.

It may therefore be worth while, not to add one more to the programmes of social change claiming to be applications of Christianity, but rather to examine, so far as is relevant, what is the essential nature of religion, and why it necessarily, when fully realised, finds expression in social structure as well as in personal behaviour.

Religion then, on its practical side, is an active endeavour, a strenuous reaching out after ends transcending those of

the natural man; it seeks something more than the satisfaction of primitive instincts or elementary affections. It means a new outlook, being 'transformed by the renewing of our minds' instead of being 'fashioned according to this world'; it means the search for 'the good and acceptable and perfect,' a quest for the best. It is not satisfied with customary valuations, but is acutely conscious of different qualities and levels of life, and believes possible a fullness of inward life corresponding with the infinite richness and wonder of the world without.

The quest is often said to be for truth, beauty, and goodness, and such a division is convenient for our thought, though the quest is really one, like life itself. But provided we understand our terms deeply and broadly enough—and religion always raises its words to their highest power—we may very well say that the pursuit and the enjoyment of truth, beauty and goodness lead toward wholeness, health, or holiness, and to true happiness or blessedness. There is nothing feeble, anæmic, or passive about real religion; it is intense and active, valiant in pursuit and rapturous in enjoyment. 'The chief end of man is to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever.' Another way of expressing the nature of the quest, which comes to much the same thing in the end, is to speak of a quest for truth; but again it is very needful to bear in mind that truth in this case is used in the very broadest sense, including much more than truth as apprehended by the intellect. It includes truth of thought ('truth' in the narrower sense), of feeling, and of conduct.

Truth of thought, then, is not the only form of truth; and further, it always has, in the last resort, some practical reference. If our thoughts correspond closely with the actual structure and mode of operation of the world as we find it, if they symbolise or represent facts in a way which gives successful guidance, which 'gives joy and liberates power,' we say they are true. The quest for the best, or

for truth, for those who have the urge to pursue it on this side, can aim at nothing less than a theory of the ultimate nature of man, the universe, God. Even the crudest mythologies are attempts at this.

Truth of feeling implies a sensitiveness to everything that is noble and beautiful, 'loving and hating the right things,' a response of approval and of joy to whatever is creative and fruitful and an indignant reaction to what is destructive or thwarting or enslaving. Such feeling is 'true' because it is in harmony with the ultimate make-up of the universe, which has a moral structure or pattern as real and at least as fundamental as the physical patterns emphasised by science.

It is significant that the intuitive poetry of speech recognises 'true' feeling; it is still more emphatic in expressing the conception of truth of conduct. Words like right and upright; straight; due and duty; owe and ought; kind and humane; civil, polite, and urbane; manly, etc.—these and others imply that the conduct described is in accordance with what is conceived or felt to be a true pattern or standard.

The unsophisticated mind rightly believes all these values to be real; from the point of view of this essay, they are self-vindicating, generally trustworthy as guides, urgent and appealing, 'deep calling unto deep.'

An adequate religion, then, as a quest for truth, is as wide as life itself. Here again the unsophisticated man is right. Long before religion was much thought about, and all down the ages, it has been felt to have relation to the conduct of life, however crudely and inadequately this may have been conceived. It has always recognised, and expressed in mythology, even in the most primitive, the essentially social nature of man, the fact and the idea of kinship—kinship not only between human beings, but between them and other beings, higher and lower, kinship with the whole. That is to say, it has always found social expression; and it is

significant that cultus or worship, social conduct, and social structure are more obviously an organic whole in the early stages than they are sometimes recognised as being in our own time. For with the differentiation and specialisation involved in progress, it has come about that large departments of life have claimed independence, autonomy, the right to set their own ends, to pursue them for their own sake and in their own way. 'Business is business,' 'Art for art's sake,' 'My country, right or wrong,' 'No politics in the pulpit,' 'Secular education,' are phrases which come into the mind.

There is, of course, a certain relative truth, or shall one say practical usefulness, in the autonomous working out of different activities, the independent pursuit of the several main ends of life. But in modern times, the claim for independent development is often pushed a great deal too far. Philosophy, which attempts to 'see life steadily and see it whole,' can obviously only admit a limited autonomy; religion, with its quest for truth all along the line, for the best in every department, cannot stop short of the attempt to harmonise and integrate all the activities, aims, and pursuits of mankind. Religion is not a department of life; it is the crown and completion of life. Or rather, it *is* life itself when it is most true in direction, most unified in expression, most truly organic within itself and with other lives, widest in its fellowship, clearest in vision and most effective in beneficent action.

Religion in other words is at once an expression and a satisfaction of man's whole rational nature, using the word rational in the same broad sense as the word truth, indicating all the capacities and activities which differentiate man from all his animal kin. The word 'spiritual' could be substituted, but like 'reason' and 'rational' it is often used with a narrower meaning.

The spirit's quest in man, along all the different roads,

has essentially the same method. Always there is the outreaching of life in exploration and adventure, the seeking, registering and associating of facts and experiences, the search for some satisfying rational meaning. Some explicit or implicit working hypothesis guides at each step the further progress. This is tested by deliberate experiment or further experience, and is amended as need shows. The result of the process is a verification, whether in thought or in life; the hypothesis comes to be held with strong conviction as expressing a large measure of truth. But always, such truth as we can attain remains tentative and relative. Our strongest convictions come from converging lines of apprehended significance. The quest is a venture of faith in all cases, whether one is engaged in scientific research, invention and construction, the creation of beauty, speculative thought, imagining and striving for the New-Jerusalem-To-Be, or seeking the Living God. Faith, be its venture small or great, is always and everywhere utterly reasonable.

CHAPTER II

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION: SOME OF ITS TEACHINGS WITH SOCIAL REFERENCE

THE previous chapter has given some general features of religion, but not one of the actually existing separate religions exhibits all those features with any completeness. Religions as distinct from Religion are endless in their diversity of beliefs and practices. Studied objectively in the light of the foregoing chapter, they differ in their adequacy.

Polytheistic religions and nature-worships express their theory or vision in mythologies. These are often dark and repulsive in some of their details, like the ancient Babylonian and other Semitic religions, or the more primitive types of popular Hinduism. But they may have many beautiful features and inspire noble art, as markedly in ancient Greek religion with its Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, Athena and the others. But in either case they imply very early moral standards, leading to serious criticism with the advance of reflection, such as we find on the one hand in the Hebrew prophets, and on the other in Plato and others among the Greeks.

Among cultivated peoples and classes religion may come to be little more than an ethical system, as with Confucianism in China, or in the West, the ethical societies and some types of humanism. Such religions have so far had little power over uncultivated or highly passionate natures, and have seldom inspired constructive social effort.

There are powerful religions and philosophies which have no belief in a personal God and which hardly find a place for

real freedom or for personal immortality—such as Buddhism, and some types of Idealist thinking.

The main theistic religions, Judaism, Mohammedanism and Christianity, are very various in their manifestations and interpretations, though on the whole agreeing in believing in a personal God, personal freedom and responsibility, and personal immortality.

In this essay it will be frankly assumed that Christianity is at least potentially the highest religion; that it holds the greatest contribution to the religion of the future; that the philosophy which lies behind its symbols is the most adequate and 'reasonable.' It is hindered by intense conservatism, arrogant dogmatism, obstinate clinging to outworn ideas, or by political subservience, as the case may be. But a truly free Christianity should be big enough to reinterpret many ancient ideas rather than merely to reject them, and to perceive and proclaim the need for constructive social applications which did not come within the ken of the older religious liberals.

What then are the leading ideas of such a modern Christianity, and what are its conceptions of man, society, the universe, God?

Its philosophy is theistic. It believes in one ultimate Being, 'in whom all things consist,' who is 'over all, and through all, and in all.' This alone would not mark it as theistic in the sense in which the word is here intended. But Christian thought goes much further. Starting from trust in the facts of the moral and religious life, it cannot be content with the idea of a God who made the world but remains outside it, interfering occasionally or not at all; nor with a notion of God which makes him a mere formal or abstract unity, or equates him with the sum of things or calls him the absolute and leaves it at that.

It demands a God who is in some sense *personal*, even though recognising that this cannot be an exhaustive account

of his nature (in other words that although we say God is one, and personal, we cannot say that he is one person).

This demand for a personal God is an attempt to make sense of experience, like every other hypothesis; it arises because all values are for persons, and are realised in and by persons. Personality is the richest thing we know; and that makes us postulate that ultimate reality, or God, must contain the ground of personality.

The modern conception of personality is fundamental both for religion and for its social expression.

Personality as here conceived is more than mere individuality though it includes that; it implies organic membership in a community, and on its ethical side, conscious realisation of this and willing acceptance of its consequences, social debt and social duty.

Either side of the conception may be over-emphasised; and it is obvious that in personality we touch one of the ultimate problems of thought—that of the one and the many, of unity and diversity as both 'true,' and implying each other in some ultimately mysterious way. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is, on one side of it, an attempt to symbolise this ultimate truth which is yet the ultimate mystery.

In another somewhat similar way too, Christian theism combines seemingly contradictory ideas. Paradox is not always to be rejected contemptuously as nonsense; it may arise from the whole truth being so large and rich that it baffles the merely logical intellect, and paradox is the only method of symbolism available.

