



The Christ Ideal

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A Study of the Spiritual Teachings of Jesus

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Chapter I. The Spiritual Method

WHAT WAS the secret power of that great teacher whom the multitude followed to the mount, nearly nineteen centuries ago? Why did his hearers come away with the realisation that he spoke with authority, not as their former teachers had spoken? Why has the sermon on the mount held chief rank among discourses from that day to this?

Is that secret to be found in the words which Jesus uttered? Many had expressed truths which he taught that day, in some cases using words almost identical with his.

Was it the power of belief? Countless thousands have believed what he uttered with such emphasis. Many have believed yet have not wrought the works that Jesus wrought. And it is doubtful if his hearers took time to test his teachings by the canons of belief.

We may well imagine that never was audience more deeply moved than on that memorable day. Even if Jesus had said nothing, those who were drawn to him then would have gone away with new incentives. For above all it was the personal presence, the sweet peace, the kindly compassion which stirred the hearts and minds of that congenial multitude. It was the life, the power of a soul true in thought, word and deed to the doctrine he

inculcated, which carried conviction where no teacher had moved people before.

Such a life needed no ornamentation to attract public notice. Such a teacher needed no gesture or loud voice to emphasise his utterances. It was only necessary for him to be there where men were receptive, in order to enfold one and all in a spirit of reverent worship and love. And he won them all because he appealed to all sides of the hungry, thirsting people who came to hear.

He was not a mere theorist, nor a mere doer of the word. He spoke not for beauty only, but for truth; not merely for virtue but for the fulness of God's great life as manifested in the total universe. And when his hearers withdrew one by one, each must have borne away the consciousness of a new life, a glad, new message uttered as if specially meant for the individual soul.

When you and I turn to the brief record of that day of peace, let us not forget to place ourselves in the attitude of the reverent listeners who were thus stirred. Let us stand upon the mount alone. Or let us walk beside the Sea of Galilee, in imagination, that we may breathe the quiet air of solitude, rested by the presence of the waters,—the calm sea of inward rest and peace which the name of Galilee suggests. For to the one who has again and again journeyed where Jesus walked, each spot is sacred with a spirit which at once puts the mind into a worshipful attitude.

How else may we interpret the Christ ideal? Surely no one should expect to learn the secret of Jesus's life who brings the sharp weapons of destructive criticism. Nor may one hope to win that secret who is deeply concerned to know what passages or gospels are most authentic.

Questions of authenticity are no doubt important, but they should surely never be paramount. Had one come in a critical spirit that day of days, he would hardly have felt the life-giving touch of the Christ.

That which is spiritual must ever be spiritually discerned.

For many centuries the spiritual simplicity of Jesus's gospel has been covered over by the heavy burden of dogma, ceremonial and creed. It is time now to listen to Jesus as the most receptive of his hearers listened. It is time, too, to lay more stress upon life than upon belief.

Right belief is essential to right conduct, but we must have both.

Jesus appealed first to the heart; his gospel fed the hungry soul, he touched the lives of his hearers. He knew that right understanding would follow.

Let us approach his teaching in the same way. First the spirit, then the letter. First the peace, the love; then the thought, the assimilation.

Yet having felt the spiritual touch, it is no less important to grasp its philosophical meaning. For if Jesus's teaching be true it is universal, and we must apply the Christ principle to every department of human thought.

They have made as grave a mistake who have suppressed their doubts, and held their intellects in check, as they who have made themselves slaves of sceptical criticism to the exclusion of the spirit.

The teaching of Jesus must satisfy the intellect or it is not true. It must harmonise with the revelations of God in nature. It must meet the demands of present-day Ideal social life.

Let a man then make all the demands he will, but let him remember how these demands can alone be met; for here, as nowhere else in the world of thought, a man shall find what he seeks, what he is.

It was said of Cuvier, the great French naturalist, that by the aid of one bone he could reconstruct in imagination the entire prehistoric animal to which the fragment belonged. Thus the scholar formulates a system of philosophy on the basis of a single statement. Thus may we philosophically construct and elaborate that which is merely hinted at in the scanty narrative of Jesus's life.

The key to all that is obscure in the gospel narrative is therefore found when we regard Jesus's teachings, not as fragments but as a whole; and here at last we have the essence of the spiritual method.

The intellect analyses, but often fails to put the parts together again. Our emotional nature apprehends the heart of things, but frequently loses all stability. We must therefore open wide our hearts to feel the divine presence, to receive the new life, then open our minds equally wide to learn its fullest meaning.

Thus may we listen not merely as the multitude listened so long ago, but think as the most philosophical may have thought when he withdrew.

Thus may we begin to realise the Christ ideal in all parts of our nature, seeking not merely to believe but to live; not only to know the truth but to feel the peace, to manifest the love; to be every day and hour what some are momentarily when they obtain glimpses of the secret of Jesus's life.

Chapter II. The Kingdom of God

ABOVE ALL else, the record of Jesus's life shows that he was a consecrated soul, giving himself fully, unflinching, and on all occasions, that he might serve the Father and his fellow-men. Consequently, he who would even in least measure understand Jesus must in some degree know what it means to be consecrated. The fragment out of which we are to construct the whole body of Jesus's doctrine must therefore be that part of his teaching which most directly admits us into the heart of his consecrated life.

Perhaps no passage more fully expresses the faith which inspired this consecration than the one which is sometimes quoted as the essence of Jesus's teaching: "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." As if in elucidation of what was to follow, Jesus had already said: "For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." In many other passages the same unqualified faith is expressed. There is no need of anxious thought. Fear and doubt are alike groundless. Simply do the Father's work, and all that is needed will be provided day by day. It is not even necessary to consider what we shall speak, for when we do the work of the Father it is not we who speak, but the Father who speaketh in us. All that is needed is to enter one's

inner chamber, and close the door to the outside world, that one may feel that spiritual quickening which comes in its fulness from God alone.

To seek the Kingdom of God, therefore, means entire self-dedication, willingness to set aside personal desires and plans, that in their place we may know the divine wisdom and guidance. Only to him that loseth his life in the personal sense shall be given that fulness of life which transfigures merely finite personality and makes it divine.

There is accordingly one rule for all cases: "Not my will but thine be done." Not what I would seek that it might add glory, wealth and renown to my name; not what I think ought to be; not what my friends advise; but what the Father has chosen as a part of his perfect world-plan—that is for ever to be my guide. And if at any time I know not what to do, I am to remember that if I ask I shall receive, that there is never any turning away from those who give all that they may receive all.

That which is easiest said is, however, sometimes the most difficult to do. We must therefore approach this great thought again and again from many points of view.

Voicing this same spirit of consecration, Jesus also says: "No man can serve two masters." We must concentrate. Entire allegiance is demanded. If we give this the way will be made plain. If all is not well with us, if the guidance does not come, we may know that it is because we did not truly consecrate all that we are; for what a man pursues and receives is measured by what he desires. No man can defraud the universe by seeming to lay up treasure in heaven while in reality desiring this world's goods. Where his heart is there his whole life is concentrated, and if he fails to attain that which is spiritual he has only himself to blame.

It is not enough merely to cry out that we believe, to seek the Kingdom as a sort of unsubstantial ideal. "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" is he who truly seeks and finds. We must not only seek the Father's Kingdom but his righteousness. We must both seek and utter the truth, both search for and manifest goodness. We must live for humanity as well as for

God; for the Father's righteousness demands ideal conduct with reference to our fellow-men; it is unselfishness, it is devoted love. Nothing shall be hidden which has been thus revealed.

Here we have a perfectly clear statement of faith, as precise and unmistakable as a proposition in mathematics. To seek the Kingdom of God is to open heart and mind in unqualified consecration to the Father's work. To seek his righteousness is to be true to the divine guidance in every moment of our individual and social life, whenever it comes, and to follow wherever it leads. And if we are thus faithful we shall be so tenderly and faithfully cared for that from the hour of consecration we need not give secondary things a moment's anxious thought.

This is essentially a practical faith, for application here and now.

Only he who misunderstands or seeks to evade the law would think of postponing its application until some future state.

Where is the Kingdom of God which we are thus to seek? In a number of passages, Jesus lays special emphasis on the fact that it is within, since here is the secret place where the voice of God is heard; but it would be as serious a misinterpretation of the Master's teaching to limit the Kingdom to man's inner consciousness as to deem it a place. The inner realm is the source of all divine guidance, the beginning of all spiritual growth. Unless a man ceases to be cast about by outside influences and begins to listen at home, to become poised, centralised, he will not find the Kingdom though he search the entire universe and sit at the feet of the wisest men. But as we are to seek both the Kingdom, or dominion over self, and the social righteousness, the more important domain in the great Kingdom is the sphere of our social activity.

Except we become at heart as receptive, as pure and true as little children, we shall in no wise enter the Kingdom. Yet having entered we are to perform all the duties of manhood. The finding of the Kingdom is thus the return to nature, the attainment of simplicity, the peace, the solitude of the primitive

forest, from which we once more emerge to the duties of the great world of service.

Again, it means adjustment, harmony with natural and spiritual law, the discovery of the divine tendencies in every department of our being, then glad co-operation with these tendencies. For the seeking of the Kingdom does not by any means imply neglect of the body, or any part of daily life. It means the elevation of all this to the spiritual plane, its consecration and purification. It is as far from asceticism as from egoism or self-affirmation.

It is true, one must give up many things, yet to give away all one's possessions does not make one a denizen of the Kingdom. A man might simulate the garb of poverty, yet be very far from the love of God. The essential is a change of attitude toward the world. By this is meant something very different from the melancholy discovery that one is a "sinner," as we shall presently see.

Nor is the Kingdom merely of this world, as some maintain who call Jesus a disappointed prophet. Over against the symbolical passages referring to the outward coming of the Kingdom, we may place the specific statement that "the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, 'Lo here! or, There!' for lo, the Kingdom of God is within you." Unless it first come within it can never come without.

Yet the inner realm is in a sense the universal, invisible realm, whose confines are by no means limited to human consciousness. The belief that "all things shall be added," that the least as well as the greatest detail shall be cared for, so that "not a sparrow falleth without the Father," implies the presence of God with every atom, in every event in the great universe.

Consider for a moment what this watchful presence means. It implies that, although man be unconscious of it and untrue to it, there is a guidance which includes every moment in the life of every creature. It means that life in its divine sense is literally one, a single system, including even the infinitesimal details, every one of which is essential to the Father's world-plan. Consequently, the universe at heart is orderly; it is a divine harmony.

There is nothing in all the wide realms of human or world-life which can interfere with the divine order. It is especially noteworthy that there is no room for a devil who can disorganise the world-plan. As much liberty as sinful man may have, he can only play about the surface of the divine stream of life; he cannot alter its course or mar its rhythmic flow.

Since all details are cared for by the Father, it follows that not only is the Father present in spirit but in power. Jesus therefore believed in the God whose "centre is everywhere, and his circumference nowhere." The Father was not for him a distant God, outside of his world. If transcendent, he must also be immanent; and if immanent, he must be actively present, for he it is who works and speaks through us, even at an "appointed hour."

The manifestation of the divine life, wisdom, love, is therefore continuous. The Father's presence is as needfull during every hour in the life of the sparrow as at its fall. If there be constant guidance, there must be constant activity.

It would seem to be in perfect accord with the faith of Jesus to say that there is a perpetual going forth of the divine life, a stream of creative, sustaining and guiding energy whence all forms, beings and species proceed, by which all change or progress is instituted.

The Father creates, not suddenly, but gradually and progressively. It is not merely at the dawn of life that he presides, but at its inception and throughout its history; for from him proceeds the quickening which causes each and every one of the manifold changes in all the realms of being.

It also follows from the premises of Jesus that the Father moves upon us on all planes of life. The guidance applies alike to the words we shall utter, and to the apparently trivial details which relate to our physical needs. We must emphasise the fact that not only are our souls secret places of the Most High, but that our bodies are temples also. The Father's presence environs all phases of our life. He is with us in all that we do, in all that we are, even with us when we suffer, when we are tempted.

Since "God is Spirit," we may conclude that his power, life, presence, is spiritual; that in the ultimate sense the universe is also spiritual. Man is a spiritual being; it is for spiritual ends that we were called into the world. It would be erroneous, then, to define the spiritual as the religious only, as pertaining merely to our hours of worship in the inner sanctuary. When we truly live, all hours and moments are spiritual, for when we truly live we live from God. The spiritual is both for the inner and the outer life; it is the real life of the body, as it is of the soul. For ultimately all life is one, and that one life is a perpetual gift of God.

Seeking the Kingdom of God, therefore, has a far greater significance than is ordinarily realised. In the truest sense the universe is the Kingdom of God, for all life is from him, all worlds exist within his presence. His Kingdom is not apart by itself, in the upper air. Even if his Kingdom were centralised as human kingdoms are, it would only be so because all parts might then constitute an organic whole.

