

CLASSIC REPRINT SERIES

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THE GOSPEL OF  
THE KINGDOM AND  
THE GOSPEL OF  
THE CHURCH

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by  
William Bryant Brown

Forgotten Books

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THE GOSPEL OF  
THE KINGDOM AND  
THE GOSPEL OF  
THE CHURCH

*by*

William Bryant Brown

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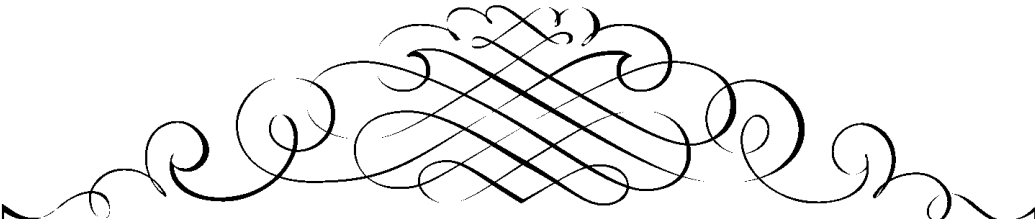
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The New Pearl of Great Price, by Peter Bonus, 1338 AD

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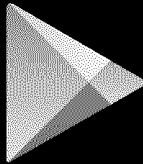
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# Dedicatory

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THIS studeously small volume is affectionately dedicated to the author's many friends, living and dead, who may, at any period of the last sixty years, have been associated with him in his public ministry. One practical purpose of the book apart from its presentation of the Gospel of the Kingdom as related to that of the Church is to enlarge the ideal of religion, so that it shall include, not a part only, but the whole of human activity and life. That the work was written in the eighty-sixth year of the author's earthly life affords natural ground for self-distrust; but of itself, is not a sufficient reason for or against its publication. If the subject treated be not interesting, important and timely, and one that calls for careful exposition; and if the style of the book is not clear, concise, consecutive, constructive and convincing, but without ornamentation simply for ornamentation's sake,—then friends may look upon it with sympathetic sadness, and the general public with cold indifference. The work has this in its commendation: It is not an old man's conservatism, nor a reminiscence of the past, but an inspiring vision of the future,—of the whole world after a long and eventful struggle with environment, finally at rest in the Gospel of the Kingdom.





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I.

OUR LORD'S PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL  
OF THE KINGDOM.



## OUR LORD'S PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

THE conception of a kingdom, at first imperfectly apprehended, in which God is supreme and man is subject, is as old as the human race. Religion itself, which is inherent in human nature, presupposes such a kingdom. The fragments of ancient annals discovered in the last half century, reveal that peoples centuries older than Moses or Abraham not only had their religions and their deities, but they recognized the fact of a Theocratic government.

No thoughtful reader of the first chapters of Genesis can fail to see that, in the garden, at the opening of human history, the idea of God as King and of man as subject was clearly recognized. Indeed, this is the central truth brought distinctly into view in those chapters. All through the patriarchal history this conception of a kingdom, and of God as King, was, by promises and threatenings, by rewards and penalties, so forced upon the attention of men that its reality and importance could not be misapprehended.

Not the Old Testament alone, but in those early classic writers from Egypt, Babylon, Greece and other lands, not less than among the Hebrews, the gods were recognized as kings and rulers of men, whose favor and protection they sought and to whom they professed allegiance. But so far as we know, Moses was the first to reduce this universal conception of a theocratic kingdom into definite written form. The whole Mosaic system was that of a Theocracy, in which God was supreme. When, centuries later, the people, ambitious to become like the other nations, desired a king from among themselves they were warned of danger, and accused of wishing to substitute for the Theocracy a form of government not in accord with the kingdom of God. While they denied this they elected and crowned Saul as king. Then their misfortunes began; and after many centuries of checkered history came the Babylonish captivity.

All the prophets from the beginning and more and more as the centuries passed on, recognized the kingdom, and God as King. Daniel, one of the latest of the Old Testament writers, foretold the coming Messiah who should set up a kingdom and whose dominion should be an everlasting dominion. This was the same kingdom that had always been

recognized, except that God was now to be personated in human form. When John the baptizer appeared on the outskirts of the wilderness and began to deliver his great message, his first words were a quotation from Isaiah,—the greatest of the prophets,—“Prepare ye the way of the Lord for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” And our Lord’s first deliverance was in the same strain. The time He said is fulfilled and the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He went throughout Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

The gospel of the kingdom was ever the central theme of our Lord’s preaching, and must therefore be the central theme of Christianity, the focal point towards which all things converge. Sometimes Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God, at others of the kingdom of heaven, and often simply of the kingdom, without qualification; but everywhere and continually the kingdom was His theme. No word of lesser meaning could contain or express the vastness of His thought. About one hundred times, mostly in the synoptic gospels, Jesus is reported to have spoken of the kingdom and to have made it the subject of discussion. Several times, but in different connections, He compares the kingdom to the sowing and growth of seeds; then it is



like a woman putting leaven in her meal, until all was leavened; then again, it was like a grain of mustard seed, the smallest of seeds which grew to be a tree on whose branches the birds of the air could rest. Now it is like a woman searching for lost pieces of money; and then it is like a shepherd seeking and finding his lost sheep and rejoicing over it. These are only specimens of the many similitudes Jesus employed in setting forth the nature and work of the kingdom. The kingdom, Jesus said to the Pharisees, is within you, meaning evidently that the human mind is so configured to the Almighty that it needs, and is susceptible of, those qualities of heart and life that the kingdom provides for and enjoins.