Christian theism agrees that the One Life of the One God in its wholeness is beyond the utmost bound of our thought and experience, something other than and beyond all created being—that God is transcendent; but it also believes that everything in our experience is an expression of the life of the One God, and therefore all things have a unity in God.

This immanence, or 'remaining-in' the world, of God, implies the 'kinship' of all things, and is behind the idea of God as 'Father,' 'whose offspring we are.' It also lies behind the idea of God as necessarily a revealing God, or 'Word,' and an operating God, or 'Spirit.'

Phrases like the 'Fatherhood of God' and the 'Brotherhood of Man' come trippingly from the tongue, and we often do not fully realise how deep they go. All things are *akin* in God, and 'persons' are not only 'creatures' but 'children.' The practical implications are tremendous and relevant to our main argument.

Persons, for Christian ethics, are absolute ends, and as such, equal in spiritual value. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'; that is, you must realise, and act upon the realisation, that his and your moral and spiritual well-being are of equal importance in the sight of God. If we in any way use another or others for our own mere pleasure or profit, and corporately, if we remain content with, or connive at, or deliberately and actively support any social arrangements or methods which stunt, starve and thwart others in body and soul, we are guilty of deadly sin. Any industrial or commercial methods which make profits the prime concern, and which practically regard dividends as of more importance than human souls, are flatly and blasphemously unchristian.

As already seen, *Persons* imply a *Community*. We are members one of another.

Only in a community can personality be developed; and as full and rich personality is our goal, in the light of all the considerations above, the kind of community in which we live is of vast importance.

For Christians then, the constitution and organisation of the community cannot be indifferent, and indeed must be a prime concern. A truly Christian community will aim at the fullest possible development of rich personality in every

member; it will seek to have the fewest possible hindrances and to give the greatest possible stimulus and help. The beautiful story of Jesus blessing little children may be looked upon as a parable and highly significant. 'Hinder them not'; but we *are* hindering many of our brothers and sisters from any chance of attaining 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,' a perfected humanity.

The world-wide, universal scope of this implication of Christian teaching could not well be realised until our own day. When communities were smaller and religion more organic with daily life, the Christian Church had and exercised very great influence on corporate activities and methods, in government, industry and commerce, through the merchant and craft gilds and through the clergy as a third Estate of the Realm. It had a conception of 'just price,' a very different thing from 'the price the trade will bear,' or from a 'competitive cost price.' It forbade 'forestalling and regrating,' *i.e.* cornering the market, or buying cheap to sell dear, taking advantage of a natural shortage or creating an artificial one, to snatch a profit. It also forbade 'usury.' Frantic speculation on the stock exchange, and gambling in currencies, did not then exist; but they are obviously open to the same condemnation, along with many other of our accepted commercial methods.

Scientific knowledge and its technological applications, and large-scale production, have made all our problems world-wide and increased their complexity. But they have put into our hands enormous power. To what end should this power be used? The Christian answer is by this time obvious; but only a minority of professing Christians has realised this at all. Still fewer have even begun to think out the means whereby the aim which their Christian conscience approves could be embodied in social organisation and economic practice. As to those who make no profession of religion whatever, they are loud in their disdain

of any such notion, or treat it with silent contempt. They have enormous influence in the press and in politics.

The power that can organise production could also organise distribution and the universal provision of a sufficiency of material well-being, given the vision and the good-will. The results of our failure there are intolerable to an enlightened Christian conscience, as intolerable as chattel slavery was in the nineteenth century realised to be. Those who already say so encounter the same opposition and even hatred from some of their fellow-Christians as happened in the early days of the anti-slavery agitation. But Christian morality is a developing thing; its founder laid down a few principles which are as profound and far-reaching as they are simple. New insight into their applications is always possible. Each age needs to beware lest it persecute its prophets and afterwards build costly memorials of them.

Examining the Christian teaching about God, man, and the universe further—consider in what a marvellous universe man finds himself, of unspeakable grandeur and complexity and beauty, filling the mind with awe and wonder and delight. Modern scientific knowledge, rightly assimilated, only intensifies all these. The more we know, the more boundless and inexhaustible do the material and spiritual riches of the world appear to be. How vastly fuller of meaning to us are the old Biblical words: 'There is no searching of his understanding'; 'The unsearchable riches of Christ'; 'O the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!'; 'His greatness is unsearchable'; 'The fullness of the whole earth is his glory'; 'he stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain,' 'telleth the number of the stars,' 'not one is missing'! It has been well said that 'the moral qualities of God match the infinitude of his works.' A God who is adequate for the creation

and sustaining of the vast and wonderful universe which includes man, is surely also adequate for the tenderer and more intimate experiences; 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him'; 'The Lord is *my* shepherd, *I* shall not want, he maketh *me* to lie down in green pastures'; 'Not one sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father, and ye are of more value than the birds'; 'the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' This is a point which seems strangely difficult for many people to believe, nowadays. But it is crucial both for personal religion and for its social expression. If God cares for *each one*, and if we slight or injure any single human being, how can we be in harmony with God? To deny that God does so care is practically a-theism. It is also practically a-moralism; if God does not care, why need we? Each man for himself! On the other hand, if Christian teaching is true, then it surely needs little thought to realise that our duty lies not merely in the sphere of direct personal relationships, but reaches to the full extent of our influence, whether singly or in co-operation with others. There are many wrongs for which we have no direct individual responsibility, but we assuredly have a share of corporate responsibility for many of them; and to that extent it is our Christian duty to use the influence of speech, writing and vote in order to remove them. This implies among other things that the clergy perforce must sometimes preach what some will readily and hotly denounce as political sermons. To do so may be dangerous to themselves but is not in itself wrong. The indiscriminate banning of questions of corporate morality, for that is what it amounts to, is much to be regretted, and resisted.

This thought of the boundless riches of the universe has its practical side. Man is in and of the universe, and the conquests of science are a part of the proof of that. To these conquests by man's mind it has become plain that no

assignable limit can be placed. New knowledge is continually achieved, new technical inventions follow each other in rapid succession, new sources of power are ever being discovered and utilised. There is infinitely more power latent in the very " matter " of the world than could even be dreamed of by the physics of half a century ago. Biological research is also making great strides. Only a very few years ago, eminent men of science were anticipating a serious world shortage of wheat; now, by selective breeding in the light of present biological knowledge, millions of acres have been added to the world's potential wheat lands. And wheat is being burned or otherwise destroyed to-day! That this should happen when malnutrition and even famine are the lot of thousands is now *corporate sin.*

Evolution is an ancient philosophical idea, but it dominates modern science and modern thinking in all fields. In science this happened first and most markedly in biology. Time was when Charles Darwin's theories aroused intense fear and opposition among religious people. But we are doing tardy justice to Darwin's memory now, and we can take the early chapters of Genesis as a sublime kind of poetry and mythology, not as an authoritative literal statement of ' The Beginning.'

Accepting evolution as God's method in creation, some consequences follow for religion and life which are simple enough when pointed out, but more far-reaching than perhaps most of us have realised. The fact that man is organic with the universe, not an alien being dropped into it ' to sink or swim,' and the idea of the ' kinship ' of all things, have been touched on already. Consider further this, that *hunger and food imply each other*, in an evolutionary world. They have developed together, or how could life have carried on at all? Food is ' there,' but it has to be sought for, worked for. Every creature must bestir itself, keep its wits about it.

That failures, and conflict, are incidental to the process, part of the price of progress, need not in the long run cause us distress—but that cannot be discussed just now. One significant fact, however, emerges from biological study. The higher we rise in the scale of organisation, the more does co-operation become a factor in success, and the more care is lavished on the young. The herd becomes better organised, and the mere progenitor becomes ' mother ' or ' father.' *Education begins.*

These facts have been worked out for the sub-human world by Kropotkin, William J. Long and others. When we come to human life, we find these tendencies pushed far beyond anything to be found in the sub-human species. The ' pointing ' of these facts is plain enough; co-operation is higher and better than mere competition, fellowship is better than enmity, love than hate, service than self-seeking. Religion teaches the same; of this more later. Keeping to the sphere of bodily food for the moment—man has been forced almost in spite of himself to co-operate in supplying his bodily needs, and this in our age on a world-wide scale. Selfish and separate interests are always tending to thwart the process of evolution, causing wars and catastrophes innumerable. Even apart from wars and their consequences, any failure of the mechanism of our corporate economic life brings suffering and disaster. Such failures are always due to lack of intelligence or failure of fellowship, to stupidity or selfishness, in other words. Such a failure at the moment is causing a creeping paralysis on a world-wide scale in our economic life; it could quite possibly attain proportions which would mean a crash of civilisation of a kind and degree that baffles even imagination.

Yet look at the other possibilities, already hinted at! The religious idea of the bounty of God is now illustrated for us in the practically boundless resources of the world and of human knowledge and skill. By intelligent foresight,

planning and co-operation we could supply not only food but all the other material needs, clothing, housing, fuel and tools for everybody, and still have abundant energies left for the higher interests and activities of man. Some rational check on the growth of population might be necessary; but this in some quarters has already gone too far. With better management of our economic affairs it would probably be less necessary than was supposed even a generation ago. And with the growth of intelligence and foresight, and the increasing respect for personality implied in the building of a better social order, the matter would on the whole take care of itself.