Although souls which have entered the freer life outside the flesh may dwell nearer to God, and even though there be a realm which because of its righteousness is called "heaven," such a state is possible only where the divine presence is constantly realised, and since the Father is omnipresent, that state is everywhere possible. Wherever love is manifested, there is the Kingdom.

Truly apprehended, the entire visible world is a part of the Kingdom of God, for every moment of its life is a fresh embodiment of the divine presence. The reason it has not been so regarded is found in man's bondage to sense, his thought of himself as a physical instead of a spiritual being.

Again, the coming of the Kingdom in human consciousness has been impeded by materialistic science, by the dogma that force and matter are alone competent to account for the universe. Nowadays, the foremost scientific men are saying that consciousness is also necessary. It is but one step farther to the spiritual creative power, behind and within consciousness, as the sufficient cause of all evolution.

Evolution, thus considered, is the law of external growth or gradual realisation of the divine ideal, which springs from the mind and heart of God. To find the Kingdom "within" is thus to penetrate far enough to discover the real essence of things. To understand the law of righteousness is to learn the universal plan of creation. To discover the divine order and the divine goodness is to see that all things have been brought into being by love.

Therefore first feel the spirit of the Kingdom in the inner sanctuary of worship and receptive humility, then set your intellect at work to grasp the divine law in its fulness as a universal principle. But always the spirit must come first, then the effort to understand it.

First the great, illimitable, everywhere abiding Spirit,—the Father-Mother, the divine Substance or Reality,—then the going forth of that Spirit in varied forms of manifestation or embodiment. First the invisible, then the visible; first love, then its perfect work.

It is plain that no one who truly grasps this great thought will lead a self-centred or subjective life. To live in consciousness of the Kingdom does not mean to attain the ease and poise of complacent self-contentment. God is present in our struggles as well as in our happiness; he dwells in the slums; he is present with "the wicked," and he who shuts himself apart from the struggling submerged classes, or who affirms that God knows nothing about our ills, has not yet found the Kingdom.

The Kingdom is large, noble; the discovery of it inspires an enlarged life. It sends a man forth from his little world of self with as much zeal as though he believed in the old dogma of "lost souls"; for the hour of worship is the hour of preparation. The Kingdom is the domain of life, not of death. The creative life of God ever pulsates forward, and he who feels the divine pulsation is ever active.

But is it practical to seek the Kingdom of God, to carry the consciousness of the divine presence into everything; to trust that all these things shall be added even when one knows not whence the money is coming from?

Yes, for all who would be true men and women it is the only course that is practical.

There are thousands ready to testify that the law is true, that it applies in minutest detail. Those who thus testify declare that from the time they began to do all for the Father, the way began to be opened most marvellously and unexpectedly.

Great faith is required, but this is the price of the things that follow. It is for ever true that no man can think first of the "things" and attain the Kingdom. But the moment one begins to live as if one really believed that God exists, the power of the Spirit to command circumstances is seen.

In reality God holds all circumstances in solution. To find his Kingdom is to feel the touch of that power which, even while we adore, is shaping things around and within our life.

Are you willing to pay the price? If so, you shall have the Father's care.

Do you grasp the law as applied to your individual life? If so, extend its benefits to all.

Do you seek the meaning of the Kingdom as a social law? If so, enlarge that conception until you have a philosophy of the total universe. For the universe is the Kingdom of God; and love, goodness, beauty, justice, are its omnipresent attributes. And if you would begin here and now, to-day, this present hour, to enjoy the benefits of the Father's care, go apart from your fellow-men for a time, seek the solitudes of the Spirit, as Jesus bade men seek them in his wonderful sermon on the mount. Lay aside all plans, open your mind and heart in receptive worship, consecrate all that you possess, all that you are, to the Father, then be true to the highest thought that comes to you; trust though you see not whither you are going, though your faith be most severely tested. For no man ever sought help in that spirit who came away unfilled.

Chapter III. The Kingdom of Man

WE HAVE thus far considered the doctrine of Jesus largely from the Godward side. When we turn to the more human point of view, it at once becomes evident that if there be detailed guidance for each soul, which the Father knows even before we ask him, there must also be a life-plan for each man, an ideal which man is called upon to realise.

Moreover, since all life is an ultimate harmony, the special plan for each must blend with the plans for all others. In seeking to know the Father's will concerning our daily conduct, we may therefore rest assured that we shall never be called upon to do anything contrary to the best interests of our fellows. All those relationships have been provided for. We need not fear. We need not be troubled. Our part is to do our work. If we do that, the Father will care for all that bears relation to it.

Tolerance follows as an inevitable consequence. What another does in his truest moments is as much from God as what we do. If the other is not always true, he may be trying as earnestly as we. Therefore we should not condemn him. If his way is different from ours that is his privilege; ours is to be true to the individual prompting, not ours to say how the two ways shall blend. Only the total perspective reveals the harmony of all human lives.

If each soul has an individual work, each must learn in his own way what that work is and how to perform it. No one can sincerely believe Jesus without also believing that there is no separation between the Father and "the son of man,"—any son of man.

It follows that there is in man a faculty which transcends that of sense perception. God is revealed everywhere, it is true. The Kingdom of God includes all space and all time. But through nature and through our fellow-men the revelation is indirect; it is only in the precincts where God alone may enter that there is direct communion with him.

On this side of the soul's life, therefore, there is no translating medium by which our consciousness is conditioned, as in the case of the sensations of heat or light, and the other modes of feeling by which we are made aware of the existence of the physical world. It may be our capacity is decidedly limited. It may be that our inner hearing is so dull that we detect only the most distinct intonations of the divine voice. But so far as the Father is concerned there can be no impenetrable obstacle, else were he greatly limited in power, shut out from communion with his children. And if there be no impenetrable obstacle the soul is not an absolute prisoner of the flesh; God can quicken our hearts even though the soul be immersed in the density of the darkest materialism.

The psychology of Jesus is therefore truly spiritual; it is not in bondage to the grasping arms of sordid physiology. God is Spirit. Man is a son of God and therefore spiritual. In that eternal Kingdom for which we are exhorted to store our treasure, there is a union of Father and son which no cataclysm of the physical world can break. Let existence be as carnal as it may, the Father cares for us all, and is present with us every moment of our life.

There is only one attitude which shuts us away from the Father, as long as the attitude endures. This is "the sin against the Holy Ghost," the sin of non-receptivity. If a man turn wholly away, he must suffer until he turn back again. The Father does not enforce obedience. He does not excuse us and make the pathway easy, while we stand obdurate, refusing to recognise him. We

must at least be receptive; there is nothing changed, that is, forgiven, until we are.

Yet even while we refuse to listen the Father is ever here, knowing our needs, tenderly watching over our troubled days and hours, so that not even the sin of sins separates us from the transcendental world of his loving care, his unspeakable peace.

Again, it follows that since Jesus believes in this orderly relationship of Father and son, he also believes in the freedom of the will.

From one point of view, it might seem that Jesus was a fatalist; for if all things are prearranged, even unto minute details, there would appear to be room for naught except the irresistible unfolding of the divine plan. But if this were all, how could man sin? If this were all, what would be the significance of the injunction to enter into harmony with the divine guidance, to display love instead of hate, to deny ourselves and follow the Christ?

If all events were part and parcel of a rigidly foreordained system, our sins would also be a part of that plan, consequently they would not be sins at all. The entire theory of sin and its cure is based on the presupposition that there is both the divine activity which makes for righteousness and the power in man either to disregard it or to obey. Sweep away man's power to act and you sweep away human life. Grant the power of human action and you must at the same time concede that man is morally free.

Finally, if man be morally free the injunction to love, to do the Father's will, makes clear a realm of possibilities which give sublime significance to Jesus's teaching.

Let the divine plan be as detailed and unyielding as it may; let divine care watch over every moment, it is still possible for man to pursue his own course oblivious of the divine care, and postpone the day when that care shall be welcomed.

There is both the divine plan and the human by-play which sports around it. Say that the by-play is a part of the divine plan, and you must still grant man the liberty to disregard it or pursue it through free choice, although

the Father may sometime turn it all to account and teach man the lesson of his waywardness.

From no point of view is it possible to say that all is one hard-and-fast piece. The Father's ways are many and rich. He permits his children to wander through the forest of ignorance, hiding where they may, devising whatever scheme fancy may dictate. But no pathway is so far astray that the weary soul shall emerge comfortless, and no man's steps are so devious and flighty as to outwit the Father. Man is free, yet in the end all life is moral. God's plan is changeless, yet it permits infinite play to human genius; and thus in the end there is neither paradox nor inconsistency.

It is noticeable that Jesus nowhere tells us that such and such events are bound to happen, and nothing else can happen. It is not decreed that on an appointed day, at a predetermined hour, a certain man shall enter his inner sanctuary and receive the divine blessing. But "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find." If we love, we shall reap the results of love. If we hate, we must receive the punishments of hatred.

Both courses are open to us. If we consecrate ourselves, the Father will speak through us, but if we close the door the Father will not come. For there is both the son and the Father. What the Father does is the wisest that can be done. What the son does depends upon his choice between the selfish prompting and the divine guidance. Consequently, whether the wisest possible deed be done in given circumstances depends upon whether man be true or false to the divine guidance.

If God alone acted, one could say without qualification, everything that occurs is the best that could occur. But until man shall be perfect we can never truly say this.

Here the critic contends that if man did not choose the divine guidance in preference to the selfish prompting, it was not possible; hence nothing else could have happened, and therefore whatever was, was right.

By this, of course, the critic means that the man did not follow the divine guidance because he was not developed to the point where he could.

But this is fatalism, the exact opposite of Jesus's teaching. If we always do as well as we can, there is no sin. Sin is not sin unless it be simultaneously possible for us to act righteously instead of unrighteously. If we do only what we can we are mere automata.

That we know far better than we do every honest person will admit whose conscience is not dulled by the constant self-persuasion that "whatever is, is right," "There is no evil."

Jesus nowhere compromises with evil. He does not soften it into "so-called evil." He calls it by its name, unsparingly condemns it, and puts it in sharpest contrast with the good. His doctrine is in fact unmistakable on this point. Evil is evil, and good is good. We must despise the one and love the other. We are not fated to do this. We ought to do it. It is an ethical imperative. We must conquer the one to win the other, and the two are not to be confounded.

He who would grasp the real meaning of Jesus's doctrine must therefore avoid the pitfalls of the modern heterodoxy which sweeps away the distinctions between lower and higher, and plunges the mind into the deceitful snares of optimistic indifferentism and self-complacent fatalism.

The divine tendency is with every soul, but in the majority it is latent. There are countless millions of souls that know the way of righteousness, but they do not follow it, and our part is to help them to be true. Consequently, our philosophy must be of the sort which meets people where they are; and in the world, with all its beauty and moral possibility, there is an abundance of wrong to be righted—as the Father may direct.

If you say the wrong is right because good is brought out of it, you lose the opportunity to deal with it triumphantly. The fact that the criminal may sometime become a good man by no means makes his crime good. With Jesus, we must unqualifiedly condemn the crime while making every effort to help our brother who has sinned. Thus must we ever bear in mind the distinctions implied in the doctrine of love.

Since the philosophy of Jesus is ethical, it follows that it is very far from pantheism in any form. Spiritual pantheism identifies the soul with God, but Jesus everywhere speaks of the Father and the son. It is reported of him that he “continued all night in prayer to God.” Nothing could be farther from pantheism than this.

In the fourth gospel there are many passages of a character so mystical as to imply pantheistic conclusions. Yet even in this mystical record of Jesus’s doctrine, Jesus speaks of God as the Father; and his saying, “I and my Father are one,” may be taken to mean the oneness of spirit or purpose, the harmony of will, rather than the complete identification of the human son with the divine universal Father.

Throughout this gospel, the Master distinguishes himself from the Father by constant references to his mission as the Christ.

“I am come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.”

“I can of myself do nothing; as I hear I judge.”

Moreover, Jesus says, “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” It is not a Kingdom of absolute monotony or identity, like the ocean of infinite wisdom and bliss of the Vedantists. It has room for the individuality of each. It is a wonderfully varied, rich, diversified world.

“I go to prepare a place for you.” This is very far from the Oriental theory of absorption, very far from the Buddhistic “Nirvana.”

“If the reader remembers that in many passages Jesus, the teacher, is speaking for the universal Christ—the highest union of God and man—the entire gospel becomes intelligible.

As the Christ, Jesus can truly say that he is literally “in” the Father, and in his disciples. For he knew that the Christ self was latent in his disciples as it is

latent in all; that through its universal quickening all men might become one in spirit, though differing in individuality.

Jesus neither identified God and the soul nor God and nature.

Physical pantheism declares that God and nature are one substance. If this were true, there would be no invisible world, no soul, no Kingdom of God.

Jesus, who very frequently illustrates his teaching by references to nature, nowhere speaks of nature as God.

He pictures the Father as watching over and caring for nature as he watches over and cares for men. He describes nature as a revelation, a product of God, not as the substance of God. Jesus is thus to be classed as a theist, and not in any sense as a pantheist.