In many places where the word kingdom is not spoken, our Lord's discourses have evident reference to it. The whole Sermon on the Mount is an exposition of the principles of the kingdom. What He says of Himself as being the vine and His disciples the branches; of His being the shepherd and His people the sheep; of His being the door, the way, the truth and the life, are all expositions of the kingdom. Our Lord's tender discourse and prayer with His disciples extending from the 14th to the end of the 17th of John, is a revelation of

the spirit of the kingdom. In a word, Christ and the gospel of the kingdom is the theme of the four gospels.

Not only is the kingdom coeval and coextensive with the human race, and the central theme of the gospels, as we have seen, but it is vastly more. Its field is the universe, and its principles and their operation are as infinite and absolute as is God Himself. Not that the principles and workings of the kingdom are so absolute as to set aside the freedom of moral beings; for it makes responsible beings responsible, and places God over all and King forever.

Turning now from this more general view of the subject the question to be considered is: What did our Lord mean by the kingdom as He, in part, unfolded it to the people of His day, and as the principles He taught involve and unfold it to all subsequent ages?

It is a law of revelation that the sacred writers speak to the people of their own times. As a rule they do not speak exhaustively or ideally upon the subjects treated, but unfold them only so far as those whom they address are able to comprehend and accept. Hence the Bible cannot be in all parts ideally inerrant. If there be any exception to this

rule, it is to be found in the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. And yet even here Christ left many things in a state of incompleteness and uncertainty. Many of the live questions of to-day He never touched upon if, indeed, He ever thought of them. Jesus taught great principles as no one else has ever thought them; and principles that were not comprehended in His own times except in small part, and whose meaning and application have been unfolding ever since, and will continue to unfold while time endures.

We may not then expect to find the doctrine of the kingdom mapped out in full detail in the gospels, but the seed principles are there, and it is for those who come after Jesus to study and apply the principles He taught, thus broadening, enlarging and clarifying, from one generation to another, the world's knowledge of the kingdom.

First, then, we must not take our understanding of the kingdom from the view of it that was held by the people of Christ's own day. When Jesus came to the Jews they understood neither Him nor His teachings. He was regarded by the leaders as either an impostor or a madman. Some of the common people followed Him in the spirit of idle curiosity, some on account of the wonders He per-

formed, and others because they thought Him a prophet sent from God whose words to them were mysteries. He was a mystery to His own family who thought Him a victim of some strange hallucination. Even John in prison was brought into doubt, and His very apostles while He lived, did not understand Him; and at His betrayal they forsook Him and fled. Clearly then we cannot take our conceptions of the kingdom from what the men of Christ's day thought of it. They were incompetent to judge.

Again, the term religion, not of Scripture origin, and the gospel of the kingdom, are not synonymous. The two terms have much in common, but that of religion includes an amount of form, ceremony, perfunctory service, superstition and other such things with which the gospel of the kingdom has nothing to do. This gospel cares little for mere outward service, and everything for light, love and life as the ruling principles of the minds and hearts of men. A cold sense of duty and a purpose to perform it is better than nothing, but, apart from love, it is a legal, slavish service that falls far below the gospel ideal as Jesus saw it and as it was expounded by Paul. Much of what is called religion may be delusion, deception or even a sham; but,

being in the kingdom is to serve God and man from love, and this is a joyous, unselfish, restful service. It is a life of Christlikeness and so brings freedom, peace and gladness to all who enter it; while much that is called religion is only fear and bondage.

The kingdom that Jesus taught and came to establish was no outward, visible organization, civil or ecclesiastical, that could be seen, framed and operated by men. He said distinctly to Pilate,—I am a king,—but immediately added,—My kingdom is not of this world. He did not mean that His kingdom was wholly out of this world and in some other world, but that it was wholly different in character and aim from other kingdoms and human organizations that then existed. He did not mean to depreciate the value of earthly kingdoms, but to differentiate His own from them all.

Jesus came to preach the gospel of the kingdom, but not to bring it within the range or limits of any visible, tangible organization. His preaching was progressive in thought and form, as a comparison of His earlier with His later discourses reveals. Compare, for example, His Sermon on the Mount with His last consolatory address and we see progress as to detail, but no command or even hint of organization. When once His disciples proposed

to make Him king in their sense of the term, He instantly rejected the suggestion. He sent out His disciples to preach the kingdom, but never to organize His work or theirs. His last words to His disciples, before He ascended were : Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature ; but He did not say,—Preach and organize the gospel of the kingdom. My point is that Christ's conception of the kingdom never included what we mean by visible organization for its advancement. The only needful organization was in Himself and in the principles of the kingdom which He inculcated. Christ is King and Ruler over all who know and love Him, and they need no other. When men attempt to organize Christ's kingdom and to put its management into human hands, the least that can be said is that they run without being sent.

The kingdom as Jesus saw and preached it was mainly for this world and not for angels and redeemed spirits in heaven. The same kingdom is already consummated in heaven, and Christ came to establish it on earth as it was and is in heaven. He taught us to pray, Thy kingdom come on earth *as it is* in heaven. It is true that Jesus brought life and immortality to light, and that He said to His disciples,—In My Father's house are many

mansions ; but all this, and all that He said about heaven, was to lead men into the kingdom while yet they lived in this world. It was for men and not for angels that Christ came and preached the good news of the kingdom, otherwise He would have preached to angels and not to men. Unless we see and accept this view, we shut ourselves and the world out from the kingdom and its blessedness that Jesus came to establish on earth *as* it is in heaven. If we are not in the kingdom while we yet live in the body we shall not be prepared for it when we go out of the body. The kingdom that Jesus preached is for men to enter while they yet live here on the earth.