What new light these modern thoughts throw on the old teaching of the Sermon on the Mount! All our worries and fears, our disasters and deprivations, our cruelties and social horrors, are man-made, the result of stupidity and cupidity, and are quite unnecessary. We could, if we were good enough and intelligent enough, live our normal natural happy lives, like the flowers and the birds, without toiling and spinning, in the sense of slaving for long hours at monotonous soul-destroying tasks. We should grow naturally into beauty, like the lilies of the field and the fowl of the air, and we should create beauty far transcending the tawdry trappings of the Solomons and Cæsars. Such beauty would not be exotic or artificial; it would be the natural expression of a people's feeling, appreciation and aspiration. Art would at once express the best in life, and be an ennobling influence, unconsciously and powerfully educative. It would be a living art, expressive and quickening.

And how is all this to be achieved? 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Make the kingship or rule of God, and its divine justice, your first aim, and then you will have no need to worry about food and clothing and material things. Jesus saw that with the intuition of the seer, the

insight of spiritual genius; but it is literally a scientific truth, a law of nature, a statement of the way the universe on its moral side is actually made and how it actually works. Religion cannot stop short of seeking social expression along the lines of this great saying.

At present we are in the ridiculous position that a bumper harvest, a great catch of fish, the vastly increased output of a new machine or process, cause widespread misery. How the fiends in hell, if such there be, must laugh!

The law of hunger and food applies over a much wider field than the instinctive hungers of the body. Man, product of evolution as he is, has, as the Old Testament writers recognised ages ago, a very complex nature, and affinities with earth and heaven. Though 'born as the wild ass's colt,' he is 'but little lower than the angels (or God, or the gods)' and 'crowned with glory and honour.' Beside the hungers of the body, he has hungers of the mind and spirit; and in the very possession of these he far transcends the infra-human kinds. 'Thou hast put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, yea and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea.'

He desires freedom, which implies leisure, and reasonably unhindered opportunity for self-expression, for seeking self-fulfilment along lines indicated by his own individual character and gifts. Play, sportive and joyous, he feels to be his birthright as regards much of his time and energy; whether it be the games of youth carried on far into maturity; or the playful forms of activities carried on earlier in racial history in deadly earnest, such as hunting, fishing, fighting, wandering, exploring, camping, voyaging, gardening; or the constructive and decorative arts and the higher professional callings which give the maximum of play in the work itself.

He desires knowledge and experience—wants to know and to do many things far beyond the range of bread-winning;

he rejoices to range in imagination over seemingly endless vistas in time and space, delights to be a 'spectator of all time and all existence.' He loves adventure, danger, the taking of risks, the conquering of obstacles, achievement. Has no one ever stood at the North or South Pole? Then costly expeditions are fitted out, and one intrepid explorer after another braves loneliness and toil and danger to achieve it. Has no one ever yet 'flown' across the Channel, or the Atlantic, or round the world? Then one daring pilot after another makes the attempt; or if it has been done, intrepid men and women vie with each other to do it in less time or under more rigorous conditions. When some new thing is achieved millions read or hear with a thrill of sympathy and pride. Is there something not yet fully understood—the movements and distances of stars—the action of some form of radiation newly discovered and reproducible in the laboratory—the means by which some fell epidemic is disseminated? Then some will spend and risk their lives until the secret be revealed.

He hungers for communion with his kind—for comradeship, friendship, fellowship, love in all their many forms and degrees; his life, and especially in those activities which are free and spontaneous and joyous, is infinitely enriched by being shared with others like-minded. How vastly poorer we should be without our clubs, societies, brotherhoods of a thousand different kinds!

Finally, all these good things leave us incomplete. Some pall in time, some come to an end, some retain their zest yet leave us unfulfilled. This is no cause for pessimism or for ultimate discontent with life; rather, it is our highest privilege. 'Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless till it find rest in thee'; our final hunger is *hunger for God*, the 'Author and giver of all good things,' their living reality, being, ground. Here as always the natural poetry of the mind expresses truths reached later and slowly

by the intellect. The Bible has many and oft-recurring expressions of this kind. It speaks of God as a well of water, a fountain of living water. 'They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have hewn them cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.' 'Like as the hart desireth the water brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God.' 'Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' 'Bread from heaven.' 'I am the bread of life.' 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.' 'Work not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you.' 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.'

All these hungers are 'natural' to man. How absurd is the idea of human nature as consisting solely of the primitive acquisitive, pugnacious, and amorous instincts! Every worthy and admirable thing that man can be or become is natural; his nature is human just because he transcends the infra-human species.

Remembering that man is organic with the universe, hunger, here too, implies the existence of food. Here too, as with the bodily hungers, the food can be had, *on terms;* and the terms are essentially the same—effort, discipline, co-operation. A man and a maid fall in love, and if they have reverence, they feel how rich and utterly undeserved a gift has come to them. And sometimes they are deceived by childish stories ending 'so they married, and lived happily ever after.' Not so do life's real riches come, but by long years of faithfulness, of shared life in all its ranges of joy and sorrow, endeavour, failure, danger, success, of expanding loves and responsibilities, and of 'paying the price.' Or how shall the slack, the careless, the self-indulgent 'find the knowledge of God'? To such more than to all he is *Deus absconditus*, a God who hides himself. The gift, the grace,

the ecstatic rapture may come from time to time to each; but like the other lover, he must surrender and serve, aspire and strive and trust, fail as well as succeed, keep reverence, face undaunted 'the dark night of the soul,' if he is to find his soul's fulfilling, and 'know him in whom he has believed.'

And now we are brought with a bump to earth again. No man can be a lover or a poet, or worship God, or conquer difficulties, or do anything else that may become a man, unless he has had frequently and recently something to eat! Also, how can a subsistence wage or an even more meagre public assistance allowance satisfy a man, amid flaunting luxury and prodigal waste, even if 'no man hath hired' him and through no fault of his own he is unemployed? Why should his daily bread, to say nothing of the higher good things of life, be dependent on 'somebody' hiring him? How can a Christian, with his beliefs about God and man and the universe, remain content with a social order which denies to millions the material things necessary for a full human life, and with economic methods that inevitably lead to the vast chasm between fabulous riches and extreme penury?

These hungers and satisfactions we have been dealing with are 'higher' than the bodily ones, if only as specific to man; but they approve themselves in another way as higher, inasmuch as they are *not exclusive*. An apple can only go into one stomach; a pair of shoes cannot be on two pairs of feet at the same time; an easy-chair may accommodate several children or two young lovers, but has a limited capacity anyway. But spiritual goods like knowledge, beauty and love, in all their varieties and manifestations, cannot be quantitatively estimated. The laws of arithmetic do not apply; they are increased by sharing, multiplied by dividing, made our own by giving them away. See a glorious picture by a great artist, catch something of its beauty and of what the painter is trying to convey to you,

react to it, now with an inward leap for joy, now with a catch in the throat and a moisture in the eye, now in other ways; and then bring another or others, try to get them to share the experience. You are made richer so, not poorer, and the others too are enriched. As long as the picture's material substance can be preserved, there is no limit in itself to its potentialities as a joy-giver, a life-quickener. Take a seat in some great hall, where a concert is being given by a world-famous orchestra, and thrill to the music in every fibre of your being; and your joy is not less but more, because a thousand of your fellows are around you, and many thousands more are enjoying a paler and less satisfying reproduction by hearing it over the wireless.

> The grass is softer to my tread
> For rest it yields unnumbered feet;
> Sweeter to me the wild rose red
> Because she makes the whole world sweet.

And 'your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things' too; if we seek to realise the justice of his kingdom, and to do (not bear) his will, on earth as it is in heaven, then all these things will be added unto us, *all of us*.

We have emphasised words like hunger, thirst, striving, active endeavour, quest, adventure; and these are of the very essence of all life, from the simplest organism to man, from the infant's cry and groping for the breast to the lover's wooing, the soldier's daring, the reformer's passion for righteousness, the poet's making, the saint's purgation, the spirit's flight. Life is 'all of a piece,' and all these are part of, and are summed up and completed in the soul's quest for God. Christianity has much to tell us of this many-sided quest, and the conditions of its success and fruitfulness.

Man needs much more than mere food and clothing; consider again how absolutely true this is. The moment the elementary needs are satisfied, other imperious and urgent needs become felt. Nay rather, in all but the most primitive

stages of development, and in all but the most desperate circumstances, the endeavour to satisfy the elementary hungers is linked up with the higher ones. See how man even in the remote stone age makes rude weapons and tools of stone or bone, and when for the time being his hunger is satisfied, scratches on these the very spirited drawings of animals of the chase that are such fascinating objects in our museums. He finds out beautiful lines and curves in making his tools, and adorns these, as also his dwelling and his person, with carving or colour, or with natural objects used with more or less art. Probably clothing itself was primarily æsthetic. Perhaps some day we shall get back to a new kind of simplicity, and hide the beauty of properly developed human form far less than we do. But perhaps, as Dr. Herbert Gray suggests, 'too few of us have sufficiently reverent eyes for it yet.'