It is also significant that the Master does not employ any of the metaphysical terms by which abstruse reasoners describe nature. He nowhere assures us that nature is a thought world simply. He does not affirm that the mind creates the physical world through ignorance or "Maya." The world is no dream of unmetaphysical speculation, it is not an "illusion of sense." The sweet and tender ears of corn are very real for him, and he loves the waving fields and vine-clad hills whose health and beauty reveal the Father's care.

Nature may be secondary to the spirit, but its existence is not thereby denied, as we shall see more clearly in another chapter. The soul may reveal the divine presence in greater measure, yet nature, too, is instinct with the divine life. And although Jesus possessed great power over nature, he nevertheless displays much reverence for natural law.

We may therefore conclude that nature, in the eyes of Jesus, was a real existence, manifesting the power and beauty of God, a part, though a subordinate part, in the divine order the highest purpose of which is the realisation of the spiritual ideal.

It is needless to examine the other conceptions of reality which, like fatalism and pantheism, are incompatible with the theism of Jesus. Since Jesus believed in God the Father, it follows that he did not believe in these

metaphysical gods. His was not a speculative scheme. He went not out in search of abstract truth without regard to its practical bearing upon the lives of men. He possessed the evidence of the Father within, he saw the Father's hand in all nature, and the Father's heart in the lives of all mankind. His first desire was to quicken the same vivid sense of reality in all men, well knowing that if they felt the presence all else would be clear.

Moreover, his was an ethical scheme of things, and therefore it was not this and that doctrine which in comparison proves to be subversive of ethics.

There was first the Father, then the son. First the spiritual Kingdom, then its embodiment, the realms of nature and human society. First the law of righteousness, then the law of its gradual fulfilment. Accordingly, we must view the whole organism as a means to an end—the ethical perfection of man through the contests and relationships of the soul with this graduated series.

For the law of evolution, or development from lower to higher, is an important part of the moral order as Jesus viewed it. There are constant references to the word of God as a seed, or as the leaven which slowly attains fruition.

First comes the tiny blade, then the waving corn, and finally the ripened corn in the ear, as the result of weeks of preparation. So there is first the ideal, the divine quickening, then the weeks and months in which the tender young life of the Spirit contends with the robust life of the flesh and the subtleties of self. Wise is he who trusts the Father in these darker times, believing that as the seed passes through its gestative period in the soil, so the spiritual seed will break through the densities of the unregenerate lower nature.

While, therefore, Jesus did not enunciate an elaborate theory of evolution, we may well believe that he regarded all life, physical, mental, and moral, as a process, a progressive result of the divine quickening. The Kingdom of the Spirit comes first, the creative power of God. The simplest forms of life come

next, and the entire series of forms, species and events up to the Christ, is the outward or manifested result of the inward or divine quickening.

It is noticeable that the philosophy of Jesus at no point halts at mere individualism. It takes account of man's part in the universe, it acknowledges man's freedom and individuality, yet its beginning is found, not in the Kingdom of man but the Kingdom of God. Jesus does not start with finite consciousness and construct everything from that. He does not affirm that a man should build his own world from within. He starts in the large world of divine and social consciousness, of God, man and nature; and never enters a smaller world.

Nor does Jesus try to prove the existence of God. He believes in God because he is aware of the divine presence in the soul. He accepts the existence of the world as given. His philosophy is thus founded on experience; it is wholly of the practical, not of the speculative type. His point of view is always that of the one who takes the world as he finds it and seeks to make it better. Even when condemning the age in which he lived, he is not a pessimist. He is throughout a believer in the beauty of the divine order, and in the regenerative power of human righteousness.

Nor does Jesus inquire into the validity of human knowledge; his teaching is everywhere founded upon an intuitive basis.

The ultimate solution of the world problem which Jesus's teaching suggests is therefore the splendid possibility that all men may sometime do the Father's will. Men shall thus know the full truth when they *live* it. They shall understand virtue by being virtuous, beauty by being beautiful, love by loving.

This solution at once appeals to the reason as the true one. For even if philosophers could solve all problems in regard to the validity of knowledge, or propound a theory which should appeal to the reason of all men as the true solution of life's mystery, the ultimate proof would be the life, not the theory; only the Christ fully knows, because only the Christ truly lives.

There is not the least taint of agnosticism in the faith thus offered as the solution of the problems of life. It is the faith of the seer who knows because he is. Yet in that very knowledge there is an implied solution to all the doubts of agnosticism. While, therefore, Jesus is not confessedly a philosopher, his teaching meets the requirements of a completely reasoned faith.

It is noticeable also that the solution which Jesus offers is not a reconciliation between an angry God and a repentant man. Man's ultimate harmony with God will therefore be a first attainment, a conscious adjustment to the divine will after varied experience has taught him what that will is. This relationship of God and man will, however, become clearer if we first search for the truth in the doctrine of the "fall of man," then consider Jesus's doctrine of salvation.

Chapter IV. The Fall of Man

WE HAVE seen that the Kingdom of God is a universal Kingdom in the most minute sense of the word. The Father is not only present in spirit within the soul of man, but the life which ever comes from him is active in every event of our physical existence, so that there is no man so far removed from him in unrighteousness as to be separated from his sustaining love. Nothing could be more intimate, more personal than the relationship which Jesus's sayings thus suggest.

Yet the mystery of man's waywardness seems the more intensified the closer this relationship is found to be. That man should fall, if left to his own devices, seems possible. But if God not only created man good, but is always present to guide him, it seems incredible that he should sink so low. And why should man suffer, if God created him perfect? How could he sin, if God pronounced him "good"?

Let us approach this problem from the point of view of our knowledge of daily life.

All knowledge begins with experience. We really know only what our personal contact with the world enables us to comprehend. Our elders may counsel us with all the wisdom of the ages, hoping thereby to spare us the hardships and mistakes of life. But it is like talking Greek to an infant.

The only way to know is to live. Always we are constrained to confess that, despite the admonitions of our elders, we had to try and prove and work things out for ourselves. And when we prove a thing we know it.

Further, no prediction is ever quite verified. No knowledge given in advance of experience is ever adequate. Our fathers do not know all that is latent in us. Each life is a new problem, each man is free to essay new experiments, within certain limits, and so each man must learn for himself, each man must know life by living it, by solving its problems in his own way.

We also know from experience that we must labor for every point gained, that every item of our vast modern knowledge is a hard-won product either of human intellectual toil, or of human suffering: the wisest men have suffered deeply as well as thought deeply.

It is inconceivable that man should be born with knowledge and really know it, that he should understand life before he has lived it. If he were thus gifted, there would obviously be nothing further for him to acquire, life would hold no novelty for him. On the other hand, grant him the splendid opportunity of starting life in the darkness of ignorance, and he has before him the possibility of entering fully into the light by his own exertions.

Again, the human mind is limited. How would it be possible for man to acquire this great mass of knowledge except bit by bit through a vast period of time, through gradual evolution? To expect him to acquire it suddenly, or be born with it, would be like expecting a fully matured tree to spring suddenly into existence with ripe apples on it. That is not the law of growth.

It is also a fundamental law that the mind learns only by comparison, just as melody is distinguished from discord, or one colour from another. We detect the weaning of an experience when we are far enough removed from it to contrast it with other experiences, and so learn our mistakes. Youth becomes intelligible to the man of maturity, and maturity is understood from the point of view of old age.

Conscience tells us what is right and what is wrong by contrast, by the difference between lower and higher, the consciousness of shame, guilt or

selfishness as contrasted with the assurance that we have been true to the noblest moral prompting.

Jesus makes his doctrine clear by contrasting it with the law of Moses. His teachings abound in comparisons calculated to distinguish the beauty of the law of love from the ugliness of the laws which were inculcated in his generation. And he very sharply distinguishes between the false prophets and the true, teaching men to know the one from the other by a comparison of their lives. If we have had experience with both the false and the true, we know as we could never know by being told. In a word, we must have experience with evil in order to know good, we must encounter darkness in order to value light.

If we were merely good we should have naught wherewith to contrast it, nothing to call out our sympathy, love, and compassion, nothing to overcome. We can no more spring into sudden virtue than we can leap into perfect knowledge.

Even Jesus, with all his wisdom and beauty of character, attained the fulness of his mission only through what was called out from him by his relationship with a sinful age. And even Jesus had obstacles to overcome, both within and without. We first learn of his great strength when he vanquishes the temptation to possess all the kingdoms of the world, instead of the kingdom of the Christ. And in the Gospel of St. Luke it is recorded that he prayed: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will but thine be done. And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground."

If Jesus was thus compelled to struggle and to pray ere he could fulfil the Christ ideal, how should we expect to fulfil our missions in life until we, too, have trailead and conquered?

But why need we suffer? Because suffering teaches what naught else can teach; because we do not really know until we have personally struggled and sorrowed and conquered.

Until a man has suffered, until he has met the severest tests of faith, we classify him as a theorist. And we hear people universally confessing that the harder experiences of life are those which unlock life's mysteries and let them into the joys of truth, of love and service.

Still man might at least have been told that he was divine, the critic insists. That would have fatally maimed and weakened him.

"Nothing venture nothing have." We must plunge into the dark in order to enjoy the full benefit of experience. If we knew what we were plunging into, we would never make the plunge. If we knew our divine heritage, we should be deprived of the opportunities of experimentation whereby we learn what is wise, what is right, what is sound and good.

When the sharp pangs of pain, really a beneficent guide, have taught us how to obey the divine laws of our being, we know for all time: there is no theory about it. And best of all, when we learn the meaning of suffering we learn how to avoid it, and how to help our suffering fellow-men. Thus we understand the divinely beneficent plan by which we are instructed. Thus is the Father's love revealed.

Again, we have seen that moral freedom of the will is implied in Jesus's doctrine. If man's will be free, a certain amount of suffering is inevitable; for unless man were always compelled to do the wisest thing, he would be sure to make many grievous mistakes ere he should learn the futility of his schemes and devices.

The great glory of the moral cosmos is the opportunity it affords to man, although free to choose his own will, to say in all humility: "Not my will, but thine be done." Were man deprived of this choice of choices the universe would lose its greatest beauty, its noblest significance. And surely man could not be free to rise unless he were also free to fall.

But man ought at least to be guided, to possess a divine instinct, instead of being left to blunder about in darkness and misery, cries the critic in desperation.

He *is* divinely guided. There is not a creature in all God's universe without the instinct for perfection. No one is left without guidance. No one can sink into a pit of darkness so deep that the divine spark cannot be kindled.

This is precisely the truth which Jesus came to declare, bidding men leave all else and seek God's Kingdom that they might know that guidance, and thus escape from the bondage of ignorance. This is the message of the Christ. This is the lesson of all sorrow, of all suffering, of all persecution for the sake of truth. Immanent in our very hardships is the perfecting power of God. All our trials and tribulations are blessings in disguise. All pain is an indication that the remedial power of God is restoring harmony and health. All remorse is prompted by the moral activity of God.

We are left in ignorance of all this that we may first try our own way. We are granted sufficient freedom to experiment, fully to express ourselves; yet we are checked by the divine guidance at all points where we would otherwise be unable to help ourselves. And when the divine succour comes, if we will not receive it in any other way it comes as pain, even as a hard knock calculated to bring us to our senses.

Every moment of our daily life is replete with promptings from the divine, but we are largely unconscious of them. Every day and hour the possibility is open before us to turn away from the selfishness and the strife to that Kingdom of peace and love which is not far from any one of us, but which we so often neglect. Thus we cause ourselves a great amount of unnecessary suffering by resisting the very Power which makes for health, happiness and virtue, all the time complaining that we have been left utterly alone. But when at last we begin to discriminate, to awaken to spiritual consciousness, we know with a knowledge which no doubt can shake. Thus is justified our long denial of the Father.

When we take into account the great height to which man is to ascend, all that he must know and be, we see that the end justifies the means; that without this long and sometimes weary travail the greatest heights of virtue and wisdom could never be attained.

Man was not then born perfect? No, that is a mistaken assumption; hence much false reasoning. The law of growth, the divine method of creation, as everywhere exemplified, is from simple to complex, from lower to higher.

If man were perfect, there would be no wars, no selfishness, no sin. All men would live in harmony, as brothers, as fellow-workers for God.

Man *is being* perfected. There is still a vast amount to do. Out from the Kingdom of God, day by day, the divine life proceeds, carrying this great work forward. And there, in that creative realm, everything has been provided, so that in due time even the least of men shall be a finished product.

This is an important part of the significance of the Kingdom of God. We should not think of the divine life as quiescent, but as ever active. We should not approach it as a thing of history, but as an animate kingdom where even now history is in the making.

But man may be perfect in being, yet not in knowledge and experience, the critic suggests.

That is impossible. Perfection is perfection. It is organic; one part cannot be complete until all are complete. We cannot be perfect in being until we are perfect in knowledge, since to know is to live. We cannot have complete knowledge until we have had complete experience. We can only have complete experience when the last activity in the universe has ceased.