The kingdom that Jesus preached was not the premillennarian or the sub-resurrection kingdom that some think it to have been. The belief is general that there is to be a period of at least one thousand years during which Christ shall reign supreme over all the world. One class of Christians, not large, but many of them intellectual, educated and devout men, hold that Christ is to come in visible form, and in great splendor on the clouds of heaven at the opening of the millennial period ; that when He so comes those who are then living will be changed, the dead will be raised and

the kingdom of which Jesus spoke so constantly will be set up with Himself as the visibly enthroned King, probably on the Mount of Olives ; and that this kingdom will endure for at least one thousand years. This view of the kingdom is derived partly from the book of Daniel, partly from what Jesus said in the twenty-fourth of Matthew and other kindred passages, and partly from the apostolic epistles including the book of Revelation. The Christians of the first century, including the apostles, were ever looking for the immediate coming of their ascended Lord, whom they confidently expected would appear visibly in their day. He was to be seen in glory with the holy angels before that generation should pass away. They were mistaken ; they were disappointed ; their expectations were not fulfilled.

The Scriptures contain scenic and spectacular representations and prophecies which, if construed literally appear to support that view. But every Bible student should know that this whole class of scenic prophecies was never intended to have a literal, or any other than a spiritual fulfilment. To put any other construction on this class of passages is to deny their truthfulness.

Jesus did come in that generation as He prom-



ised, but not in the spectacular sense which they anticipated. This subject is treated at length in my book on *The Problem of Final Destiny*. Christ's kingdom was not outward to the senses but inward and spiritual, in the hearts of men.

All I care now to emphasize is that the kingdom which Jesus preached was not something that He Himself was miraculously to set up two or ten thousand years in the future, but was something practical and personal for the people of His own day and of our day. It was a kingdom into which those whom He then addressed were encouraged, by repentance and faith, then and there to enter and to enjoy its privileges. Any other view would, to my mind, make Christ's teaching of the kingdom mystical, impracticable, misleading, and so worse than useless. The kingdom that Jesus preached was a present kingdom and not some scenic, miraculous manifestation thousands of years away, or it was nothing of worth to the people of His own day or of ours.

Having settled some mistakes as to the kingdom we come now to a fuller study of its nature. The kingdom that Jesus preached was a spiritual kingdom to be set up in the hearts of men. It was a kingdom of righteousness. It was not outward

form but inward life ; it was not letter but spirit ; it was not creed but experience ; it was not profession but reality ; not intellection but heart-choice ; not authority but reason ; not tradition but truth in the lives and souls of men. This is what Jesus meant by the kingdom.

It follows then that the central virtue, and the only essential thing in Christ's gospel of the kingdom is love, love of God and love of man. It is a love that means good-will and unselfishness ; a love that expresses itself in accordant life. Love is of God, for God is love. He that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. Love is the fulfilling of the law. It is the central staple on which all the commandments hang, and from which they derive their character and value. Love, rightly expressed, is the only law of Christ's kingdom, and must therefore be made emphatic in this investigation.

Love is not only the central truth of Christianity and of the kingdom, but it is the central truth throughout the moral universe of God. It is in the spiritual world what gravitation is in the physical ; —the one principle that holds all moral and eternal interests in harmony, that unifies them and binds them to God from whom they all proceed. Without this central principle of the kingdom noth-

ing of enduring value could be secured; nothing great would be undertaken and nothing good accomplished. Where love reigns moral evil, and that alone, is destroyed. Love is of God, for

“ God is love saith the Evangel,  
And the world of woe and sin,  
Is made light and happy only  
When a love is shining in.”

Christ's kingdom then is the kingdom of love burning on the altar of human hearts and shining brightly in Christian lives, and so of necessity, moulding character and regulating conduct. When all men, each for himself, has this experience, then will Christ's kingdom be established on earth as it is in heaven. The intellect may still be at fault, but the heart will be true to Him who is God over all and King forever, as the needle is to the pole.

The kingdom that Christ preached is, in its character, instrumentalities and aims, both individualistic and socialistic; that is to say, it applies and appeals alike to individuals as such and to organized society. Hitherto, until recently, Christian teachers have been mainly intent upon preaching the gospel of the kingdom to individuals in order to secure individual conversions to Christ and the upbuilding of individual Christian character.

This point of individualism has been urged too exclusively. True, in a sense, "every tub must stand on its own bottom." Each moral being has responsibilities and duties that he cannot delegate and may not shirk. While it is true that every man must bear his own burdens, it is equally true that we are to bear one another's burdens. The kingdom stands in the same essential relations to organized society that it does to individuals. Men are to be instructed, reformed, elevated, converted and brought into the kingdom in their associated capacity no less than as individuals. Families, communities and nations, all organized bodies existing for useful ends are, as bodies, proper subjects for the kingdom; and every existing agency that tends in any way, direct or indirect, to advance society and the world towards the kingdom is an element of that kingdom. The principles that Jesus taught carried to their natural limits, involve all this, and show that the kingdom is a much larger thing than has generally been supposed. It is not only for the saving of individuals but for the uplifting of society, of organizations, of nations and of the world. This great subject is only referred to here as explanatory of the nature of Christ's kingdom, and will be considered more fully in its proper connection.