Strange as it may seem, this active side of life and of religion has frequently been largely forgotten. Over-emphasis on thought in religion has led to a barren and cold intellectualism, egoistic and quarrelsome; while over-emphasis on feeling has brought about a shallow, and ultimately cold and heartless, sentimentality. Even on the active side itself, as already indicated, the emphasis has been too much confined to works of mercy, or worse still, to censorious tabus and repressions. It has been forgotten that what men need is opportunity, stimulus, guidance, not repression and punishment; and that in order to give these we must scrutinise and reform not only our personal habits but our methods of carrying on our corporate business—industrial, commercial, political.

Christian ethics says practically nothing about real or supposed rights of property; indeed it warns us in the most unsparing terms that material possessions are not real treasure, and may actually hinder and choke life. It does indeed assume commandments VI to X of the Decalogue, deepening

and extending them. But it goes further, to things much more positive, creative, and joyous. Its specific virtues are Faith, Hope, and Love.

Faith begins in fundamental trust in life and experience, in the pointings of our own nature. It means the confidence that hungers imply food, that love and fellowship, unhindered and joyous, are possible, that more than the best that men have dreamed of shall one day be realised by man. It leads to trust in God, and confidence that the Rule of God can be progressively realised. Faith is dynamic and creative, tending to realise its vision. We are saved by faith.

Hope includes the determined and courageous forward look, the avoidance of idle remorse, egoistic and fruitless, the dwelling upon the glowing vision ahead and the undaunted pursuit of it. It too is dynamic and creative. We are saved by hope.

Love, in this triad, means love active, which has been defined as practical service inspired by reverence. It is unforgettably described in Paul's great chapter 1 Cor. xiii. Christian love will agonise, will do costing things, will take up the cross, will share in the divine work of redeeming mankind from slavery to evil and its heritage of pain. And in our time it cannot but work itself out partly through legislation, administration, and social reorganisation. We are redeemed by love.

Another side of the Christian life must be just mentioned for the sake of balance, though it has little to do with the social expression of religion (it is, however, a warning to social workers). It is this: service and sacrifice are not ends but means; 'the active life is inferior to the contemplative.' Against pursuit must be placed *fruition;* and this is described in the second great Christian Triad, Love, Joy, Peace—love realised, consummated and blissful; joy unspeakable, perfect; peace final and all-embracing. Love, the last word in the first triad, is the first word in the second.

It is the greatest thing, belonging to both spheres and linking them into a unity. We glorify God in faith, hope, love; we enjoy him in love, joy, peace.

On the active and practical side which concerns us most in the present inquiry, and with some theoretical backing, man's hungers may be grouped as hungers for power and hungers for love (and the greater of these is love). On the due proportion of these, and the direction of them to right objects, depend man's happiness and well-being as a personal and spiritual being. As such we have seen that he needs to be a member of a community; and this needs to be of a kind that will enable him to find his true life, in which he can be free and creative and happy because he follows out his own true good with the minimum of hindrance, inward or outward.

The reality of both kinds of hindrance cannot be doubted, and they are inter-connected.

Think of the outward obstacles. Consider, for instance, poverty in the midst of riches; poverty, not in a tiny country cottage, with flowers growing by the door, green fields, clean air, sunshine and rain, the pageantry of the over-arching sky and the changing seasons, where it is tolerable, but poverty in the festering slum or the mean street, drab, dirty and dreary at the best, and at the worst, foul and vile.

Think of the overcrowded homes and the overcrowded neighbourhoods, of dwelling-places where the most ordinary decencies are almost impossible, and even a step higher, the absence of privacy and quiet, the inevitable fraying of nerves, the lack of freedom to express individuality. The child in such homes is handicapped already; if in spite of this some individual capacity shows itself, and the child is sent to a higher school, what real chance has he? How can he get quiet for home-work, leisure for reading, stimulating conversation, help or understanding sympathy? How indeed can he get the greater care for physical health that the brainy child often needs?

Think of the temptations to base amusements and pleasures, *out of which someone is getting dividends*, with little social or Christian disapproval.

Imagine if you can the literally impossible task of bringing up five or six children properly on a labourer's wage, even when he is in full work and when neither parent through weakness or despair yields to the many degrading temptations around. That many put up the splendid fight they do, and with amazing relative success, fills one alternately with admiration and with hot shame.

Beside these are the uncertainty of employment, chronic under-employment, or long periods of total unemployment. Have we realised the physical and moral damage of this?

In tolerating such things, are we, *collectively*, loving our neighbour as ourselves, are we treating all as brothers and sisters, of equal value as children of the One Father, God?

The plain truth is that parents, teachers and ministers are up against practically impossible obstacles, *removable* obstacles. There is a vast amount of loving, self-sacrificing work being done in dealing with what are really *symptoms* of social *disease;* but it is 'not enough.' Hygiene and preventive medicine are needed for the social organism as well as for the physical body and the individual soul. And can any human need be of no concern to a Christian?

It is true that 'pain and passion may not die'—that even if all outward obstacles be removed, there will always be the need of guidance, nurture, education, for the overcoming of inward obstacles. But this too is a great *corporate* activity, and should be a supreme practical interest and expression of religion.

To think of education as having for its purpose the enabling one to get a living or to do the best for oneself in the kind of society which now exists is utterly contemptible and desperately false. An educated human being is heir of all the ages

and knows it. He has reverent memories and glorious hopes. He 'loves and hates the right things.' He is conscious of social debt and social duty. He has some approximation to a true scale of values. He knows that true life is found not in getting and having but in giving and being. He realises that loyalty and service are of infinitely more worth than pride and pomp, power and pelf. He sees his own life in some sort of relation to a cosmic whole, however inadequately conceived. His loyalties are worthily enlisted, his purposes noble and his will disciplined for their attainment, his passions not wild beasts but splendid steeds under rein and control, bearing his life onward toward its goal.

For all this religion alone is adequate; and nothing is worth calling education which is not essentially religious through and through. The notion of education 'as a faggot of subjects, out of which one may take the particular stick called religion without appreciable loss of kindling for the fire,' is quaintly absurd and indeed preposterous. Equally so at the other extreme is the opinion recorded by the House of Lords in its journals in the early years of the nineteenth century, that an education suitable for the poor 'should make them humble, patient, and moral; and should compensate for the hardships of their present lot by the prospects of a bright eternity.'

Here then is a vast field in which religion *must* find social expression, if mankind is to be saved at all. And just here is one of our greatest failures. 'Our unhappy divisions' and sectarian squabbles have made the very idea of religious education a hateful one to many high-minded citizens.

Ceaseless thought and effort are required for the one reason alone, that man's foods have to be won, and can only be won in fellowship. But when another simple fact is realised to the full, the need is seen to be clearer and more urgent still—the fact that the individual life moves relentlessly on from birth, through the normal course, to death. 'The

generations rise and pass away,' and there is no line of division, though for convenience we often speak as if there were. Births and deaths are happening every day and hour. Mankind is engaged upon a big and difficult enterprise, a great and perilous adventure; individuals, and whole communities, may relax effort, lose hope, fall by the way, miss the road to the true goal, lose 'the prize of our upward calling.' Always there is the tendency to slip back to the lower levels, to rest satisfied with the more primitive satisfactions, to despair of or deliberately to turn away from the higher values. But it is not possible to become mere animals again, mere natural history specimens. When man ceases to climb he tends to fall below the beast; indeed to call him a beast is an insult to the furred and feathered creatures of the wild.

What have been called the hungers for power and for love manifest themselves on the lowest ranges as the instinctive urges to self-maintenance and to procreation, with readiness to fight when these are threatened.

In even such civilisations as have yet been achieved, mere natural existence has become so relatively easy that tremendous vital energies are liberated; and unless these are directed into specifically human or spiritual channels, horrors and disasters unspeakable ensue of the sort with which we are all too painfully familiar—foul personal vices and perversions, breakdowns and insanity, titanic wickedness, oppression and injustice on a gigantic scale, destructive wars bringing pestilence and famine and moral retrogression in their train. The highest type of religion alone can give both reasonable theoretic backing and an effective dynamic for the ceaseless striving whereby man must fulfil himself.

Man, considered merely biologically, though he can and should grow to great beauty and perfection of bodily development, is a rather feeble and defenceless creature. He cannot, and never could find food and keep himself alive without

co-operation, to which indeed he has strong instinctive urges. The story of social development, on one side of it, is a story of many inventions in the technique of co-operative maintenance of life, individual and racial; the moral development tending to lag behind the material in every civilisation so far, not least in our own. Modern knowledge is such that by really intelligent and willing co-operation, unperverted by covetousness, the obstacles to self-preservation can be practically annihilated. The needful things for material well-being could easily be provided for everybody. There is now literally no assignable limit to what a rationally planned 'economy' directed definitely to that end, and not to profit-making, could achieve. The moral implications of this fact have not yet been fully thought out; that it has any moral implications at all seems to have been realised as yet by only a few minds.