God forbid that we should ever be perfect if perfection means quiescence; for the glory of life is not found in completed attainment, but in constant progression.

Since society is an organism of interdependent beings, the life of one soul could only be complete with the completion of all social life. Even the life of Jesus, although perfect as the prophet of the Christ, will in a sense remain incomplete until he has literally drawn all men up to him.

Meanwhile there is beauty in imperfection. Blessings be upon it so far as it enables us to do our special work and no other; for we are organs or functions in a perpetually moving social life, adapted to fulfil a certain divine ideal, ever progressive, with boundless possibilities of life and change before us.

At birth, if we were ever born, absolutely speaking, we were potential functions only. We began, we know not how low; we are ascending, we know not how high. We do not even know that what the Father has caused us to be in this life shall be our final goal; for there are countless worlds besides this, and there may be innumerable forms of existence differing widely from the one we partly know. It is too soon to talk about perfection.

Then there was no fall of man? Not as commonly believed; for if man had in truth been born perfect he could not have fallen. A fall implies ignorance, but a perfect man is wise.

Still man was declared "good." Yes, but a thing is good if adapted to fill an end; it is not self-sufficient then and there. Since all things in God's universe fulfil their purpose progressively, that is, through gradual evolution, we are justified in saying that man was good to realise the highest divine ideal through the conditions of just this toilsome life of ours. Now that which is highest in product is longest in gestation. And "it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

Man was good, that is, adapted to start in ignorance and work up to the highest pinnacle which a product of the divine life can reach. Therefore we must view his life as a whole, not as a fragment created "out of hand" in a single day.

The creation of a perfect man is the work of all eternity. The fragment of human history which we chance to know is only a phase of the divine creative process. To judge correctly we must know all, and we cannot know all until we can be all.

Viewed from the standpoint of the whole, we can only say there is an ascent of man. As for his fall, we must say, as it is now customary to speak of "the prince of darkness," not that there is one devil, but that there are many.

To understand these falls of man we must take his origin into account, remembering that he began very far down, in ignorance, a mere animal, burdened with a long inheritance.

For the animal, there is nothing higher than to be an animal. Consequently, that which we condemn as brutal in man is good in the animal, because it enables him to be an animal. But when the human is added, and there are two natures in conflict and contrast, then, if man cultivates the animal at the expense of the human he becomes worse than the brute.

Here we see the origin of evil, also why it was not evil at the outset; also that God did not create evil and mingle it with the good. For evil begins when man, in presence of a higher, chooses a lower, when instead of becoming more of a man and serving his fellows, he becomes more of a brute and wrongs his fellows.

Sin is misdirected energy, misdirected power, which in itself is good. Man sins; he falls every time he consciously chooses a lower instead of a higher, every time he subordinates the soul to the body. Sin entered into the world with knowledge, because, until man began to know himself as an upright being, he was only an animal, ignorant, and therefore blameless.

But why is man wilfully perverse; why does he want to misdirect his energy? Through ignorance: enlighten him and he will not wish to sin. Many a man commits a crime because he thinks he can elude the officers of the law, but if he knew that there is a law of the universe, a law of action and reaction which no man can evade, his knowledge would give him pause. Jesus is most emphatic in his statements concerning this law.

Again, many a reprobate would be a better man, but he does not know how; many a person is struggling upwards, but is repulsed on every hand.

Then God is at fault, you say. No, an old dogma is at fault. Man has been condemned and pushed aside as a sinner. He has been told that he was vile

and perverse, and has been put away with many other so-called worthless mortals.

Reach out a helping hand to him, call him "brother," love him, explain to him that all his forces are inherently good, that he can overcome them by gradually building a different habit of life, and you will find him a human being, like yourself. And who would like to be condemned as the criminal is condemned? Who can make headway if he looks upon himself as "fallen," as a miserable sinner with no help in him?

If you would really redeem a man, seek first the Kingdom of God, the home of peace and love. Put yourself in a kindly, forgiving mood. Remember the far-off goal set before all humanity, and the conditions necessary to attain it. Recollect that we are one and all emerging from ignorance and animalism, that we have not yet travelled far. Approach the man as a brother, giving him the benefit of every doubt, believing that he longs to conquer himself but does not know how. And so help him, even as you would be helped, by turning his thought in a new direction, by calling out the best that is in him, by teaching him how to resist temptation. Thus shall you meet response. Thus shall you help him to rise, instead of making him the more miserably conscious of his fall.

Right knowledge of the fall of man thus suggests boundless possibilities of helpfulness. Man falls because he is not wise enough to see the misery he is causing himself and humanity, or because he is not yet strong enough to turn from the lower impulse and cleave to the higher. Therefore explain to him the law of action and reaction, whereby every deed brings its corresponding result. Show him that by cultivating a different habit of life, by manifesting love, by seeking the environments of peace, he is developing a centre of resistance which shall in time withstand all the assaults of the lower self.

Point out the possibility of pausing for a moment to gather strength when the animal impulse arises, as one would pause before an angry man to seek thoughts of peace and express words of love, instead of returning blow for

blow. Thus you will aid him to outflank his temptations, to conquer himself by the indirect and far more successful method of cultivating the good and letting the evil die out.

We all know from experience that when we acted wrongly we acted impulsively. And when we conquered, it was because we paused to think, "to count ten before striking the blow."

We also know why we paused to think, namely, because we had some measure of repose.

Therefore to strike at the root of all our misdeeds, to avoid our mistakes, we must cultivate repose, moderation, equanimity. We must seek the inner Kingdom, where we can say unto the troubled waves of our lower nature, as the Master said to the waves of the sea, Peace, be still!

If we find this calm, inner centre, all else will follow. For in finding it, as we shall see more fully in the following chapter, we take the Christ attitude, we find the true way of escape from sin, the true atonement for the fall of man.

Chapter V. The New Birth

IN THE foregoing chapters we have noted the importance of human co-operation in the realisation of the divine ideal. Man is divinely gifted from the outset, and the divine guidance is omnipresent. Yet our entire experience is given us as a free opportunity to learn the higher from the lower, to pursue self until, by sheer dissatisfaction, we learn the power and beauty of that higher will with which our own is thus put in striking contrast.

The greatest attainments therefore result from a certain degree of moral choice or spiritual willingness. Man must awaken to full self-consciousness, and become self-victorious before the highest ideal can be realised through him. He must atone for his wayward years by years of zeal for righteousness, and no vicarious suffering on the part of others can relieve him of that burden which his own hands have wrought. For no one can attain self-dominion for another, no outsider can turn the life-currents from lower to higher.

This statement is perfectly obvious. Yet it is necessary to affirm and reiterate it, so apt is man to shirk individual responsibility, so long a time is it ere he learns that the universe is begirt with unflinching laws.

Jesus again and again assures his hearers that there is no way of escape from individual responsibility. God is a God of justice, and each man must

prove himself worthy before he shall receive the blessings of the spiritual Kingdom.

So much depends on the individual that even Jesus, with all his power, could not make way for James and John to sit on his right and left hand (Mark x., 40). "This is for those only for whom it hath been prepared," that is, for those who because of their great work for the Christ earn the right to occupy a superior position, to make a greater sacrifice for the Father.

Again, Jesus declares of himself (John v., 30), "I can of myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me." That is, though so much depends upon the individual, yet the relation is reciprocal. When the individual at last blends his will with the divine, it is the power of God that accomplishes the greater work. The relationship is direct between God and man. No one can step in either to relieve man of the responsibility of choice, or to usurp the prerogative of God.

It is true, Jesus assures his followers that no one shall come to the Father except through the son, and those whom the son wills to reveal unto him. This seems to imply that the decisive power rests with Jesus. But we must first understand what is meant by "coming through the son."

Jesus permits Peter to call him the Christ, which means literally "the anointed one." The anointed one, or the Messiah, had long been expected as the deliverer who should set men free from the bondages of sin and death.

But this Messiah was expected to come as a king in great glory to establish a kingdom, and Jesus was very far from being the Messiah whom the Jews had expected. Jesus was a seer, a spiritual prophet, and the Christ ideal attained by him referred to the great envioning Kingdom of God which Jesus preached.

As the Christ was an ideal which Jesus attained, a divine type in the universal spiritual Kingdom, Jesus was qualified to speak as the Christ. We must therefore distinguish his authoritative words as the great spiritual king

from his personal life as a being of flesh and blood. Thus we shall avoid the mystical complications of the fourth gospel, and refrain from all confusion between the flesh and blood, on the one hand, and the spirit on the other.

“It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.”

“But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believed on him were to receive.”

It would be a most ignoble rendering of Jesus’s teachings to identify the Christ with the physical being. Jesus distinctly tells us that “that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” He assures us that every man must be born anew, that is, born from above.

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

That is, there is a higher law even than the law of self-conscious responsibility. The utmost which the human will can do is to dedicate itself to the Spirit, to seek the Kingdom of God and be true to the divine prompting; it cannot dictate when the divine inspiration shall occur. Man’s highest statement simply is that at a time whose coming he knew not, while he was faithful but knew not that he was unusually receptive, the Spirit breathed upon him, quickening new life in him, inspiring new peace, and communicating a greater love.

Yet even in the least of men, when this great receptivity is attained, the Christ is present, and no man cometh to the Father except through this sonship. There is no other way. There could be no other way. As well expect the heavens to fall as for man to receive the Holy Spirit in this its highest form until he attains the Christ attitude in some degree.

In order to understand the teaching of Jesus concerning salvation, we must then remember the law of the new birth, or the coming of the Holy Spirit upon all who in some measure live the life which Jesus lived.

We must spiritualise the entire doctrine: We must believe in and seek the "well of water springing up into eternal life" from within. We must live above the flesh in the consciousness of God's presence, ever faithful to the highest we know. Then shall we begin to eat of that food of which the physical man knows nothing. Then shall we begin to drink of that water which really quenches the thirst of the soul.

But we must not lose sight of the fact that the beginning of the new birth is the discovery of our personal responsibility, is a change of attitude toward daily life.

"He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life." Not he who closes the door, but he who enters the portal of the spiritual sanctuary.

Throughout Jesus's ministry, stress is laid upon this law of individual responsibility. Again and again Jesus declares that action and reaction are equal. As a man judges, he shall be judged. As he measures so shall he be measured unto. "Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find; for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Therefore we should do unto others as we would that men should do unto us. For no man can escape the penalty of his actions, no man shall be set free until the last farthing is paid.

Here, again, the teaching of Jesus is as precise as mathematics. If you would alter the results produced upon you, you must first change your mode of life within. This law applies even to a man's thoughts, for simply to look upon a person with sinful thoughts is sufficient to bring its punishment.

Even he who is angry with his brother, or he who cries, "Thou fool!" must suffer severely.

Nothing could be more explicit than this. Man is played upon by a stream of events or experiences which each soul meets in a certain way. The Father

is present in all these experiences, all are meant for man's good. But what man makes out of them depends upon himself, what he thinks, what motives and deeds he chooses. There is no kind but foolish friend to pay our fine for us and set us free. It is impossible, by imploring God, to reap as we have not sown. Heaven and earth could sooner pass away than this, for upon this law of action and reaction heaven and earth are founded.

Thus the discovery of the meaning of the fall of man is likewise the glad news that by the same law whereby we suffered and sinned we may build ourselves "new mansions in the skies;" we may regenerate all that is in us. There is indeed compensation for struggles which teach so great a truth as this.

Jesus therefore meets man where he is and points out the way of escape, by revealing that faith which is founded on law, the law of exact sowing and reaping. It rests with man to say whether he is ready, whether he cares the more for the fruits of the Spirit or for the possessions of the flesh.

A man may compromise with his conscience, if he will; but he will not find the Kingdom. He may simulate righteousness, but he will have a corresponding reward. But when, at last, he is intensely in earnest, when he gives all that he is and all that he has, then shall he really find the Kingdom, then shall he be born from above.

From the point of view of Jesus's teaching there is therefore no reason to condemn the universe. The law is so plain that in the end even the fool cannot err therein.

Man alone is at fault. The wrong springs from within. All reform must accordingly begin within. Only when we have cast the beam out of our own eye can we see clearly how to cast it out of our brother's eye.

Even sickness is identified with sin, which in the original meaning of the word translated sin in the New Testament signifies "to miss the mark." It matters not to Jesus whether he says, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," or "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." For both are infractions of divine law. Over both

the Christ has power, since the essence of the Christ life is to control all that lies below it, through the consecration "not my will, but thine be done."

Here is the point where so many have failed in their attempts to understand the teaching of Jesus with reference to sin. It has been supposed that Jesus died to save us, as a propitiatory sacrifice—as if God were an angry king instead of a Father of love. Consequently, it has been deemed sufficient merely to believe on Jesus, as if he could somehow relieve man of all responsibility and the obvious necessity of changing his mode of life to conform to the Christ ideal.