We have now before us a general description of the gospel of the kingdom, but not a full definition. Even if every essential element of the kingdom were included, this, of itself, does not sufficiently differentiate the kingdom from all that closely resembles it, but is not identical with it, and therefore is not a complete definition. Not till we have studied the gospel of the Church, its scope, modes of working, and its relations to the gospel of the kingdom can a full definition of either Church or kingdom be reached. The two are alike while yet they differ. Our second chapter is upon the substitution of the Church for the kingdom, and this will open the way for comparison between them, which must result in bringing the kingdom more fully into view than any study of it apart by itself, could do. The one conception I have of the gospel of the kingdom, as Jesus saw it, is that it relates to and includes everything in human history that works away from ignorance and selfishness and towards enlightenment, morality and spiritual life. All such agencies and influences belong to the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of the Church, as we shall see, means much less than this. Its thought and movement are individualistic and apart from the general field of advancing civilization.

II.

THE SUBSTITUTION OF THE GOSPEL OF  
THE CHURCH FOR THAT OF THE  
KINGDOM.



## II.

### THE SUBSTITUTION OF THE GOSPEL OF THE CHURCH FOR THAT OF THE KINGDOM.

WE have seen that the central theme of our Lord's preaching was the gospel of the kingdom; and also what the kingdom was that Jesus preached. Most naturally and without hesitation, we should anticipate that the apostles and their associates would follow closely in their Master's steps, and preach for substance what they had heard from His lips; and that therefore, their great theme, as was His, would be the gospel of the kingdom. If the apostles believed, as they did, that Jesus was a prophet sent from God, that He was the promised Messiah, that He was God manifested in the flesh, that He was the world's Saviour, and the impersonation of divine wisdom and goodness,—if they believed all this,—then we should say that most surely they would keep very close to the line of their Lord's teaching, especially as to the gospel of the kingdom, which was His central and constant subject of discourse. We should expect them to present to others what He Himself had taught.



To put this thought in a still stronger light, let us glance a moment at some corresponding cases. The Buddhists received their religious teachings, many centuries ago, from Buddha whom they revered as an inspired teacher; and from that day Buddish priests have been proclaiming, as they naturally should, the central doctrines that Buddha taught. Mohammedans, from the first, have closely adhered to the teachings of their great prophet. The Lutherans hold and teach the central doctrines of Luther; and the Calvinists, of Calvin; the Armenians adhere to their Dutch oracle, Armenius; and the Wesleyans, to Wesley; and so on to the end of the chapter. All this is perfectly natural, and an opposite course would have been unnatural and disappointing.

Applying the same principle to the apostles and their relation to our Lord's teaching, how much more strongly should we anticipate that His great central theme of discourse would be theirs also, and that it would be presented by them after His own way of teaching it. We could not look for less, and yet our anticipations are not realized. They do not preach the kingdom.

At this point two singular facts, not easily explained, have to be met. The first is that the word

kingdom is dropped almost entirely from their writings. Only about four times in the Acts of the Apostles and in all the Epistles,—together more than twice the length of the Synoptic Gospels,—does the word kingdom appear ; and in all but one of these instances it has no reference to Christ's conception of the kingdom as something to be established on earth, but exclusively to the soul's condition in heaven after the earthly life is ended. In 1 Cor. 14:17, it is said that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Here in a general way, the word expressed in part Christ's conception of the universal kingdom, but still it is mixed up and put in contrast with the Old Testament idea of the kingdom which was largely one of form and outward service.

The second strange fact to be accounted for is that the apostles and their successors not only practically discarded the word kingdom from their vocabulary, but they substituted a newly coined word, at that time of very indefinite and undefined meaning, in its place. That word is translated Church, a term that appears nearly a hundred times, in their writings, to one of the kingdom.

Now be it observed that this word Church is

wholly foreign to the Old Testament, not so much as once appearing there. I know that modern writers talk about the Jewish and Hebrew Church and try to read its meaning into the Jewish and Hebrew institutions; but those institutions were kingly in their constitution, and were wholly different in their nature from the later idea of the Church.

Then again, let it be considered that in the four gospels the word Church occurs but twice, and both instances are in the gospel of Matthew alone; and that in both cases the word is used in such an indefinite sense as to make its meaning very uncertain. Clearly it has no such meaning there as the word Church, a century later came to signify. In Matthew 16:18, where Christ says to Peter,—“On this rock will I build My Church,” His meaning both as to rock and Church is, and always has been in dispute. Christ’s meaning here of the word Church was as different from the later Roman Catholic conception as day is from night. In the other passage, Matthew 18:17, where Jesus says, “tell it to the Church,” the question naturally arises as in the other case,—What definitely does the word Church here signify? It is a new word of which we have no knowledge until we find it here.

Whence came it? From what is it derived, and what, here, is its real meaning? If, as some suppose, the idea of the Church is suggested by the Jewish Synagogue, why then was not that the proper name for it? Doubtless there was something of likeness between the synagogue and the Church, or what was called the Church, at the beginning; and yet they were different even then. Others, and rightly, as I believe, derive the term Church from the Greek word, *ekklesia*. But the classical and proper signification of *ekklesia* is an assembly or congregation. It may be an assembly called out for any purpose, political, military, or religious. The word does not imply a permanent organization; it is simply a collection of people gathered for some common purpose. This is something very different from the modern or ancient idea of the Church. It is indeed probable that the early Christian Churches were little if anything more than regular gatherings of the people for worship. If they had any organization it was of the simplest kind. They had no creed or constitution. They were simply an *ecclesia*, a congregation of Christian people; and to my mind, the word Church throughout the New Testament might better have been translated Congregation, as, in

some translations it has been. Such a rendering would express the primitive idea more accurately than the word Church has done. At most, what was called the Church was a very simple thing to which, in time, an entirely new meaning was attached, and a meaning that the word kingdom could never have suggested, a meaning that the primitive disciples never dreamed of, even as a future possibility.