Again, only religion is adequate to enable man to grapple with these vast problems; and if the members of organised religious communities persist in saying that religion has nothing to do with all these matters, they are making the 'great refusal' of our time. And Nemesis will assuredly follow. Without the guidance, the dynamic, and the supreme loyalties of religion, man easily over-develops his love of power and desire for possession. Every civilisation that has yet existed has in the end destroyed itself through developing an economic system designed for gratifying the acquisitive instincts of some rather than for supplying the needs of all. Such methods destroy 'love,' render impossible the creation of any satisfying community, encourage hatred and selfishness, mutual suspicion and fear, lead to crooked and insincere politics and Machiavellian diplomacy, and finally to the fiendish hell of modern warfare.

That is what will happen to our own civilisation in its turn unless we repent, *i.e.* change our minds and hearts and methods, and that speedily. Our present troubles are the

handwriting on the wall. And if we silence those who would tell us so, 'saying to the prophets, Prophesy not,' and enforcing it by subtle but effective methods, we are once more crying 'Not this man, but Barabbas,' and crucifying the Christ afresh.

As between power and love, we have said that the greater of these is love. But just as an over-developed desire for power and possession destroys love and is disastrous and devastating in its effects, so too, in the other sphere, the over-gratification of the desire for love on its lowest plane, as procreative activity pursued for mere self-indulgence or pleasure, is in a different way even more destructive. It ruins many marriages, and introduces a subtle poison into social life, bringing about suspicions and fears. It renders difficult or impossible that happy equal comradeship of men and women in the higher ranges of enjoyment and activity which ought to be possible and is extraordinarily fruitful whenever in any measure it exists. The only Christian standard for the relations between men and women is 'purity of heart,' which means a complete delicacy of respect amounting to reverence. This applies both within marriage and outside of it; and indeed it covers the whole field of personal relationships. The true Christian purity of heart would make it utterly impossible to use any other human being for one's own mere pleasure or profit, or to connive at or approve social arrangements which so used human beings, whether men, women or children, and whether in directly personal relationships or in industry and trade. Nothing else and nothing less is the Christian standard. A truly far-reaching principle! It expresses in a different way the fundamental law, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Personal relationships, social habits, trades, economic methods which inevitably degrade or enslave or exploit others, or even cause serious risk of so doing, stand alike condemned. A Christian who realises the full implications of his faith finds

himself enlisted for life in a spiritual warfare against these things. He must 'not cease from mental strife,' but 'build Jerusalem,' offering his life as a building stone.

The possibilities of power guided by love, subordinate to love and in its service, have been suggested earlier. Science and organising skill, used with a single eye to the good of mankind, would work wonders beside which our mere 'machines' and 'records' would pale into insignificance. But the possibilities of love itself are literally infinite, with the infinity of God whose very nature is Love. Even in human life, love is the greatest thing in the world, proved so by experience though we have yet trusted it and tried it so little. *The Christian as such is committed to it*, over the whole field of human life.

And as a matter of science and experience, the hunger for love, properly understood, is the highest hunger and leads to all the best goods of life. Intellect at the bidding of love can lead us safely through the infernal deeps and up the mount of purgation to the earthly paradise; but Love itself must be our guide to highest heaven. A life of love is a life given and shared; it is a quickening life, ever touching other lives in and to love, awakening slumbering souls to new joy and power. It inspires alike the artist's vision, the poet's song, the musician's melody, the patient tender courage of the mother and the father, the political battle of the reformer, all the best of professional work, and the vicarious motherhood and fatherhood which tends the sick, teaches and guides the little ones, rescues the fallen, champions the down-trodden, opens blind eyes and prison doors, makes the lame to walk and the dumb to sing. To the measure of our love is our knowledge of God, whose very almightiness is the almightiness of love and of no other.

The Kingship or Rule of God is to be 'within us'; that is, primary and fundamental. But the further duty is inexorable; it must be *realised*, as in heaven, so on earth.

A Christian society would manage all its affairs with a view to the fewest obstacles in the way of spiritual development in all its members, and the fullest opportunity and stimulus to realised membership in the family of God. This earth would then be what it is meant to be—a fitting forecourt to our Father's House, in which are homesteads in plenty, eternal in the heavens.

CHAPTER III

SOME OBJECTIONS FORESTALLED

SOME objections that are commonly met with at the outset, to the very idea of the social expression of religion, have been already mentioned. But some of those who have had the patience to read what has been written up to this point may still be saying that social service is not religion; that religion as such has no concern with slums or poverty, with garden cities and baths and libraries, with currency reform or an international outlook. We shall be told we are still confusing morality with religion, giving special emphasis to what purports to be a neglected side of morality, or a new sphere in which moral ideas must be recognised and applied. We shall be reminded again that religion is something quite other than morality of any kind, or even than 'morality touched with emotion.'

This is indeed most true and needs to be impressed whenever it is forgotten. There has been a strong tendency in some quarters in modern times, in reaction against ancient dogmas now difficult to understand, or theologies which though modern also need much toilsome study, to say that after all what matters is conduct and that religion all boils down to uprightness and kindness. It is curious and perhaps significant that some of the very people who tend to take this line are most insistent that religion has nothing to do with politics or trade. The truth is that this sort of blindness can arise just as easily from the absence of any thought-out theology as from a detailed and dogmatic but narrow one.

But it has surely been made plain in Chapters I and II that religion as here conceived is not mere morality, but that it is a personal relationship based on faith and love, and also a search for the best all along the line and in every field. Religion, in so far as it is distinct from all the practical activities of life, may be termed devotional religion. It is *Worship;* the gaining of life by the offering, the surrender of it. It is personal experience and enjoyment of spiritual values, of fellowship, of God. It is fruition as against endeavour, life as against living, rest and peace as against toil and battle. It is experience of the abiding as against the fleeting and unsatisfying, of harmony as against discord, of the eternal as against the temporal, of God as against self. But to the Christian it is not the *negation* of all these others; rather it is their crown and completion. No one, however insistent that religion is not mere morality, would dare to say that it had nothing to do with morality in any way. But when the connection is forgotten, even 'religion' may become a self-indulgence, thereby slipping easily and quickly into superstition. 'Behold in the day of your fast ye find your own pleasure,' and oppress all your labourers.' New moons and sabbaths, burnt offerings and sacrifices, music and crowded festivals (and their modern equivalents) may all become abominations, unless we remember that God's first requirement of us is that we do justly. A really living religion, real whole-hearted worship of the Living God, will inevitably inspire, energise, and transfigure all our practical activities and human relationships, personal and corporate. That has been our thesis, all through.

Even so, it may still be objected that the account given of religion is altogether one-sided and insufficient; and that as regards the Christian religion, with all its richness of content, the inadequacy of the description is still more apparent—that indeed there have been omitted almost all the teachings and experiences which are most specific to Christianity and most

characteristic of its life. That there is much truth in this may be admitted at once. The purpose of this book required that a good deal should be said about the nature of religion, in order to show how inevitable it was that religion must find social expression. But it was no part of its purpose to attempt a complete account of religion. Only those aspects have been dealt with which seemed to have relevance to the main topic. Other volumes in this series deal with some other aspects. But the series as a whole deals with 'modern needs and problems,' so that the treatment throughout is likely to be selective. Criticism as to omissions is only valuable if it can be shown that omitted features have an unnoticed and direct relevance to the particular problems discussed.

Especially, nothing that has been said in this book need be taken as denying the reality of sin and of conflict, or of the need of salvation, atonement, and of redemptive suffering as its means. Nor, in the emphasis on human responsibility, personal and corporate, on human effort, adventure, discovery and achievement, on the challenge of social injustices to the conscience and the will, is there to be read any denial or want of appreciation of the Grace of God, or of the profound truth that 'we love because he first loved us.' The 'sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,' is always two-edged.

A third and more formidable objection may be anticipated. A Christian order of society, it may be said, is impossible. Also, that even if some approximation to it could be realised it would be miserably unsatisfying, and moreover by leading to moral slackness and degeneration it would destroy itself.

Those who say that it is not possible to establish a juster social order, to which a Christian as such could give a large measure of approval, usually couple it with the phrase 'human nature being what it is,' and think of human nature as expressed in its worst possibilities. There are indeed no moral depths to which man may not descend under the

influence of insecurity and fear, or a sense of an unjustly thwarted life, or sheer boredom and absence of rational satisfaction of his normal desires as a human being. But when these distorting causes are removed, many finer possibilities open up. His powerful instincts become directed toward other objects, and the more social and 'kindly' ones find scope, to his immense increase of happiness. Human nature is best understood in the best things of which it is capable, demonstrably capable, even apart from religious teachings as to man being a child of God, with something of divine 'seed' in him.

Given reasonable security, and a real home, with full access to gardens, playing-fields and other amenities, the average man would contentedly enjoy his home, garden, children, and hobbies. Merely commercial amusements and 'news' being abolished, the natural man would find his natural pleasures in gardening, games, rambling, travelling, music, social intercourse, constructive handicrafts as hobbies, reading, listening-in, and in a hundred ways which are not harmful or degrading. Nearly all the worst temptations come from riches and poverty—the fear of poverty, the incentive of great gain, narrow and thwarted lives, minds arrested in development, and commercialised amusements.