It is the *consecrated life* of Jesus, his spiritual history, not his physical death, which shows what it means to accept the Christ. Jesus's life was characterised above all by obedience to the divine law. That law, we have seen, applies to the body as well as to the soul. We may therefore conceive of Jesus as adjusting his life to the divine instinct in a thousand and one details. To seek the Father's Kingdom and loyally realise the divine ideal of righteousness means just this many-sided adjustment, this detailed manifestation of harmony.

The Christ life is without sin, therefore, because in the universal, not merely in any particular sense, it was harmoniously adjusted to the law of God.

Since the Father's will is immanent in all creation, to do his will one must obey it on all the planes of being. It is not enough to obey in thought alone. We must consecrate, therefore elevate and adjust, the entire life, mind, heart, body and soul. If we will do this all shall be taken care of, the health of the body as well as the health of the mind.

Thus the Christ law applies to the minutest detail. It is literally universal. It is that mode of thought and conduct which in every respect aims at and actually "hits the mark."

The remedy for all sin is therefore to direct our energies with, not against, the omnipresent divine energy, ever welling up within. The Christ attitude is the attitude of perfect adjustment, the perfect blending of the human will with the divine.

When the heavens were opened unto Jesus, and he perceived the divine peace descending, his vision of the Christ ideal became perfectly clear, he understood the law in all its fulness. His life was wholly dedicated to the Father's work, to the welfare of his fellow-men, that they, too, might be saved, not from a general hell, but from the hell each had created by his sin, or "fall," the only way of escape from which was to seek the Kingdom of God in the Christ spirit.

But nowhere does Jesus speak of God as the angry deity of the Old Testament. That was the old idea, consonant with the acceptance of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Jesus came to declare a better way, the law of love, and with it he brought the conception of God as a watchful Father.

Every quality that makes the old deity repugnant was swept away. Every evidence is given that if we repent, that is, come to judgment and change our mode of thought and life so that we do the Father's will, we shall enjoy the forgiveness, the remission of sins which is a natural consequence of righteousness.

How sublime the prospect, yet how stringent the law! Though a man accept a theological creed, make great protestations, and pray in a loud voice, it matters not. Jesus unsparingly condemned many customs which have obtained for ages in the Church. Here, as elsewhere, his statements are unqualified. For ever is it true that no man can serve two masters. No compromise is possible. A man must reap as he has sown, just as the number of units in a problem in arithmetic produces a given sum, and can produce no other sum unless more units be added.

But by the same law, the moment a man begins to sow righteously he shall reap righteousness. No man can sow for him, any more than a man may think for him. For, let it be repeated, it was not the *death* of Jesus which saved mankind; it was the *life* he lived, the Christ, the ideals to which he was faithful even when men came to slay him. "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly."

Therefore every man who would be free must deny himself, take up his life problem where it is, and follow where Jesus led, endeavour to live as Jesus lived.

It would be futile to imitate the external life of Jesus. We are not called upon to do precisely what Jesus did. We are called upon to meet the opportunities immediately before us as Jesus met the hardships of his life.

We cannot even save ourselves by repeating the words which Jesus uttered. Each must retire to his sanctuary and learn there how to be the Christ. For each must be a new Christ. And even greater works are promised when many shall attain the Christ attitude and lead the Christ life.

Jesus saved mankind, therefore, by revealing the true way. Before his time no one had been faithful in all respects to the divine will,—so far as history records,—though many had been faithful in certain details. But after his time no one could say that the way was not clear. Since then men have known not only the truth, but the way and the life.

Yet how far from Jesus's meaning is that doctrine which lays chief emphasis upon salvation! The salvation theory is akin to the theosophical doctrine of "Karma." The Theosophist labours to rid himself of the burdens of "Karma," or the accumulated misdeeds of previous existences; he is ever seeking to avoid another incarnation. Thus all is primarily for self. And so the Christian has sought escape from the torments of hell. But imagine Jesus healing the sick, not because of compassion for them, but because he "needed" to in order to be saved, or to avoid re-embodiment!

"He that loveth his life shall lose it."

In the doctrine of Jesus all lesser ends are fulfilled by the attainment of the highest. The true Christ man simply says, Come what may, death, crucifixion, another life, it will find me ready. "Not my will, but thine be done." "He that loseth his life shall find it."

Thus does Jesus trace all results back to the individual. It is not the storm which sweeps upon the house built on the sand that is to be condemned; the blame rests with him who chose the uncertain foundation. Every tree is known by its fruits, and the tree must be pure before it can produce pure fruit. There is no other way. Jesus does not resort to theoretical arguments, nor is he a believer in miracles, that is, infringements of law.

The universe was for Jesus a realm of law, and no compromise was possible. Therefore he always spoke unqualifiedly. Unless a man be willing to do the entire will of the Father, he cannot attain the Christ. Only through the sonship, only through the Christ can such things come as people have sought in their pursuit of the Messianic ideal.

Thus Jesus is the Saviour because he points out the way of escape from sin, from the consequences of misdirected life; Salvation can come only through this channel because man can only direct his energies aright when he is living the Christ life. It must come through conduct, for individual conduct is alone responsible for the results suffered.

Another may bear our burdens for us for a time. There is much vicarious suffering in the world. But sooner or later all men must face the great alternatives and decide for themselves. For no one can be unselfish for another. Each must settle this problem of problems in the solitude of his own heart: either self or the Christ. By the consecrated life which follows, the world shall know how the struggle ended. Not by protestations of belief do men prove themselves saved; not by publishing abroad the works of their right hands. Always it is the life, and the life is determined by the individual soul.

But are not people saved by the divine grace? the critic asks. Is not even the hardened sinner sometimes suddenly transformed?

What are we to understand by the divine grace—a miraculous interposition? If so, we must part company with Jesus, for Jesus assures us that, to the last, everything is governed by law.

But if by the divine grace is meant the new birth from above, the coming of the Holy Spirit to the receptive soul, the unexpected welling up of the divine life, we shall have the full sympathy of Jesus. This is not a providential interposition. It is the regular activity of God, the constant effort of the divine Father to recall the wayward son. At all times and in all places the Father thus seeks recognition. Nothing is more in accord with law than this.

What then constitutes the sudden change from the sinful to the righteous life? Is it God's action alone? Then it would not be an act of free will.

The suddenness is unquestionably due to some change on man's part, either to subconscious receptivity, or to self-disgust on account of a long career of sin. For in order to be a true conversion it must be a permanent change in consciousness, a recognition of the Christ ideal as contrasted with the life of sin. There must be preparation for it, a gradual working up to the point where, when the divine alternative was presented, it was at once accepted; for there are no sudden leaps in God's cosmos, no changes contrary to the law of evolution.

But can there not be forgiveness of sins? What are we to understand by forgiveness?

Jesus says that we are forgiven as we forgive. He urges us to forgive that we may be forgiven. Thus he invariably assures men that the first change must take place in themselves.

Yet may not the Master bear our sins for us? Again, what is meant by bearing another's sins? Are we absolved because we accept him, because he hung upon the cross? Are we therefore free from obligation?

No, Jesus does not teach this. He bids men take up the cross and follow him. If man must atone for his sinful life by following the Christ, by patiently working day by day to wear off the burdens of his earlier years, this process surely cannot be stopped by mentally casting the burden on someone else. That would imply that Jesus knew not what he said when he based the entire plan of salvation on the law of individual action and reaction.

No, there is no escape from this conclusion. In so far as a man repents and seeks the Kingdom of God, he wins freedom and peace. God is always faithful; Jesus has done his utmost to reveal the Christ law to all. But upon man, individual man, rests the responsibility.

The Father never fails to come and plead. The Christ spirit is abroad in all the world. All nature declares the law of salvation which Jesus so clearly enunciated. But God does not repent for man. Jesus does not come and compel obedience.

There are, no doubt, many marked and sudden changes from unrighteousness to righteousness. But if we could know all the circumstances we should find the same familiar evolutionary conditions everywhere exemplified.

In the end, therefore, we can give no wiser counsel than the advice of Jesus, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness," for with each step in the seeking we set that power in motion which in due course will free us from our sins. And when the unexpected happens, we may know that it is not because the Father has made special effort to save us, but that in deepest truth he is perpetually seeking to make himself known to all men.

The new birth is thus the supreme work of creation; the coming down from above of that supernal peace which soothes the troubled soul after its long travail; the union of the creative spirit with the noblest product of the life which has evolved from below. In that moment the son at last recognises the Father. In that moment the true atonement is made. For all barriers have fallen away. The law of life is seen. The mission of Jesus is appreciated. And the love of the Christ begins its perfect work.

To become a Christian therefore means to pray without ceasing, to live hour by hour and moment by moment as Jesus would have men live. It is as impossible to settle the matter once for all by standing up and confessing one's self a Christian, as it is to do all our praying for the week in a half-hour on Sunday. It is the little causes that are effective, the little thoughts of righteousness and the little deeds of love. And so the new birth extends

through the Christian's lifetime. He must die daily and every day be resurrected until, finally, only righteousness shall triumph, only love shall prevail.

Chapter VI. Christ and Nature

WE HAVE seen that Jesus by no means accepted the doctrine which identifies God and nature. We have also noted that his ideal for the redemption of man is harmony with the divine will, consequently adjustment to the laws of nature as a revelation of God.

As this may be a new idea to some, the possibility of taking the Christ attitude toward the entire universe, it may be well to divert the discussion from the direct consideration of Jesus's teaching, that we may more fully illustrate the Christ law at large before considering its social application.

In these days, it is indeed necessary to consider the relationship of Christ to the material world, in view of the prevalence of a certain doctrine which claims to have reduced Jesus's teaching to a science.

The nature of the material world is, however, one of the most difficult subjects which confront the philosophical student. It is repeatedly postponed by many writers, or put off under the guise of an explanation which does not explain. The differences of opinion in regard to it are absolute, and more nonsense has been put forward as philosophy under this head than under any other.

Not to concern ourselves with the history of opinion, there are live issues enough in the world of thought to-day to furnish abundant topics

for investigation. In this enlightened twentieth century there are those who profess to disbelieve in the existence of matter, there are those who deem it an illusion (*Maya*), those who declare that it has no qualities of its own,—not even drugs and poisons,—those who regard it as the only reality, and those who almost worship it as king. It seems incredible that in these days of exact physical and chemical science such a divergence of views can exist. Yet, from another point of view, this confusion of thought is easily accounted for by the fact that mind and matter are almost indissolubly blended; and what one man describes as matter, another very naturally classifies as mind.

In no department of thought has this confusion crept in to such an extent as in regard to foods, drugs, and poisons. In certain cases it has been discovered that the effect of drugs has been mitigated by thought. Bread pills have been known to accomplish the results of powerful drugs, when taken with powerful belief. Flavored water, under a Latin name, has proved equally efficacious.

Surprising results have followed in certain instances where people have eaten one kind of food, believing that they were eating another. Everyone has observed instances of this kind. Every doctor has a fund of such anecdotes to relate. And so has grown up the belief that the qualities of foods, drugs, and poisons, are such as the mind gives them. The belief has grown into a dogma, until one frequently hears that it matters little what one eats; it is what one thinks about it that is effective. How far is this conclusion sound?

It is a scientific fact that a powerful drug may be swallowed without effect by a hypnotised person who believes it to be water or some equally mild liquid. Does this prove that the drug has no qualities of its own, or that in certain cases the power of man's mind is sufficient to overcome the chemical qualities, and produce a different effect upon the physical organism?

Susceptibility is, in general terms, an affair of the living organism. Foods and drugs which produce certain effects while the body is alive, produce no result after the body is dead. Obviously, assimilation and healing are

qualities of the living organism only. One would not expect medicines and foods to be efficacious after dissolution.

There are chemicals, however, which are effective after death, which preserve the body for many years. Is it reasonable to suppose that their preservative qualities are merely due to the suggestions of the embalmer and the "subconscious mentality" of the race?

Take a more marked instance. Sulphuric acid eats marble. The effect is purely chemical, and is obviously as independent of the mind as the wearing away of the soil by a foaming torrent. Unless one believe that matter has no existence apart from man's mind, one must admit that there are native qualities in the physical world which tend, under uniform conditions, to produce the same effect the world over. That is, that those are inherent characteristics of matter, whose tendencies are to produce harmony; they are not the diseased results which man suffers through ignorance, fear, and the varying susceptibilities which differ with each individual. It is the tendency of the soil and the sunlight, for example, to nourish the plant. According to the same principle, man's physical organism is nourished by nutritious foods. These results are ultimately attributable, of course, to divine causation.

When man is in a normal, healthy condition, the tendency of natural phenomena is to produce harmony. The ideal, therefore, is not to impose egoistic thought on nature, to project the qualities of mind into matter, but rather to remove all obstacles both in the mind and in the body, that we may know nature as it really is, as an orderly, purposive, divine manifestation.

It is clear, then, that there are many factors to be considered in an analysis of the experience called material.