But this subject of the substitution of Church for kingdom, and what came of it, will be more fully considered in the next chapter on the good and evil that have resulted from the substitution.

We are now arrived at a question of exceeding interest and one that calls for careful thought. Did the apostles deliberately and intentionally substitute the term Church for kingdom, giving to the new word a different and narrower meaning than Christ's term conveyed? and, if they did this how came they to do it? They certainly knew that Christ's preaching was mainly of the kingdom. They did not think themselves wiser than their Lord, nor did they mean to be disloyal to Him, or to reject or undervalue anything that He had spoken.

As suggestive of the right answer to our ques-

tion a few words of generalization may be useful. Every great teacher and leader of men is in advance of his own age. There are millions of people who seem content to trudge along in the exact tracks which their fathers trod. They have no idea of progress and no belief that anything better than they now have is possible. Such people are found in all the avocations of life; among farmers, mechanics, tradesmen and, to some extent, in the professions. There are clergymen who never go beyond their people; traditions and creeds limit them. They preach familiar platitudes. Like a door on its hinges they come and go, but make no progress. The kaleidoscope, with its bits of colored glass turned this way and that, gives many combinations of form and color, but the same bits of glass are in them all. This is a representative instrument. Such people of every class are useful members of society, and the world could not get on without them; but they are followers after, and not leaders of men.

Born leaders, I repeat, are in advance of their own day, and are not understood and appreciated by their own generation. The Bible and the great characters of the Bible are illustrations. Noah, Abraham, Moses, Isaiah and many others are ex-

amples. They were not understood by the people of their times as they are by us to-day. This age has even passed the goal at which many of those old reformers halted. The world is ever onward, so that the advance of one age is the rear of the succeeding one.

Of all the great leaders and teachers of men Jesus Christ is the most profound, far-seeing and, to the people of His day He was the most enigmatic and mysterious of teachers. He laid down great principles, He brought into view the deepest and most spiritual truths of the kingdom of God, but He did not undertake the then useless task of fully explaining the exact meaning of His words. He left that for time and the Spirit of the Lord to reveal. His own apostles did not comprehend Him. Their minds were not then so enlightened and spiritually evolved as to enable them clearly to understand just what and how much Jesus meant by the kingdom, in His teaching. They understood Him in part, but their minds were confused; His words were often so mysterious and profound that they were not able to grasp His deep meaning and to repeat understandingly, His teachings of the gospel of the kingdom; and so, rather than fall into mistakes they started out on a somewhat lower plane

where their thoughts were clear. If they spoke at all they must stand on a basis where they could speak understandingly from clear conviction, in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. This was the utmost they could do; it was this or nothing.

Let persons who are disposed to shrink from the explanation here involved recall again that, as a matter of fact, Jesus was not comprehended by the people of His own day; and not while He lived, to any large extent, by His chosen twelve. The proof of this appears continually. True, their minds were greatly enlightened after the pentecostal manifestation of the Spirit; but even then they did not see, and so could not teach, as deeply as their Master had done. After centuries may not blame them; for even down to this day, our Lord's teaching of the kingdom is little more than half comprehended. The apostles went as far as they saw and knew; they could not have gone further; and doubtless they were right in judging that they could do better work for God and man by preaching on the plane of the Congregation, afterwards called Church, than by undertaking to stand on that of the kingdom. To have done otherwise in their circumstances would have involved a misjudg-



ment that must have led to weakness and failure. It would have made them uncertain, vacillating, and often negative in their preaching, and so might have defeated the establishment of Christianity in the world. Men must be clear and positive in their apprehensions of truth or they are powerless as public teachers. Suppose that Paul, for example, who though not one of the twelve apostles, did more than they all to extend and establish the Christian religion, had been in doubt as to whether or not his preaching was in accord with what Jesus would have him preach; what except disheartenment and failure would have been the result? The apostles were right in going as far as they clearly saw and no farther. They used the term Congregation, afterwards called Church, not in the sense of a closely organized ecclesiastical administrative institution. They would have shrunk from that idea, because Jesus never suggested such an organization or any other. He placed all Christians on an equality and forbade lordship among them. What the apostles meant by Congregation or Church was the gathering, and place of gathering, of the people for religious service. Close organization was not a part of their plan or practice. That was an after innovation.

It may be objected again, that the apostles, inspired men, could not have been in an attitude of uncertainty as to what Christ meant by the kingdom; and that, if they did not fully comprehend His meaning while He was with them they must have done so after the Pentecostal baptism. If that were true, and if from that day they fully saw and understood all that Jesus saw and said, why then did they not continue to emphasize our Lord's teaching of the kingdom? Nowhere does Jesus even hint that His message of the kingdom was to be changed to that of the Church. And, besides, the theory that encircled the objection assumes that there are no degrees of inspiration, and that the apostolic knowledge concerning the kingdom must have been complete and final. Such a view is misleading and contradictory of facts. The Bible is a progressive book. The apostles were as far in advance of Moses as Christ was in advance of the apostles.

The apostles went as far as their inspiration carried them. They clearly apprehended much of what Christ meant by the Good News, translated gospel, which He had brought into the world; and they preached that gospel to lost men with clearness and power. From their day to this the Church

has had the right conception of man's duty to his God. The duty of repentance, faith, consecration and love of God revealed in Jesus Christ has been clearly apprehended and faithfully preached. Very much of what Jesus meant by the kingdom has been, from the first till now, embodied in the Church; and many Christian people have regarded the two as identical. Taking this view it has been claimed and understood that whatever of real spiritual good there is in the world comes through the Church; and that whatever is not of the Church is of little or no religious value. It may be useful in a temporal point of view, but it is no part of true religion in the sight of God.