If the life of the liberated average man, as sketched above, seems to some people rather pedestrian, this view is only superficial; and in any case such a life is better far than the starved, degraded, brutalised life so common now. Nor is that all. In such a social order as we are considering, romance would have freer play, and the homely affections a fair chance. It is these things that are 'natural' to man, when he is enabled to live a natural life—not the bestial, the cruel, the selfish. But we can go further, and say that the average man can be counted upon for much more than that. Should need arise, through fire, accident, disease, or misfortune of any kind, heroic service would be normal, and its

occasional absence something to be noted with pity or blame. We all, if we get our knowledge of human nature from personal contacts with ordinary people and not from reading the sensational things dished up by newspapers, know of the quiet heroism of mothers and fathers, nurses, miners, sailors, railwaymen, and a host of others. This we could normally rely upon; and more than this we have no right to expect of the majority.

There is nothing in Christian ethics to justify the expectation of everyone living all the time on a sustained level of heroic self-abnegation. The people who do that are the salt of the earth; but just as salt alone would be a thirst-inducing poison, so a society composed wholly or largely of the spiritual heroes would be unendurable and self-stultifying. A little salt is required to preserve the sweetness and bring out the flavour of a mass of plain wholesome food, just as a little yeast will make light and digestible a great heavy mass of dough. The Christian saint, on the highest authority, is likened to salt and leaven. But under the Rule of God on earth, most people will live normal, happy, ordinary human lives, and will be neither great saints nor great sinners. There are many mansions, which means places to live in, homesteads, in the Father's house.

And if the normal, happy, ordinary people with their homely joys need further discipline by trial and sorrow, that is a matter for God our Father, not for their human brethren to inflict upon them. There is nothing whatever in Christian teaching to lead us to condone social injustices and preventible miseries on the ground that hardship *may* brace a character and temper a soul. It may be an excellent prescription for a man to make for himself; to make it compulsorily for other people is sheer hypocrisy and flat blasphemy.

Nor have we any right whatever to expect a better average than we get in human character and achievement, from bad

social conditions. Indeed the marvel is all the other way, that so many *do* become the salt of the earth, and that the average is so high as it is. We can only say it happens by the grace of God, and bow the head humbly in worship. Who that knows some poor homes at first hand has not done so?

Others doubt the possibility of a Christian social order because of the mountainous vested interests and ignorances and fears which stand in the way. But faith removes mountains; we believe it to be literally true that if even all professing Christians, though they be a minority, really held the Christian 'faith,' these mountains could be removed. On the other hand, something else needs to be said, in words considered and measured. If Christian faith does not set about its proper work of mountain-removal, and tackle in earnest the hindrances to full and happy life for the whole people, cost what it may, then the work will be done by what we sometimes call a 'bolshevist' faith. Relatively, that would be a disaster, because the Christian faith, properly understood, implies an infinitely finer, fuller, truer philosophy of life than the Marxist one. The latter in comparison might be described as narrow, fanatical, ruthless, and intellectually bankrupt. But perhaps in view of much Christian teaching and practice, both in bygone ages and to-day, our habitation is too brittle to admit of stone-throwing.

Others may look upon a Christian social order as something merely utopian, which if it could be set up in some unknown and miraculous way would not remain stable, but would begin to crumble forthwith. But that is not the sort of thing which is in the mind of any intelligent advocate of a Christian social order. It would not be anything static, established once for all. It would embody certain large features such as relative security and peace and plenty for all; but in details it would be alive and growing, ever exploring new ways toward perfection, as well as ever guarding against retrogression. It would be informed by a spirit, the Christian

spirit of love and service and brotherliness, real because based in the knowledge and love of God. It would be led by real and thorough-going Christians, who would find in its 'guardianship' the fullest practical expression of their religion, their supreme practical call and mission.

Just as the ordinary man, under better conditions, could be counted upon for normal life, with quiet faithfulness, homely affections, wholesome pleasures, and heroism in emergency, so too there would be no fear of failure in the succession of prophets, apostles and witnesses. As many, probably more, would hear the call to a life of high vocation, and would by serving achieve the greatness which is on the scale of the eternities. Who that has in any measure or degree responded to the call can doubt it? God hath not left himself without witness in any age.

Indeed these chosen, sent, devoted people would for the first time be set free for their proper work. They would no longer be obliged to give tremendous energies to social ambulance work, dealing with the symptoms and results of social disease. They could befriend, guide, inspire and teach and they could do it with real hope and joy. At present, they are up against inhuman obstacles. Things which can and should be prevented are working powerfully against them all the time, such as the condition of many homes, the worst productions of Hollywood, the low-grade 'press,' the drinking saloon, the varied and subtle temptations to gambling; out of all of which some people are getting a livelihood and other people are getting dividends, the latter being the more to blame. As things are, a sense of helplessness and futility drives many from any participation in organised religion or specifically Christian ministry of any kind; many turn to politics, and then find that politics uninspired by religion are a snare and a disappointment. Others lose heart altogether, their attitude becoming in effect 'all is vanity; let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we shall die.' That

that outlook is as common as it is, among intelligent young men and women whose forbears were zealous church members, is a standing shame and reproach to Christians. We have failed badly somewhere. Perhaps our argument has shown part of the reason.

If Christians could give direction and dynamic for the major reforms that are needed for our deliverance from the present hopeless tangle, we could then realise in fact what is but a dream of the mind at present, namely, a wider conception of Christian ministry. Not only the 'cure of souls,' and not only education and medicine and public administration, but many other callings would come under the term. Even more of it than at present would be voluntary, an occupation of leisure. When professionally paid, no 'minister' would need or desire a large income, the present monstrous maldistribution of material goods, with its disastrous consequences in all sorts of ways, having been rectified.

No, there would be no failure of Christian ministry; rather, in it more and more people would take a share. Then we might come near the realisation of the prophet's dream:

> 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.'

This cannot possibly happen without drastic alterations in present social conditions.

CHAPTER IV

CONVERGING LINES OF THOUGHT. CONCLUSION

In all that has been said so far, there will be to some Christian people nothing whatever that is new, though possibly not all these thoughts have been put together before in the same compass.

As, however, these deductions from Christian teaching are very very far from being generally agreed upon, the argument has necessarily included a great deal of criticism of current average Christian thought and outlook. In this way a little sense of one-sidedness and unfairness may have been left in some readers' minds. Lest this should remain, be it acknowledged at once and emphatically, that Christian people have for nearly two thousand years been ever in the forefront in unselfish service of the poor, the sick, and the down-trodden. There have been shortcomings and failures enough; but until a few centuries ago, practically all voluntary and self-giving personal work in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, tending the sick and teaching the ignorant, and practically all money given or bequeathed for these purposes, has been done by church members and through the inspiration of Christian teaching and worship. Even to-day the same is true of a large majority, more so than many critics realise. Friendly and personal help within the immediate circle, benevolent funds, poor's purse, tithe and the like in the local parish or congregation have always been features in Christian church life. (One-third of the tithe was set apart for the poor in pre-Reformation days.) Monastic institutions, schools, colleges, hospitals,

orphanages, almshouses, trust funds for charitable purposes have been formed by the thousand. A very large proportion of the voluntary funds for these still comes from church members, and probably a still larger proportion of the actual personal voluntary work. The harvest may sometimes have been poor in quality and meagre in quantity, but the fruits have never completely failed.

No real Christian ever has been or can be indifferent to *realised* suffering or wrong; but the individual Christian and indeed the whole body may be woefully blind, through lack of imagination, inadequate thought, class distinctions and the bias of class feeling and tradition, false emphasis in religion, undue preoccupation with trade or gain or personal advancement.

We now need, on a large scale, wider conceptions and more thorough applications of Christian teaching. We need a more lively imagination which shall quicken sympathy, eager efforts after a fellowship that shall ignore class distinctions and either abolish them or take all the sting out of them, a Christian loyalty which shall be felt to transcend every other loyalty, a determined effort to approach every problem of politics or social organisation or industry or commerce as Christians first, and everything else, in comparison, nowhere. Such a quickened Christian conscience in social affairs and business matters would quickly make impossible the taking for granted of many ideas and methods which are at present seldom questioned or criticised from a religious point of view. So that once more we come round to the fact that a fully realised Christianity will profoundly affect social structure and methods as well as personal conduct. Higher personal standards inevitably in the end bring about changes in social organisation; these in their turn help to make easy and habitual the better ethical standards to which they owe their origin. To deny any relation between religion on the one hand and politics and business

on the other is going quite ' against the grain ' of the universe, and is ignoring every lesson of sociology and history.

Modern as distinct from mediæval times have been characterised by a strong individualistic emphasis. The close of the Middle Ages was marked by a new sense of freedom and a more adventurous exploration both of the surface of the globe and of the realm of knowledge. Wider intercourse, new thoughts, fresh opportunities for the discovery of hitherto unknown worlds, readier means for carving out a career or making a fortune, had their usual disintegrating effect on old and settled habits of thought and life. The reaction of all this on religion was what might be expected. Stress was laid on individual sin and salvation. Individual energy and enterprise were admired and praised. Personal honesty and integrity in business and politics seemed the great and only desideratum. A strong tendency developed toward separate codes of conduct in the home, in business, or within one's own social class, with little criticism from the religious side. The right of private judgment in matters of religious belief and personal conduct was insisted upon. Corporate responsibility for social evils was hardly thought of, or denied. If people were poor, it was their own laziness or stupidity or bad habits which made and kept them so.