First, there are the divinely implanted tendencies and qualities, governed by uniform laws, varying with different substances and under different conditions. This is the material world *per se*, as a systematic, progressive, purposive objectification of Spirit. What this world of nature is, apart from any particular human experience, modern science is more and more fully

telling us. We must therefore turn to geology, biology, physics, chemistry, and the other special sciences for detailed descriptions.

Second, there is the physical organism of man, which of course modifies in some degree all physical experiences according to temperament and the state of health. The sense of taste, for example, varies not only with the general habit of life, the kind of foods one has lived on, but is greatly altered by fever and other severe disease. It is important to note and reiterate that what we call the qualities of foods and other physical substances are due to the combined effect of matter and our organs of sense. We must have ears in order to hear. To what extent our ears modify the vibrations which we know as sound, we do not know. The fact that a man sees no colours, if his organs of vision are defective, leads to the conclusion that his eyes, and possibly the other senses, have the power greatly to modify the vibrations which give rise to all physical sensation.

Third, we have the far more interesting factor of mind which transforms physical sensation into a state of consciousness. Here, again, no one knows how great a change may be wrought by the transforming medium. No one knows a physical sensation in itself; we know only the state of consciousness which corresponds to it.

On the mental side there is a wealth of thoughts to classify, not merely the subconscious suggestions of the race, but all the beliefs, fears, idiosyncrasies, and the like, which constitute our minds in general. Then there are the passing thoughts, suggestions, and fears, the changes wrought through hypnotism, the effect produced by Latin names attached to drugs, the power of the doctor's suggestion, and a host of similar suggestions. Truly, the array is startling.

If we compare these three factors, matter, physical organism, and mind, we conclude that matter tends to be uniform, the physical organism is a very variable quantity, and the mind is subject to constant fluctuation. Thus we have a uniform quantity translated by a varying medium and interpreted by an inconstant observer.

The important fact is that matter is known only through mind. We do not know it in itself. At best, we know it only through the scientific consciousness of the race.

Yet the fact that matter is known through consciousness does not imply that it is a conscious element. There is a difference between a mere thought—for example, a prayer—and the perceptions which are brought vividly and involuntarily before the mind, *e. g.*, the sensation of fire. Knowledge of what fire comes from is obtainable not by experimenting with thought, but by handling ponderable substances. We learn that under certain conditions wood will burn. The combustion is due to the union of a chemical substance with oxygen. The entire race, scientific and unscientific, knows that fire will burn. We know that water will put fire out. And in all this we are dealing with uniform external forces, which the mind can observe, but neither create nor control by a mere process of thought.

Again, we may illustrate by the perception of hardness. We know a thing is hard by coming in contact with it, not in thought, but with our physical organism. Matter is hard, soft, solid, liquid, or gaseous, independently of the mind of man. The sum total of physical forces, the conservation of energy, is also independent of human thought. The laws and forms of matter, the phenomena of life, and the stages of evolution among all the multiform species are equally independent.

The mind can neither destroy nor create. It can only observe, become more and more minutely conscious, and direct or modify through its physical instrument, the brain. The utmost that mind can accomplish with matter is to produce an impression on the cells of the brain. All changes beyond that are physical.

It is clear, then, that the mind does not directly change matter. Foods, drugs, and poisons are not changed by thought. Thought modifies, overcomes, or destroys the effect upon the organism.

If one wishes to free the body from the effects of tobacco, one must leave off using tobacco. It is in vain to argue that tobacco will not injure if one

believes it will do no harm, although this belief may be effective temporarily. In the long run the body becomes like what it feeds on. "As a man soweth, so shall he also reap."

One can gradually accustom the organism to take arsenic, so that a quantity ordinarily sufficient to produce death may be taken at one time. But this by no means disproves the power of arsenic to kill. A man may slacken and even stop the beating of his heart. But, if he holds it still too long at a time, death will result, as actual fact has shown. One may accustom one's self to sleep less and less each night. But a man who reduced the time devoted to sleep to one hour, then less and less time, finally died.

There are natural limits, then, beyond which the mind in its control over the body may not safely go. Matter is not fundamentally the cause of consciousness. But, while we are linked with a physical organism, it is that which limits it, and gives rise to its perceptions.

What sort of a world we might behold, were we freed from our physical organisms, we do not know, because we lack the experience. Very likely it would be very different, as unlike the present world we see as a dream is unlike our present waking life.

But that would not prove that matter does not exist. It would not prove that the present life is a delusion. It would only prove that what we see is coloured by the organism through which we see it. Given another organism, we should have a different perceptive experience. That which gave rise to the former experience would still be there; that is, the vibrations, the manifestations of force, which through our senses of sight, hearing and touch, we knew as colour, form, sound, hardness, and the rest.

If, then, you accept the conclusions of certain idealists, and declare that matter has no existence apart from mind, that, if all men were absent, no world would be seen, you sweep away the divine manifestation which is the real cause of this our world of sense-experience. For what we call matter is ultimately the diversified power of God in causative action.

We know this activity according to the deliverances of our present organism, interpreted by consciousness. How it might appear if known through a more refined organism, we do not know. How it might affect us on Mars or some other planet, we do not know; nor are we aware of its nature as perceived by our spiritual senses, except so far as our present very imperfect experiences permit.

If God's life or spirit is the foundation of things, all force, life, motion, substance, is ultimately spiritual. In order fully to know what these are, we must discern them spiritually, just as we must interpret the gospel of Jesus by the spirit, rather than by the letter.

Spirit known in its most objective form of manifestation is matter. Known through the intellect, it is thought. Known through conscience, it is the right; through the heart (spiritual intuition), it is love; through reason, it is truth.

There is intelligence in matter, because God, or Spirit, is there as its reality, its life, power, purpose.

Our senses do not deceive us, as the thoughtless idealist affirms. It is thought that is deceived. Our senses translate for us the vibrations of Spirit in its most objective form. They are trustworthy, when rightly used by the mind, because they are gifts of Spirit.

The conservation of energy ultimately means the eternal conservation of Spirit. When this law is thought of in relation to matter alone, it plunges the mind into numberless difficulties. But, when regarded from the point of view of Spirit, it is obvious that there is no break in the continuity due to mental and physical interchange.

Matter, then, is far more real than the subjective idealist believes; it is lifted many planes above the low level to which it has been relegated by mystics, pessimists, and believers in Maya.

It is not as real as unthinking common sense seems to prove, when it strikes against a wall. When subjected to analysis, all that this experience means is that force has met force, while a greater force may be brought to bear to

destroy the wall. Forms are transient; it is only Spirit in changing forms that abides, God and his republic of human souls.

Matter is not a "shadow"; it is a real embodiment of Spirit. It is therefore to be understood in all its phases in relation to Spirit, by seeking first the Kingdom of God. Thought has limitations; it is only Spirit that is free. To know matter in its truest sense, man must harmonise with it as a beautiful harmonious revelation. He must think of the living presence within it, beating in the heart, evolving through the struggle of the fittest, manifested in all the grandeurs of stellar and planetary space.

The highest function of thought as related to matter is therefore right understanding. Instead of imposing its own suggestions upon matter, thought should seek more and more to know matter in itself, to set self aside. "Not my will, but thine, be done." Only the Christ truly knows what nature is.

What thought cannot do, God or Spirit can. Seek, therefore, the way of Spirit, and harmonise with that. If it be a part of God's ideal for all individual souls to control animals and the phenomena of nature, God will declare the way, he has revealed the way through Jesus. When such power is attained, it will be spiritually gained and spiritually applied by exalted souls, whose motives are too pure to permit unrighteous use of the great power thus granted them. It is futile for selfish thought to seek such powers of command.

Likewise, in our present practical endeavours to conquer disease and master the flesh, suggestions and affirmations have decided limitations; only the Spirit, only the Christ attitude, is all-availing. He only shall attain perfect health who, ceasing to affirm merely egoistic thought, adjusts mind and body to the divine upwelling.

Through God we can do all things that are in harmony with the ideals of God. Only in this highest direction is the way freely open. There the soul can create. There the soul can triumph.

In all relations with matter, therefore, ask what God is accomplishing there. Look back of pain to the power of God restoring equilibrium or carrying

forward the processes of growth. Follow the promptings of God, and seek those surroundings which harmonise with the organism in a normal condition.

Do not be bound by the flesh, but seek unison with God as revealed within it, the laws which govern it, the ideal end which it serves.

Remember that Jesus identified sickness with sin, a lack of harmony with the divine law, the divine tendency; and so seek freedom from it by becoming unselfish, by moderation and equanimity, through the peace of the Spirit, through personal communion with the Father in the Christ spirit.

Remember that ultimately matter is the continuous causative activity of God, and so learn to look at life as a unit, as really spiritual. Thus shall the soul rise to the true dignity of matter. Thus shall it become progressively free. Thus shall nature be understood at last as Jesus understood it, in the Christ spirit, as a part of the Christ world.

Chapter VII. The Ethics of Jesus

THE PRECEPT, "Resist not evil," has undoubtedly proved more perplexing than any other of Jesus's commandments. It would seem wise, therefore, to begin our study of the ethics of Jesus with an interpretation of this precept, for if we can prove it to be of practical value the way will be made easy for the application of the other ethical principles.

It is frequently said, nowadays, that this precept is impractical, that it would apply only in an ideal state. But in an ideal state there would be no evil to resist. Of what force then would be the command, "Resist not evil?"

After all, what is an ideal state? Is it one in which there is nothing to overcome? Perhaps our present existence is nearer the ideal than we suspect, but that its ideality has no meaning for us because we evade the laws whereby its beauty might become manifest.

To the objection that literal obedience to this precept results in a weak altitude and subjects one to the roguery of the world, we at once reply that this is not the fault of Jesus, but is due to a misinterpretation of his teaching. All laws apply under given conditions, and it is as necessary to understand the conditions as to understand the laws. Jesus constantly warns his followers to beware of false prophets, and others who come in sheep's clothing. He

does not bid us open wide the doors to all; but to discriminate and know the false from the true.

We are not merely to assume an unresisting attitude, then let our adversary do what he will. There are situations where it is even wise to agree with our adversary quickly while we are with him in the way, lest haply he deliver us to the judge and the judge to the officer who may cast us into prison. For in this, as in all situations, we must pay the last farthing, we must suffer in exact accordance with our actions.

It is important to bear in mind that the law of action and reaction lies at the basis of our conduct. If when an angry man strikes, we return force for force, he will also strike back and so the trouble will grow.

The old law was of this personal type. It counselled man to return "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." A man was to stand up for his rights and strike back, to meet the action on the plane on which it was given. This is the resisting of evil which Jesus warned men against. Do not, he implicitly said, lower yourself to the level of evil and return evil for evil. Do not try to overcome evil by suppressing it, by fighting it, but "overcome evil with good." Conquer the lower power by exercise of the higher. For "how can Satan drive out Satan?"

"The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the Kingdom of heaven is preached." The gospel of the Kingdom is the law of love. We are not even to meet love on its own plane, loving only those who love us. There is a higher law of love, namely, to love our enemies, to love even those who despitely use and persecute us.

The old or lower law simply said, Give as you receive, love or hate as you are loved or hated.

The higher law exposes this doctrine for what it really is: the law of selfishness. The old law said: "Thou shalt not kill." The new law forbade men even to be angry or to think sinful thoughts. The old law applied to external deeds. The new law included even the secret thoughts.

We must bear in mind, therefore, the stress which Jesus laid upon the inner life. From his point of view it was never sufficient to assume the form of goodness, to seem to be pious and to pray. It was necessary to be good, and to do good; and he assured men that the highest goodness never makes a public display. Therefore a man might even give his cloak also and yet be very far from the Kingdom of heaven. For the essential is not the merely external deed but the decisive thought, the intent, the attitude.

We must also bear in mind that Jesus spoke in parables. No one can grasp his meaning who insists upon a merely literal interpretation.

The "turn to him the other cheek also," is an illustration of a principle. I am to treat with love and forgiveness even the thief who comes to steal my coat. If I simply handed him my cloak, he would laugh and accept it in triumph and I should be guilty of consorting with evil. But if I say or do that which conveys love to him who would wrong me, it matters little whether or not I also lose my cloak. I have been true to my spiritual opportunity, and that is the highest purpose of life. I have been true to myself and to my brother, by whom my conduct will not soon be forgotten.

Non-resistance to evil should never be non-activity. I am to take a strong moral attitude, whatever I do. Righteous indignation is an aspiration. It is a step on the way toward the moral life, and is very often inspired by a keen sense of justice and insight into wrong-doing. But it is possible to lift our conduct to a higher plane, to transmute the force which would spend itself against the wrong-doer into positive and impersonal zeal for the right, the true.

It is a different way of overcoming evil. The same energy which would spend itself as hate, must be turned into the gentler but far more effective channel of love. For love is a mighty power, able to master evil, and only by being true to its guidance may we ever hope to win the day for righteousness.