This may be the true conception of the Church as it has existed through all the centuries, but it is not the true conception of the gospel of the kingdom as Jesus proclaimed it. The kingdom is a larger and broader thing than the Church ever has been, or, in the nature of things, can be. The kingdom embraced all of good there is in the Church, and much besides which the Church has not recognized. It is more man-ward than the Church has ever been. Every movement in the world, as we have seen, that tends to the uplifting of man, and that draws Godward, is an element of

the kingdom. Doubtless multitudes of people are in the kingdom who are not in the Church, and who, for one reason or another, could not enter it. The point I make is that the Church and the kingdom are not synonymous. One is vastly greater than the other; and that all the Christian centuries have been content to preach the gospel of the Church, while Christ preached the gospel of the kingdom. From the first, the Church has been coming more and more into prominence, and the kingdom has been receding from view; the Church has been coming, as the centuries advanced, to be an end in itself, rather than a means to a greater end beyond itself. To build up the Church rather than the kingdom has been, and still is, apparently, the practical aim of Church people the world over. This was not our Lord's view, nor was it that of His apostles.

Of late this order of things has begun to change. Progressive Christian people are beginning to see and feel that our Lord's conception of the kingdom, which is vastly larger than any conception of the Church has ever been, is the true and working conception. Advance in mental and moral evolution is preparing for this larger view. At the present time we are hearing more about the kingdom, and

of the kingdom as a substitute for the Church, than has been heard in all the preceding Christian centuries. The necessity for a broader view of religion is beginning to be extensively felt in the Church and out of it. Turn where we will and religious people are talking about the kingdom; and this idea is one of constant growth. If it continues to grow as it has done for the last fifty years the kingdom, and not the Church, will soon be the centre of religious interest. The kingdom is coming back to the place that Jesus gave it, as He is reported in the gospels.

Should that time ever arrive many great questions that have long been subjects of controversy will find a rational and permanent settlement. In that day, among other changes, would not Church names, creeds and forms, with the controversies they originate, be lost sight of, and be merged in the kingdom as rivers are merged in the mighty ocean? Will that day ever dawn upon the world? This great question demands an answer.

### III.

THE GOOD AND THE EVIL THAT HAVE  
RESULTED FROM THAT SUBSTITUTION.



### III.

#### THE GOOD AND THE EVIL THAT HAVE RESULTED FROM THAT SUBSTITUTION.

THE two great facts that have claimed attention hitherto are :

1. The gospel of the kingdom as preached by Christ Himself; and 2. The gospel of the Church substituted for that of the kingdom as preached by the apostles and their successors. We have seen in a general way that the gospel of the kingdom was a greater gospel than was that of the Church. This difference in character must of necessity lead to difference of result.

It is the purpose of this chapter, therefore, to trace the results, good and evil, that have come from the substitution of the term Church for kingdom. In the preceding chapters these two terms have been studied separately, with the promise that when they should come together, as they now do, that the two, by comparison, should be more fully differentiated. The question now is as to their agreement and their diversity.



Happily, what, for convenience, I have called the two gospels agree perfectly as to the great end to be accomplished. That common end is the saving of the world, individually and collectively, from sin and death, and the bringing of all men into the possession of everlasting life. Jesus expressed that one great purpose when He said : God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved. When it is seen and conceded that the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the Church have this great common end of pursuit, the difference between them cannot be vital, and must consist chiefly in difference of breadth and method. Both the kingdom and the Church would convert the entire world to Christ ; but their methods differ. The Church, as we have seen, would convert men, one at a time, here and there, as opportunity offered, and would depend chiefly upon individualistic work for success. While the gospel of the kingdom does not ignore, but emphasizes the importance of individual conversions, it takes a larger view of the whole subject. It aims to instruct, uplift and convert whole communities,

organizations, nations and races, as such, and so save the world. It therefore regards every movement out of the Church as well as in, that tends to the betterment of man, to the elevation of society, and, especially the uplifting of what are called the masses of ignorant and needy people as important and necessary elements in the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore art, literature, science, business, national purity and civilization generally belong to the kingdom, as they have not belonged to the Church. Indeed, such general movements have, for the most part, been carried on outside and independently of, the Church; and she has looked upon them often as outside of religion, and sometimes its enemy, with which she must have little or nothing to do. If ministers have ventured to preach upon these subjects, as some have, of late, they have been in some quarters rebuked for neglecting the gospel to preach politics and follow after the world. The gospel of the Church has no room for anything but the preaching of Christ and Him crucified, for the direct saving of souls; all else has been considered a profanation of the pulpit.

Let me try to present this difference between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the Church, by introducing a very homely illustration.

The first city of Chicago was built on low, swampy land, and years afterwards had to be lifted out of the mud and placed on a higher and firmer foundation. There were two possible ways of procedure. One was to take down, stone by stone, every building, lay a suitable foundation, and then reerect the city, stone by stone, as was done at the beginning. This would conform to the Church idea of reconstructing the world. The other method of reaching the same end, and the one actually employed, was to place mighty levers and screws under whole blocks of great buildings, and raise them, all together, to the desired height, and build under them a solid foundation. By this process, street after street was elevated, till the whole city was lifted out of the slough. This second process represents the gospel of the kingdom ; and accomplishes with ease, and at small cost, what the first plan would have failed to do, or, at best, could only have been done at limitless cost of time, labor and expense. So, the gospel of the kingdom, by means of moral levers and screws of civilization from outside the Church, largely, is steadily uplifting communities, nations and the world out of the mud of selfishness, that they may stand on the Rock of Ages. Both gospels seek the same end, one by slender

agencies that endeavor to save individuals; the other by broad evolutionary movements that underlie, move and uplift the world.