Strange as it may seem, there are still great numbers of good, kindly, sincere religious people who have not moved on from the kind of attitude sketched above. Yet for a century now we have been slowly and painfully learning again the reality of collective responsibility and of corporate sin. We have spoken of diseases of the body politic, and more and more have meant what we said, nor merely using the phrase as a vague analogy or a figure of speech. A long series of remedial social measures has been passed—Public Health Acts, Factory Acts, Education Acts, Social Insurance Acts and so on—with hot and bitter opposition at each stage. Hoary arguments of the 'thirties of the nineteenth

century are still used in the 'thirties of the twentieth against every further extension of social legislation, professing Christians being numerous in the forefront of the opposition. But surely, if our account of religion is right, its votaries should be in the vanguard of social thought; and if they disagree with some particular proposal they should be prepared with a better one, instead of being merely in opposition as they often are. We need that poverty and misery and all their attendant evils should be regarded as a challenge by everyone making any profession of religion. It ought to be impossible now for any Christian to argue either that the teachings of his religion have no relevance to social injustices, or that there is no remedy anyway, since these things happen in accordance with inescapable economic law. The laws of political economy have only a faint resemblance to scientific law. They depend on assumptions which are not universally valid but are themselves open to serious criticism from the side of ethical religion.

Medicine, whether for the physical or the social body, naturally begins with the search for remedies for symptoms. Then comes the search for deeper causes and in consequence more effectual remedies. Along with this the truth comes to be realised that prevention is better than cure. There has been much fine work done in alleviation of the miseries caused by poverty, and the rescue of individuals from slavery to intemperance, gambling and other vices. But Christian people on the whole have failed to realise that these vices are themselves largely the *results* of poverty and wretchedness, and that poverty is itself a disease which we must ceaselessly be trying to prevent as well as cure.

' Give us this day our daily bread ' we pray, taught by our Master. It is the only and sufficient clause in the prayer which asks for material good, bread obviously being understood to be typical and inclusive of all the physical needs. Our heavenly Father knows we have need of all these things

—then why ask him for them? some people say. Surely one reason is that we ask for them not merely for ourselves. The word is not give me, but give us. The pronoun is plural and unlimited; it does not mean me and my family, or the working classes, or the British people. It means all mankind. We are not begging a favour, nor even making a petition; we are expressing an aim and an aspiration that ought to be in our minds as children of God and in his realised presence when we pray. That anyone should go hungry when there is plenty of food available is something to remember with shame when we seek the throne of grace. We have thought too much of prayer as mere petition or even as a begging of a special favour. Prayer is an active energy of the whole nature, a reaching out of the whole personality toward God. It is a mode of discovering his will, not of getting our own. It is an act of self-dedication, of consecration. True prayer brings peace and strength through clearer vision, singleness of aim, certainty of direction, harmony with the will of God. If this be so, how dare we say 'Give us this day our daily bread,' and yet lazily or thoughtlessly acquiesce in the fact that millions at this moment in England are suffering from malnutrition and from insufficiency of clothing and fuel, or that many Public Assistance Authorities consider two shillings a week a sufficient sum to feed and clothe a child? And this when granaries are bursting, warehouses choked with goods, and our productive resources not being used, men and machines alike standing idle? Can that be the will of God? And when we pray the prayer, do we expect him to perform a miracle to abolish the effects of our stupid monetary system? Not so is God's universe made.

Minds need feeding as well as bodies. Can we contentedly accept the fact that we are cutting down educational expenditure and threatening to do it further, while war-profiteers can still be receiving five-figure incomes out of the

country's taxes, without the obligation of contributing any further service to the common good, just because they lent their 'money' to the Government?

The three clues that have been followed for one clause of the prayer—the plural pronouns, the social reference as part of the meaning, the reminder that prayer is an act of consecration—may profitably be followed through the whole.

The prayer is startling in its simplicity, and even more startling in its richness of meaning. 'Our Father'; a child's words! How amazing are, on the one hand, the thoughtlessness and, on the other hand, the evasions, by which Christians have failed to realise the import of the universal pronoun. The One God is Father of ALL. No difference of occupation, or intelligence, or colour of skin, of manners, or character, takes us away from the fact that every single one is as precious as every other in the sight of God. Many Christians have come near to living out this principle in their personal relationships with the people round about them, and the most lovable folk in the world are those who do so. Also, we have sent out missions alike into the dreary 'East Ends' of our cities and to the distant places of the earth. To climates of torrid heat or arctic cold alike the missionaries go, facing loneliness and peril, exiles from their homeland and their traditional culture, to heal and teach and befriend. But have we thought of many things at our own doors in the light of this simple principle? Thousands of families in this country, still one of the richest in the world, have to live in one room, in the twentieth century. Cooking, eating, washing, sleeping, all in one room; babies being born, and members of the family sickening and dying, in the same room; a dead body lying on the table and put on the floor at meal-times, until it can be removed—think of it! How many Christians have dared to say that this is simply *wrong*, that it is social *sin*, and that no vested interests and no so-called economic law ought

to stand in the way of reform? How many are made furious by any such suggestion? It is true there is a growing uneasiness of conscience, and there is much genuine bewilderment and a feeling of helplessness. The Church as a whole has scarcely begun the vigorous thought and research that are needed before this helplessness can pass away.

Our Father is 'in heaven,' and probably the phrase 'on earth as it is in heaven' should be read as belonging to all the three clauses following—a reminder that man's life is set against a cosmic background and that he has an eternal destiny; that the ideal is the utterly real; that 'things' are sacramental and have no other ultimate value. Only in the light of this and after intense reminders of it do we come to speak of daily bread at all. Yet in that light, the material necessaries are quickly given their due place and importance. They are not to be denied or despised, save as a voluntary self-discipline if need be. Social arrangements that deny them to any, while prodigal waste is permitted or even encouraged, are simply *wrong*. Our Father's Name cannot be truly hallowed, kept holy in the worship of men's souls, in so far as we 'despise one of these little ones,' whether in our personal attitude or in practical social arrangements that speak louder than words.

'Thy kingdom come, as in heaven so on earth.' The Kingship or Rule of God issues in 'justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.' If our prayer so far has really taken us into 'the heavenly places' and brought us worshipping into the presence of the Father who dwells there, can we honestly say that either justice or peace is a strong characteristic of the present world-order? And if they are not, what are Christians doing in the matter? How far do their political voice and vote differ from those of others who have seen no such vision and own no such allegiance as theirs? Do most of them ever think of the Lord's Prayer when engaged in 'politics'?

'Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' One of the most astonishing things in religion is the way this is often interpreted as a prayer of resignation, as if it meant Thy will be borne, put up with, accepted resignedly. Of course many troubles and disappointments have to be faced and accepted; but whether an attitude of mere resignation is ever really Christian may be doubted. By a vigorous Christian faith trials are accepted and *transmuted*. Be that as it may, in its whole setting in the prayer the clause is most obviously one of energetic self-dedication. It says 'done,' and means carried out, realised and embodied in our personal and social life. Most emphatically, God's will of justice and peace and fellowship is *not* being done, mostly, in our political and international life. It is selfish man's anti-social will that is being done; and to preach resignation in the face of that is a complete travesty of Christianity. We have no right to accept counsels of despair, nor to sit idly with folded hands, nor to disclaim responsibility, even by talking of 'world causes' or 'economic laws.' We ought to be up and doing. But how timid and hesitating even powerful united committees representing all the sundered Christian communities can be, how afraid of alienating or offending influential church members! Yet those few who some years ago launched a Christian Social Crusade were in the right. Nothing less than a Crusade, a Holy War under the Red Cross Banner with the weapons of the spirit, is called for.

'Lead us not into temptation—not any of us—but deliver us from evil—all of us.' Let the path to purity and true living be not made more difficult for any human brother or sister, by anything we do or leave undone, socially as well as personally. Then how can we consent to, much less draw rents and profits from, housing conditions that render decency, delicacy and mutual respect very difficult indeed; or flaunting 'publics' often most thickly placed where poverty and dreary, crowded, cheerless homes most abound, and whose

degrading and demoralising influence cannot be doubted by any unsophisticated mind? Would they be such as they are, and if they were would they be tolerated, were there not powerful money interests involved? How much folly and sin and prostitution of noble human possibilities is due to sheer poverty? We *are*, collectively, leading our brethren into temptation, and have no right to say this prayer if we draw profit from it, or defend it in our thought, or even live carelessly at ease without making any effort to get it altered.

We ought to make the path of virtue easy, not hard; there is enough 'evil' in our own untaught nature, for deliverance from which human labour and love and fellowship are ceaselessly required as well as Divine Grace.

The doxology, perhaps a later addition, reminds us once more where we are, in the heavenly places with God; and completes the setting against which stand the phrases which express, not so much petition as the awed dedication of the life, the consecration of the spirit, to the will of God, on earth as it is in heaven.