To all who would postpone the day of beginning to practise this precept we must therefore say, If a precept be really a moral law we ought to be true to it here and now even though it be inconvenient. If true, it is eternal, an

imperative command, and the effort to evade it is only another excuse for selfishness.

But time is required to realise an ideal. True, Jesus would have admitted that. Many, for example, would be pure, but the flesh is strong and unruly, and one must try and fail, and fail and try. But "blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." And seeing God, that is, perceiving his presence, they shall be made recipients of that power which will transform even the physical life.

It is not easy to inhibit the impulse to strike back. It is long ere the intellect is convinced that the method of love is not only the higher way, but the only sure method of overcoming evil. But blessed are they who know the law, thrice blessed are they who do their utmost to obey it.

The ideal state is not therefore a visible realm. It is that plane of development where the peace of the Spirit has begun to reign, where the impulse to hate and to strike is met by the Christ self which speaks with authority, Peace be still!

Jesus could command that self within him even when the lower self offered all the kingdoms of the world if he would but submit. Thus by precept and by example Jesus taught the way and the truth of the higher life. To overcome temptation, we must first develop that higher centre of power, the Christ within, so that when the temptation comes we may have the power to resist it.

The highest ideal therefore exists for all; and there is a power within us which is impelling man towards it—the evolutionary energy of God. We must recognise love and call out the dormant higher nature in all men with whom we are thrown in contact. We must remember that they are in the throes of their moral evolution, and so have boundless charity.

It is an error to say that the higher law is absolutely right, the lower absolutely wrong. Men are evolving through the lower to the higher. They are trying to be noble and true and good. Their law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth was the highest they knew until the Christ came.

Jesus distinctly says that he comes not to destroy but to fulfil. He comes to show men a better way. But the lower has served its purpose in preparation for the Christ.

Were we unsparingly to condemn the lower law, the law of warfare, selfishness and greed, we should condemn God. For has he not evolved men through this warfare, greed and selfishness? Is history without divine significance?

The critic may object that all this is due to man's ignorance and sin, and is therefore wholly wrong. Very true, but from one side only. From the other point of view, it is equally clear that God saw fit to have men evolve through darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, from bondage to freedom. Therefore, all this has played its part in the divine plan, as we have already noted in a foregoing chapter.

Moreover, the coming of the Christ would be a break in the continuity of law and evolution unless it should come as the natural fulfilment of what had gone before. The whole meaning of the Christ ideal is seen as a relation between lower and higher, as the fruition of ages of search and struggle.

Therefore, when you see men contending and sinning, remember the Christ, the Christ of all moral evolution, the spiritual Messiah whom in their hearts, consciously or unconsciously, all men are seeking. Do not sweep away the old law and leave men nothing to live by. Do not sweep away the statutes and institutions of men. Regard these in the light of their fulfilment, and concentrate all your energies upon the higher ideal. Help men to take the next step. Love them, and neither condemn nor permit yourself to be impatient with those who are plodding along the upward way.

But the fact that the Christ law is a fulfilment of the lower law by no means implies that there is to be a compromise with the lower. No ethical sanction is more imperative than that of Jesus's ethics. It is the sanction of the inner world as opposed to the outer. Whether passing through the corn-fields on the Sabbath or mingling with his fellow-men in the busy towns and cities, Jesus was unflinching true to the inner command, even when it was in entire

opposition to the customs of the country. He obeyed one master, and that was always the voice of God in his soul. He who had conquered the lower man knew but one law, the will of the Father. And his entire ethical code may be summarised in the precept, Obey the Father's will.

What then is the will of God? The will expresses the real nature, the inmost intent. The heart of God is love. God so loved the world that he gave the highest product of his being, the Christ, the perfect embodiment of his will, the heart of his heart. The Christ is the crowning product of the cosmos of righteousness, the goal toward which all the life of the universe has been tending.

To do the perfect will of God is therefore to live the Christ. All other obedience to the Father's will is at best only an earnest of this its complete fulfilment. Jesus therefore bids men be perfect even as the Father is perfect. The highest duty of each man is the attainment of the Christ, each in his individual life. And if a man knows what this command means, he needs no other precept, for it includes all the rest.

Jesus's ethical doctrine therefore has the highest possible foundation. It is based on the inner or spiritual consciousness of God's universe of righteousness, the fact that, through the world-order culminating in the Christ, God reveals his perfect nature. Accordingly the command to do right is an unqualified obligation. It is an eternal law of our existence, unlimited by time, applying under all circumstances and in all places. It has the sanction of the entire nature of God, it is written in the very being of the cosmos. Always and everywhere we are to love. Always and everywhere we are to be unselfish and to serve.

The law of love is not therefore a merely human custom, as the moral law is sometimes said to be. The ethical teaching of Jesus is very far from being a purely empirical product, although it was only given to men after ages of social evolution. We are not to love because it is expedient, nor because others have loved. That is the old law which came up from below and

pretends to be love. The new law comes down from above; it is revealed from within.

The ethical teaching of Jesus is in striking contrast to the ethics of evolution, as ordinarily taught. The law of love calls upon us to pursue a very different course from that proffered by pleasure. Pleasure has only the sanction of custom; the law of love has the sanction of God. The Father may sanction pleasure as a step in evolution, but how great is the contrast when the law of self-denial is revealed!

It is needless, therefore, to undertake a detailed study of other moral systems which claim finality, and compare them with the ethics of Jesus. The idealistic or intuitive ethical philosophers approximate to the doctrine of Jesus in so far as the sanction they offer is from within and from above.

When the advocates of evolutionary ethics have said their last word, Jesus comes forward not to destroy but to fulfil. For the highest that a man can do is to dedicate all that evolution has made him to the uses of the Father.

We must also keep up on this high level in our thoughts concerning the golden rule. If we regard this rule from below, as a product of social evolution, it easily becomes susceptible of egoistic interpretation. The same rule was laid down by Confucius and other moral teachers long before Jesus declared it to be "the law and the prophets." It fails to lift conduct to the highest plane unless we view it in connection with Jesus's law of love. We are not to do as we would that others should do unto us in the personal sense. Any social group could adopt the precept, even a low-grade society, and yet make no progress, if this rule were taken by itself. But in the sense in which the rule is enunciated by Jesus, that which we would that others should do unto us is not that which will work to our advantage simply, but that they should love us even as we were taught to love when Jesus bade us love our enemies.

Do not therefore give that you may receive, for this is self-interest only. Give of yourself, without thought of reward. Give the fruits of the Spirit.

Give as you would will to see all men giving under similar circumstances, that is, give with regard to the welfare of the entire social organism, not with regard to your own sect or nation. Give as men ought to give to you, for your best good in relation to the best good of all.

Such giving does not necessarily involve that which is pleasant. It is that gift which is meant for a person's good in the long run, never that which is for temporary pleasure, or the easiest way to be rid of a beggar. It is discriminative, righteous giving, above all, a spiritual gift, a message from soul to soul.

To be sure, Jesus speaks of the "reward" of righteousness, but this is very far from urging men to work primarily for the reward. The reward is simply the reaction, and Jesus applies the term as frequently to wrong-doing as to righteousness. By this he means that no man shall escape the result of his actions. And so no man shall labour for righteousness in vain. Everyone shall be rewarded in exact accordance with the purity of motive and deed by which his life is characterised.

Even when one is reproached and persecuted, one should rejoice, knowing that this also will bring its spiritual compensation.

We must, however, consider circumstances to some extent. We ought not to give that which is holy where it will be scorned. Even Jesus sought those who had at least a grain of faith in him.

The prime essential is to put the soul in the right attitude. We must first be reconciled with our brother, be in a loving mood, or our gift will profit nothing.

"Judge not according to appearances, judge righteous judgment." Look below the surface of things to find the truth, the reality. Remember that all men are working out their salvation, that none is guiltless, that none is able to cast the first stone.

Likewise in regard to the appeal, "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors." Not that we should turn to the ledger and cross off every financial obligation. To do this might be to wrong our neighbour. We

are rather to have a spirit of forgiveness towards those who apparently have done us an injury.

Thus it is ever the inner attitude which is consequential. Think truth, and you will speak truth. Be pure in heart and you shall be pure in your life. Be sincere, honest, straightforward, outgoing, charitable, and you will find men taking the same attitude toward you.

When his enemies came to crucify him, Jesus uttered no word save of forgiveness. Thus to the end he was true to the doctrine he taught. Always it was the law of love, the spirit of brotherhood, the recognition of the divine within the human.

Jesus would not even permit men to call him "good." "None is good save one, even God." Man is good only to the extent that God is revealed through him. For man is not adequate by himself. Just as his life is from God, so must his goodness be seen in relation to God. And Jesus recognised that even he was sufficient only through the divine creative work of which his own mission as the Christ was the culminating part.

Thus the ethical teaching of Jesus is scarcely separable from his religion. To seek the Kingdom of God was with him at once an act of prayer or worship, and a search for the clue to righteous or ethical conduct. His religion was consecrated work for humanity, and his consecration was his ethical self-dedication. The spiritual and moral ideals were not to be sundered, but each was a part of the life of righteousness which is the fruit of the Kingdom. Therefore, if we truly understand what Jesus means by seeking and finding the Kingdom we have the clue to the most difficult ethical problems which the intellect can propound.

Chapter VIII. The Denunciations

A GREAT many people have been troubled by the denunciations of Jesus. That he should call certain people blind guides, hypocrites, offsprings of vipers, has been a difficult fact to reconcile with his doctrine of love, his sweet and noble life.

Some have tried to meet the difficulty by denying that he said these things. Others have declared that, if he said them, he was so far imperfect. At any rate, these sayings are in flat contradiction to some of the accepted criteria of present-day thought.

Let us consider these sayings in the light of Jesus's method, as a teacher. As we have repeatedly noted, Jesus always spoke with perfect confidence. There is no doubt, no hesitancy, no speculative spirit apparent in any of his sayings. He foretells his own life with the same confidence which he puts into the enunciation of a universal law. His is ever the word of the seer, never the hypothesis of the experimenter. He is nothing if not honest.

Jesus also sees through the schemes and questionings of every critic or enemy. He reads the thoughts of the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, even before they are uttered in secret. He estimates each critic at his real worth.

What else could he do, then, but go straight to the point, frankly exposing the hypocrisy and scheming of his critics, he who believed that every idle

word shall be accounted for in the day of judgment? If he had concealed his real thought behind clever flattery, he would have been no better than his alleged modern followers in the aristocratic church. Since they were really blind guides, he could not consistently call them by any other name. Probably he did them more good than by any other statement he could have made. For he spoke with that authority which was not to be gainsaid.

Consider what an upheaval would follow if hypocrisy were now exposed with the same honesty. Ministers and newspaper editors all over the land who must withhold anything that may lose them their wealthy patronage would at last speak out in all sincerity. Healers, doctors, quack mediums, and thousands of charlatans would have to confess that they do not know half what their clients believe them to know. Polite society would be revolutionised, and many occupations would be gone for ever.

Everyone believes in honesty—theoretically. Everyone knows from personal experience that the true friend is the one who, upon occasion, goes straight to the point, as Jesus did. We all prefer praise; but we all know that blame is safer, if only it come alternately with encouragement.

To be sure, Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." But when you really know, what can you honestly do but express your true thought, your righteous judgment?

It is charity to give people the benefit of the doubt. There are, however, many people who really know, who are gifted with a measure of that same insight which characterised the thought of Jesus, and made his statements uncompromising and straightforward.

If Jesus were here to-day, would he not expose hypocrisy as unsparingly as he did eighteen centuries ago? And who would be his followers? They would be the honest men, the truth-tellers, those who, without regard to money or social standing, pursue truth and virtue.

To condemn Jesus on account of the denunciations is like charging him with egotism because he said, "I am the way and the truth and the life." We

ought rather to estimate any particular saying in the light of his spirit as a whole, his career as the Christ, not in isolation from its true context.

In this connection, let us also remember to judge rightly Jesus's saying that he came not to bring peace but a sword. Some have taken this literally, hence the acceptance of a theory which we shall consider in the next chapter.

His entire ministry, despite the denunciations, shows that Jesus was, above all, the messenger of peace. Peace may be said to be his watchword—the sweet companion of his love.

The symbolical reference to the sword unquestionably relates to the leavening process, the conflict which Jesus foresaw as the result of his coming.

Everyone who has tried even in a slight way to realise the Christ ideal, knows that to stand for peace and love, for freedom and equality, means that one shall encounter opposition, misinterpretation, abuse and persecution.

No sooner had the dove of peace descended than the temptation of Jesus began. Very early in his ministry certain men became his enemies and began to plot against him.

Over against the passages which seem to imply the sanction of physical violence and spiteful condemnation, we must place the passage in which he forgives even those who crucified him, and also the highly important declaration that he came *not to destroy but to fulfil*.

No saying of Jesus is more distinct than this, that he came to construct, to add to and complete.

There is surely no sanction for "Christian warfare" in Jesus's teaching. Nor is one justified in resorting to the methods employed by many of Jesus's would-be followers to make converts to Christianity.