What might have followed had the preaching of the kingdom as Jesus apprehended it, continued, we cannot tell, because we have no actual data on which to base a calculation. Potential history is a thing of the imagination. But as regards the gospel of the Church that has been preached throughout Christendom for nearly two thousand years, the case is wholly different. The history is before us for study and conclusion; so that the good and the evil that have come from it, and from the transfer, are apparent.

What then, are some of the advantages and blessings that have come to the world from the substitution of Church for kingdom, as they stand revealed in Church history? Only the briefest outline can here be given. The good that has come through the Church is incalculably great.

In the first place, the transfer placed the apostles and their associates on grounds that they clearly understood. As we have seen, our Lord's conception of the kingdom was too deep for them. They only in part comprehended it. They saw clearly that the preaching of the gospel to individual souls

for their conversion and salvation belonged to Christ's plan, and was foremost in it, for saving the world. This was a great idea, great enough to fill their souls and inspire their energies; and they gave themselves unreservedly to that work, and with what grand results! Had they stopped to inquire fully, what Jesus meant by the kingdom, and then tried to express His meaning, without clearly understanding it, they would have been shorn of their strength. Experimental movements are always weak and of uncertain results. The apostles were not experimenting; they knew whereof they affirmed; and it was this confidence that gave them power.

Then, again, the world as it then existed, was better prepared for the preaching of the gospel of the Church than it was for that of the kingdom. It was in a condition to appreciate truths that came home to individual consciences, but was not then able to enter into great general movements for the uplifting of the world, as Jesus' history reveals. For the apostolic call to repentance and faith in Christ, men were prepared, as results show. Further than this they could not have been led.

Let us now glance down the track of history and see what infinite good the gospel of the Church has

brought to the world. The good news of salvation through Christ has been kept aflame before the eyes of men. The great truths of religion have been conserved. If at times they have been partly obscured by tradition, and false doctrine, and worse practice, yet truth has ever been her own vindicator, so that in the darkest days a light has shone from the Church for the saving of the people.

What countless multitudes have been brought to Christ and to heaven, through the agency of the Christian Church; and what multitudes of grand men and women have been raised up to labor, suffer and die in their Master's service! And never in the world's history was the number of such people greater than it is to-day.

The world has been advanced through the influence of the Church, not indeed, as it might and should have been; but the civilized world and even pagan lands, through Christian missions, are much nearer the kingdom to-day than they would have been but for the influence of the Christian Church. Imperfect as the Church has been and is, she is yet the best institution the world has ever seen. Consider what would follow if the Church were blotted out of existence! Even her enemies would stand aghast at the thought of such a calamity. Re-

cently, in conversation with an intelligent and educated man, he said to me: "I am not a believer in the Christian religion; I never attend Church, but I help support it, and should consider its overthrow one of the greatest of calamities." I honored the man's intuitions more than his judgment.

This brief statement is sufficient to reveal the author's love and appreciation of the Christian Church. It is born of God and cannot die; though it may be reformed, enlarged and merged, as it never yet has fully been, in the gospel of the kingdom.

It has been intimated that great evils have come from the substitution of Church for kingdom, as the working centre of Christianity. It is the further purpose of this chapter briefly to expose these evils. What are they?

The kingdom, as we have seen, is larger than the Church. They both seek the same end, but the greater includes the less, while the less does not include the greater. Just here lies the beginning of the evil. The Church as it has existed through the centuries, represents only a half truth; and a half truth is a practical error and must, sooner or later, make itself appear as such. History abounds in illustrations of this fact. The Church has been

weak in many directions where she ought to have been strong. She has undervalued ethical culture and general morality in the world. She has at least discounted moral and reformatory movements carried on, often, outside the Church. Indeed, her general position through the centuries has been that whatever is not of, in, and under the Church can have little or no true religious value. Consequently, the Church has ever been opposed to most scientific investigations and conclusions, and to whatever lines of advancement that have not originated with, and been controlled by, herself. All this has flowed naturally from the narrow base on which she has stood. Had the gospel of the Church been as large as that of Christ's kingdom, such a history would have been impossible. It is because she has only recognized, and acted upon, a half truth instead of a whole one, that her narrowness and want of sympathy with wise movements outside of the Church have been so painfully apparent, and so injurious both to herself and the world.

Let me now come to some particulars. And, first of all, this narrow one-sided platform of the Church opened the way for the growing up of that cruel, crushing system of ecclesiasticism that succeeded the apostolic age, and for a thousand years



ruled and cursed the religious world, and whose power is not yet broken. Jesus never authorized or suggested any system of ecclesiastical government. He put, as we have seen, all His disciples on an equality one with another. He said, If any man will be a ruler among you, let him be a servant. Had the broad base of the kingdom, as Jesus saw it, been apprehended and adhered to from the first, and afterwards, there could have been no room for those ambitions and graspings after power that marked the last half of the first century, and increased afterwards, until that gigantic hierarchy, known as the Roman Church, was established as the seat of all wisdom and power. That some good has come from Church governments, is not denied; but how vast have been the evils! most of which would have been averted if the simple preaching of the kingdom, on our Lord's broad basis had been apprehended and followed in after generations. The principles and interest of the kingdom are common property, and can no more be monopolized and controlled by ambitious and grasping men than can the rain, the atmosphere and the sunshine that come from God, alike upon the good and the evil.