The commission of the apostles, and through them of all Christians, was to preach the gospel and heal the sick. They went forth to do it, proclaiming their good news; good news about the nature of God and of his Rule or Kingdom, liberating ideas which freed men from superstitions and fears, and from the shackles of law which had petrified and become burdensome. Their preaching brought conviction, with new joy and hope, to thousands. They could not break with all the thought of their time and race, and they made many mistakes, especially in believing that a catastrophic and miraculous coming of the Kingdom would happen in their own time. But mistakes in detail matter little when, behind them all, living truth is being proclaimed. The living truth has never died, though each age has had its own limitations and made its own mistakes. At no time has the full scope of the commission been realised,

though it has inspired heroic prophetic ministries and mission work. In our own period we have been slowly realising that we must go forth to the poor and the unprivileged or the backward not merely with a theological gospel, but that we must give them friendship and guidance and help in a thousand ways. They must be led into the treasures of fellowship and culture, through clubs, classes, provident societies, athletic societies, and many others. We must give them new interests and a new sense of meaning and value in life, through activities which they enjoy and through which they learn and grow.

But everyone who knows anything about the facts knows how pitifully inadequate is all that has been done, the merest fringe of the matter having been touched. Because of this, we have been still more slowly realising that in the modern world these things cannot be left and ought not to be left to merely individual effort or charity. Voluntary subscriptions in practice are a very poor basis for any large constructive effort, however laudable and valuable may be the motives they express and encourage. But like so many other much-praised and cherished things, they are not enough. Provision of all these things, the proclamation in practice of good news about life and God, must be yet more and more a matter for the collective conscience and for considered corporate expression. Professing Christians ought to be the leaders in all this; their municipal and national political action should be dominated by it. To speak or vote for slum clearance, or town-planning, or the purchase and laying out of a public park, or for better schools, with a full consciousness that it may mean higher rates and taxes for more privileged people like oneself to pay, may be an eminently Christian act. Sunshine, space, flowers, music, healthy games, to say nothing of friendship, may be 'gospel.'

The early Christians also carried out the other half of the commission; they healed the sick. Spiritual healing was

undoubtedly taught and practised; but this gradually fell into disuse, partly because of charlatans and abuses, and partly because of the rise of the science of medicine, in which as in so many other things the Greeks were pioneers. But medical charities of all kinds have been always actively supported by Christians, and increasingly it has been recognised that foreign missionaries should have some medical training. In all this matter of healing too, in modern times, the voluntary method has been more and more inadequate. Wonderful new medical and surgical methods are constantly being discovered, fresh discoveries in many fields of scientific research are rapidly turned to some medical use, and preventive medicine is potentially capable of far more than can be carried out by present methods. Again, a reasoned planning of all these things for the benefit of the whole community, and as a realised consequence of Christian principles, is called for. To say that we cannot afford these things is merely to say that our economic methods are stupid and therefore indefensible, nowadays.

Christianity when most true to itself has always tended toward simplicity of personal life. The excesses of some types of asceticism do not appeal to us very much now, and the cult of Lady Poverty by St. Francis and others has little more than a romantic interest for most of us, the details not being attractive or seeming reasonable in our own age. Their extravagant witness was necessary and beneficial then, but the form of it is not ours. Nevertheless, it is a true note in religion. Extravagant luxury, with pride and ostentation, are in themselves entirely contrary to everything in essential Christian teaching; and when they lead those to whom such things are possible steadily to oppose any political or social measures which benefit the less privileged and tend toward lessening the gulf between riches and poverty, then they become doubly harmful and evil.

Modern civilisation and the knowledge of to-day open up

all sorts of really good things; and though some may still hear the call to abjure them all and give their lives, quite literally, for the down-trodden, many more are coming to see that they may modestly enjoy these real goods, but that they *must* think and work for spreading the benefits of them as widely as possible, regardless of the effect on their merely personal position and prospects. Ours is an age of potential plenty, not of constant scarcity; and this necessitates largely new ethics and economics. A religion which is worth anything in the contemporary world will urge its votaries to lead the way in the thought and social experiment and legislation that are called for. Modest personal expenditure, but very generous public expenditure on the real goods of life for the people at large, the development of the resources of the earth for the benefit of all, are plainly required by Christian teaching. We need not now set the creature against the Creator; we can find the Creator in the creature. This means a complete revolution in the intensive religious life; but it is a revolution that is silently going on. Its necessary corollary is that religion in our age must find social expression and must inspire our political activities.

It has already been hinted, and may be fully and frankly confessed, that this new ethic is for many of us one of sacrifice, in ways not so thought of before. Individual self-sacrifice for the good of others has always been honoured; the supremest act of self-sacrifice is at the very centre of Christianity. There will always be occasions when nothing less will serve the highest good, when individuals will hear and respond to the call, and gain their lives by losing them. That will be divinely noble to the end of time. What we have not fully realised yet is that this too, like so many other principles, needs corporate expression in this age. Whole classes of people are called by Christianity, as here understood and expounded, to work steadily for social measures and legislative changes which will definitely mean

loss of riches and of personal power and privilege for themselves, their children, and their social class. A hard saying? Not more so than hundreds of very plain sayings in the New Testament; hard only with the same sort of hardness. If we refuse, we are in the same case as the young man whom Jesus looked upon with appreciation and love, but who went away sorrowful, because he had great possessions. The details for us are different, but the principle is the same. The renunciation called for is collective, social, to-day; but is just as clear. 'Sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor'; not necessarily, or probably, literally and as an individual—that might be quite useless and futile. But if we do not interpret the call in that way, all the more insistent is its demand for social expression.

Religion in its very nature must find social expression; its teachings must be embodied in social organisation, in economic structure and methods, its principles applied over the whole field of corporate activities as well as in personal lives—that has been our thesis all through. But the last few pages have been slowly working toward the fact of which readers who have travelled with us so far would assuredly remind us, that society is made up of individuals, and that the social expression of religion which we are demanding can only be found through individual lives and characters. The call of our age is in the last resort to *persons*, men and women. We have no right merely to talk about the necessity of religion finding social expression, and then leave it at that, vaguely expecting somebody else to do something. That would be as bad as passing what are called pious resolutions, and then going contentedly home supposing we have done something, and with consciences too easily lulled to sleep.

The need of this age as of every age is for men and women with the light of knowledge in their eyes and the fire of love in their hearts, with a vision of what might be shining beyond and behind the things actually seen now, with the

courage of a supreme faith and the firmness of a disciplined will. There is work to be done, there are battles to be fought; and heroes are needed for leaders.

> Like a mighty army
> Moves the Church of God,

we sometimes sing or hear sung; and one sometimes feels inclined to say 'Would to God that it did'! Have we a clear objective, a unified command, a loyalty which is faithful unto death? Do we fire the imagination of youth, offering something supremely worth living for and if need be dying for? Have we not lived too long at ease in Zion, trusting to her bulwarks and walls and her ancient prestige? Have we not neglected our drill, fallen behind in knowledge, become soft in muscle and timid in heart? Is not our technique hopelessly out of date, and are we not something like an army fighting with bows and arrows while the enemy has in his armoury every weapon that knowledge and skill can devise? Worse still, are some of us really in the pay of the enemy, without ever having thought of it that way?

These are searching questions, and he would be a bold man and perhaps a blind one who could give satisfactory answers to all of them. In so far as our candid answers are unsatisfactory and disquieting, is not the reason to be found in the extent to which we have capitulated to 'the world' and become subservient to political and financial power, so that we are nerveless and hesitating in our witness for social justice, international friendship and peace, political sincerity, and the Kingdom of God upon earth? Why are so many eager workers for that Kingdom, whether they call it so or not, utterly disappointed with the churches, and find themselves quite unable to work in and through them?

'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' There is work to be done for God, service to be rendered for him; and this not merely in 'spiritual' things unduly divorced from the rest of life, but in every activity of man. Ministers

or servants of God are wanted in the council chamber, the legislature, the study and studio, the merchant's office, the industrialist's factory, the laboratory, the school, the consulting room. Above all we need leaders everywhere who make themselves great by becoming the servants of all, who lay upon the altar all their best gifts and powers. In other words, we want more and better Christians, who have seen 'the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord' and are called to arise and shine because their light is come, that God may be glorified. And the light needs to shine in many dark places of our common life, social, industrial, commercial, international, that men may learn to see them with something of divine vision and with revealing clearness. Men are much more blind and careless and apathetic than deliberately wicked.

The noblest Hebrew religion and the finest Greek philosophy are at one in dreaming of a CITY in which God's will is done, or the good for man achieved; a divine COMMUNITY in which man can realise the best that is in him in fellowship with his kin. The Greek gains a glimpse of the pattern of it laid up in heaven; and even that gleam makes him seek to live after the manner of that city, nay, to build it in his own inmost soul. The Hebrew sees it in strange but rich and symbolic vision coming down out of heaven from God, full of every precious thing, with no night or darkness of sin or sorrow, but with the light of God shining clear and life-giving; with a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing freely and perennially; with a tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations and whose fruits in constant crop feed all the higher life of man.

Always it is a city of justice, of happiness and fullness of life; a community, a fellowship, a heavenly city; a city of peace and ordered life; a city of music and beauty; a CITY OF GOD.

'WE ARE BUILDERS OF THAT CITY.'

RELIGION: Its Modern Needs and Problems

Editor: RAYMOND V. HOLT, B.A., B.Litt. (Oxon.)

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