Let us remember that it was the *life* that Jesus led which had so powerful an effect upon humanity. Therefore, if we would follow him, let us first live as he lived. Let us first win the confidence of those whom we would help. Then if we can add anything to their lives it will carry the invincible conviction of love, consecration and sympathy.

The vast hordes of human beings who are still outside the pale of Christianity are really sons of God. Let us treat them as such. Their religion, if unlike ours, is still an aspiration after God. It is not wholly false; it is like the inadequate statement, "Two and one are four."

If you aspire to be a foreign missionary, go and live among your brothers of another colour, not as a superior being, but as a co-worker. Study their life. Study their religion. Then if you see how to add the one unit, so that two and two are four, add it gently. Do not destroy; fulfil. Call no man heathen. Call no son of God a lost soul. Speak only of the hell of action and reaction. Speak only of the heaven of the omnipresent Spirit.

Thus shall your Christianity pass from the old to the new. Thus shall your method pass from negative to positive. And when you have thus learned not to destroy but to fulfil, when you have begun to live the Christ life, you will be able to look beneath the letter of Jesus's denunciations and supposed warlike statements to the spirit of constructive, fulfilling peace which consistently inspired every word he uttered.

Chapter IX. The Christ Life

THE QUESTION may be asked, Was Jesus a socialist? The answer depends upon what is meant by socialism. Very adverse views are held by different exponents of social philosophy. From the point of view of some, Jesus was the most radical of insurrectionists, in sympathy only with the labourer, unqualifiedly opposed to the rich.

Others deem this view entirely incorrect, and declare that Jesus was the first true individualist. Still others see a truth in both points of view, and have made much headway in the endeavour to free Christianity from salvationism and make it a social, not a personal religion.

There is a basis for all these interpretations. Jesus chose his disciples from among the common people. He mingled with those whom the wealthy despised. He condemned riches, counselling men not to seek money but to serve. He called all men brothers and sisters without regard to family ties. His teaching was based throughout on the principle of justice, equality, the servant as his master, the master as his servant. And if his doctrine were faithfully and quickly applied, it would without question involve society in the most radical revolution the world has seen.

But Jesus was as ready to help the individual, to explain the laws of the new birth, or the spiritual life, as to give counsel concerning society at large.

He was a man of peace, not a law-breaker. It is a mistake to suppose that he would have favoured strikes and other external means of coercive social reform. The world cannot be coerced into righteousness. That which is sound and true comes by slow degrees, and Jesus came not to destroy, but to fulfil.

Jesus was indeed radical, but his was the radicalism of the inner life. If we believe him when he counsels men to seek first the Kingdom of God, when he declares that Kingdom to be within or invisible, and that it comes without observation, we cannot also believe those who affirm that Jesus was a social reformer, in the usual acceptance of the word.

Jesus explicitly taught that the Kingdom of God is first spiritual, then social. He condemned those who clean the outside of the cup and the dish, while the inside is full of the fruits of grasping and self-indulgence. He disbelieved in all whitewashing methods, in all external tampering and doctoring of effects. He advised men to begin at the heart of things, first to set themselves right; then the world would be righted. And above all he emphasised the great law of immanent divine activity whereby all phases of human society are carried forward to completion as rapidly as men and women are rightly adjusted within.

The social method of Jesus was thus in keeping with the law of growth everywhere exemplified in nature, the change from centre to circumference, from seed to maturity, from the simple to the complex. He took into account the conflicts, slow transformations and progressive changes which must result ere the whole lump of human unregenerateness be leavened. Therefore we may learn what his social gospel implied by close study of nature, by observation of plant and animal life, and the contemplation of our own mental development. By such a study we learn that new ideas gradually work their way from the individual to the social mind, at first combatted, then considered, finally accepted and assimilated: Jesus's idea of the spiritual Kingdom has been working its way out among men for nearly nineteen hundred years.

Accordingly, Jesus urges his followers first to love God, then to love men. We must first seek and find as individuals, learn the divine instinct, and harmonise with the divine tendency, then broaden our lives socially. For it is not according to human laws that society is to be regenerated. It is by co-operation with divine forces. And we must first learn the law before we can obey it.

When, therefore, you see a man anxiously going forth to coerce and to accelerate, you may know that he has not yet found the Kingdom within. He lacks repose, he lacks trust, therefore he spends his energy in vain.

Yet, as man is a social being the surest external evidence that he has really found the Kingdom is service, a change in his dealings with his neighbours.

This much, then, we can say confidently, that no spiritual growth or moral reform is truly Christian which stops with the individual. Jesus did not come to make men contented in themselves, he was not a mere optimist. He was a lover of humanity, a believer in justice and freedom for all. Therefore the mere individualist, one who seeks his own good, to be free from the ills and annoyances of life, will find small comfort in the Christ world.

Society is an organism. What affects one relates to all. It is therefore my concern if another suffers. It is my duty to quicken the consciences of men to this great fact that society is an organism, one great family, and that all men should elevate their conduct to the dignity of brotherhood.

But can this be done until men are economically free?

The good work can surely begin. Society *is* an organism already; we do not need to make it such. All men and women are in reality brothers and sisters. Simply to learn this fact, to feel compassion for those who are enslaved, is to make a beginning. And even here and now, in the present social order, one can accomplish much by inspiring the passion for brotherhood. To inspire the passion is to prepare the way for economic liberty, for cooperation instead of competition.

No occupation is so burdensome that it cannot be made an opportunity for the growth of character. No tyrant is so cruel that the oppressed may not

display sweetness and love and forgiveness. No prison walls are so narrow as to exclude the Christ, no cell so dark that the light of God may not shine therein.

To postpone the day of beginning until economic or other conditions are favourable is to forget that the Christ life begins in self-dedication, in consecration.

We must be men of character at home before we can be men of God in the social state.

No condition is unfavourable for the display of love.

Every possible situation in the wide, wide universe is an opportunity for fidelity to the Christ.

The ideal day never comes. Today is ideal for him who makes it so.

If there were no adverse conditions there could be no heroic character, and no Christ.

Thus the soul is foremost, matter is secondary. The brotherhood of love must come before the brotherhood of economic freedom.

If Jesus was a socialist, it was first as a believer in spiritual equality.

We must therefore choose between two ideals, the equality of the Spirit and equality of material possessions. For spiritual equality does not necessarily imply an equal distribution of material wealth. There is a diversity of gifts, and men should be free to choose that kind of external life which is most in keeping with the inner ideal.

Again, we must take into account the varying degree of receptivity of seekers after the Kingdom. Some are mere babes in the spiritual realm. Others are giants of spiritual strength. To each is given in the visible world that which corresponds to the inner state of development.

As the inner light is the highest authority for each soul, external standards and attainments are sure to differ. Do not, therefore expect external consistency from the seer.

As each soul is to be prompted from within until the social adjustment shall be complete, it is impossible to organise society in any sort of hard and fast system.

To insist upon an organisation of society such that all should enjoy equality, such that all men should agree, would be to count as naught the law of the inner life upon which Jesus placed so much emphasis.

True freedom is not that which the rulers are compelled to grant because the populace insists. It is liberty of conscience, freedom of thought, unhampered allegiance to the Christ. And no one can take this away.

Each man should freely follow the latest inner prompting, even though it lead to the sundering of firmly established relations and the choosing of new associates.

Man must not be bound by place or time. He must be free to go wherever the Spirit leads.

If any or all of our systems and institutions have their day and cease to be, it should therefore matter little to the Christian philosopher. For the real church is invisible, the real democracy is a spiritual brotherhood.

If Jesus should visit our earth again, we should hardly expect him to ally himself with existing social organisations. He would not become the exponent of any particular scheme of social reform. He would come among us as the man of peace, spreading abroad in all the land a quickening spiritual presence, a life, a love, a power, such that no man who should feel it, or really hear his words, would fail to respond by living a better life.

Therefore the true disciple of Jesus does not waste energy in the attempt to force men into line. He knows that all men will respond if approached aright, that all desired results will follow when the heart has been touched. Therefore he concentrates. Therefore he ceases to be pessimistic, and no longer assails men because of their selfishness. All his efforts are bent upon making men unselfish.

It was the old law, the eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth doctrine, which counseled men to tamper with the surfaces of things. Jesus assured

men that they should remove even the cause of anger by sending out love instead.

The rich shall suffer according to their sin. We need not inflict a penalty.

“Release and ye shall be released.”

The sun shines upon all alike, the good and the evil, without respect to social standing, and each suffers or is made glad according to his life.

In other words, God is just, although the laws of man are not; and we may safely trust the law of divine punishment.

The Christ life, then, relates primarily to the spiritual realm; the external world is of secondary consequence.

A man may as truly dwell in the Kingdom of heaven while still in the flesh, as one who has left the flesh life for ever. For there is no future state of perfection into which the good suddenly enter at death. The to-morrow of death is the logical sequence of to-day in the flesh.

The only standard by which a man is judged is character, spiritual worth, spiritual consciousness.

If a man awakens to-day to the knowledge of his life with God, he comes into possession of knowledge which death cannot take away.

But if a man is born into the future life in ignorance, he must patiently work his way to heavenly knowledge. The presence or absence of spiritual consciousness is thus the vital fact.

Jesus came to bring this consciousness to light, to quicken the dormant Christ soul in the lives of all mankind. He lived and moved and had his being in that consciousness. From it he sent forth power. From it he uttered living words of wisdom, glad messages of love, which have wrought their work among mankind even until to-day.

He, therefore, is a follower of Jesus who seeks that consciousness and, seeking it, finds and reveals it. In that spirit every man shall know what to do. In that spirit every man shall be guided to the best advantage of society.

For from that spirit all life proceeds, and in that world all things have been provided.

First, last, and always, let us therefore return in thought to that memorable scene upon the mountain top, the central figure of which is Jesus, the Christ. Let us live with him through that hour, let us walk away with him and with his followers, considering the effect upon them of the power which his life had carried.

If we are moved to forsake all and go to dwell among the poor in this world's goods, so be it. But let us recollect that it is not poverty which brings righteousness, and that an even greater mission may open before us among the materially rich. For after all it is *the life*, and they truly dwell in the Kingdom whose hearts and minds are with the Christ.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

In closing our study of the Christ ideal, we must therefore take a larger view of the Kingdom and will of God. That Kingdom is not merely the great creative realm of the Spirit, it is the world of humanity, of humanity as a divine social organism. When we seek that Kingdom, it should be because of an earnest desire to find our place in the social organism, to do the work we are best fitted to do and to do it as well as it can be done. This is the Father's will, for the Father lives for humanity, not for man alone; Jesus is the elder brother of humanity, not merely the Saviour of the individual soul.

For nearly nineteen hundred years the aristocrats, plutocrats, and potentates, have usurped power in the name of Christianity, and the time has come for this usurpation to cease. Henceforth let no one be called a Christian until his Christianity becomes social. Henceforth let no one be called a follower of Jesus until he begins to realise the law of love.

In times of doubt and sorrow and trouble, it is true, one should seek the inner Kingdom of peace, the love of God, the personal relationship of the Christ, speaking to Jesus as to an elder brother. But the indication that

we have truly found rest unto our souls will be the longing to share this peace with our fellows, the deep desire to serve. For there is and can be no monopoly in the Christ world, no competition, no exclusiveness.

Loving, giving, serving—these are the true signs. It matters not so much to whom we give as that we give, and inasmuch as we give to the least of God's creatures we give unto the Christ. For in the real world all souls are in a sense one, they are in the Christ and the Christ is in them.

In the real world, too, that is, the Kingdom of the soul, all men are immortal. The Kingdom of God is not of this world, in the ultimate sense. It is not limited by the things that perish. It is an eternal spiritual reality. It is the home of justice, where at last all shall receive compensation in accordance with the life they have lived, the wrongs they have endured.

Thus we must have regard for all aspects of the Kingdom. It is for this world; it is to be made practical here and now. It is for the individual; each is to turn to it at need, to find rest and poise and guidance. It is for humanity; our peace and poise are only means to a social end, our guidance is for service. It is for equality of opportunity; the full and harmonious development of all members of society. It is for justice, for righteousness and for love. And because it is at once individual and social, moral and spiritual, it necessarily extends beyond the confines of the present life to that larger domain where the incomplete shall be completed, where the unequal shall be equalised, and where justice shall be the universal law at last.

If you would do your part toward the realisation of that Kingdom, remember that the highest work which any of us can do for the Father is a spiritual work. Be in heart a brother to humanity and all men will feel it, however you are clothed. Begin where you are, work where you are. Simply be true to the best you know. Believe in God. Have faith in humanity. Remember that the old absolutism is passing, that it is even now entrenching itself in the last stronghold—the fortress of commercialism. And remember that, silently and without observation, the forces of life are gathering on the side of the people, that when the people unite they are invincible.

Therefore have faith even in the present age. Condemn not; love. Be faithful. Trust. Remember that the Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

“Peace be unto you.”

“And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

THE END.

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