Another evil that has grown out of the narrow working ideal of the Church, and the ecclesiasticism

that has overshadowed it, is the disposition and ability to formulate cast-iron dogmas for the perpetual assent of the Christian world ; and dogmas, some of which are repugnant to the judgment, the conscience and the moral intuitions of mankind. My self-appointed limits forbid specification, nor is specification necessary, as every intelligent person knows just where specifications apply. These dogmas have been made by human edicts, so sacred that whoever has doubted or denied them has been counted unfit for Church membership, even though he belonged to Christ's kingdom. Such arbitrariness our Lord's larger platform could never have allowed. Here, loyalty to Christ is the only test of fellowship ; and equally so whether such loyalty is found in the Church or out of it.

One other, and the greatest of the evils that have come from the substitution, is the spirit of rivalry, of division and of sectarianism, which the narrower conception of the Church has generated and produced, but which the larger gospel of the kingdom would have made impossible. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one, even as He and His Father were one ; and the apostles plead for the same unity. But even then some were for Paul, some for Apollos and some for Cephas.

Before the close of the first century the evil spirit of ambition and love of leadership, was a controlling force; and a force that ever increased in power, enkindling controversy, denunciation and persecution, which was the disgrace of the early, and even of later Christian centuries.

One outcome of the conflict was the division of the ancient Church into what was known as the Eastern and Western Churches; the seat of one, Constantinople, and of the other, Rome. In the western section the struggle went on until, at length, the Roman hierarchy was firmly established that for a thousand years ruled, with a rod of iron, both Church and State, in all western Europe. As a natural result, the car of progress rested, and ignorance, superstition and formality miscalled religion, was well-nigh universal. Doubtless there were good men and women in those days, but they were bound hand and foot in the network, of ecclesiastical despotism. Darkness, as we have seen, reigned for ten centuries, chiefly because the Church had displaced the kingdom.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century rent the corrupt Roman Church in twain and established Protestantism over nearly half of Europe. This was a great clearing and spiritually clarifying proc-

ess. But Church narrowness still prevailed and brought in other evils, different in their nature, but not less in violation of the spirit and principles of the kingdom than were those which had been displaced. I refer now, not to doctrines, but to divisive and sectarian movements that rent Protestantism into hundreds of contending, jealous, and rival fragments. It is the boast of Catholicism that she has always been one united Church; it is the weakness of Protestant Churches that they are not large enough in thought, and in love for God and man, to bind them together in one harmonious body. The heresy prevailed that, if Christians did not think alike on all subjects, they must break fellowship with each other, go off by themselves and form separate denominations; a thing that the gospel of the kingdom would never have allowed or made possible. The cardinal error of Protestantism is, that it overlooks the central fact that union and communion with God, as revealed in Jesus Christ is, or should be, the one and only Christian test of membership and fellowship in the Christian Church. Where intellect is exalted above heart-experience, there can be no real unity on earth or in heaven. Differences of opinion must always exist among finite beings; God only knows the infinite.

Yet, there are people who believe in denominationalism. They say that the spirit of rivalry in religion, as in the secular world, commands more money, time, and effort, than could otherwise be secured. They would even seek to harmonize and save the world, not by driving selfishness and party rivalry out of it, but by so balancing one form of selfish rivalry against another so as to secure a measure of efficiency, and of good results, that might some day bring harmony and peace to mankind. If this theory be true, Christianity is a failure. No balancing of selfish schemes can save the world, or do otherwise than drag it downward. Alas, for religion when such motives are stronger than pure love for God and man! And yet, one cannot help fearing that much of what is called Christian work springs from no higher motive than that of competition and rivalry. How must Christ look upon such so-called service!

But, again, it is claimed that sectarianism, and not denominationalism, is the evil to be condemned, as if the two were not one and inseparable. The distinction is one without a difference. Denominationalism is the root out of which sectarian zeal grows and without which it could not exist and exploit itself, as a poor counter-

feit of genuine Christian life. One involves the other.

Not only does denominationalism foster envyings, jealousies and counter movements for party ends, but it is also a huge spendthrift, wasting time, life, and vast sums of money to no good purpose. In hundreds of localities it tries to sustain, often half-a-dozen Churches, where one united Church would do more good than all of them combined. And, moreover, these divisions into rival sects are the great stumbling-block to the outside world that knows their meaning and folly. This is also the foremost obstacle to successful foreign mission labor. It not only diverts funds from the Churches which they would otherwise receive, but it embarrasses missionaries, and exposes them to criticisms which they cannot answer. And, most of all, it is contrary to the gospel of Christ's kingdom.

That some advantages may come from denominationalism, as they do from selfishness, from slavery, from wars, from sin in general and from the devil, is conceded. But the evils overbalance the good, a hundredfold. The good is incidental, while the evils are inherent and vital.

Here the question naturally arises: Suppose that the gospel of the Church had never been sub-

stituted for that of the kingdom, and that the gospel of the kingdom had continued to be the ideal of Christendom, would not the same evils that have been described have followed? Did Christ's kingdom contemplate and provide for such evils? If not, and its principles had been followed, the evils could not have arisen. I concede that if the kingdom had not been the kingdom, but only another name for Church, the results might have been much the same. But if the gospel of the kingdom had been fully comprehended and carried out as Christ conceived and preached it, then the results would have been vastly different. The kingdom would have included everything that tends directly, or indirectly, to bring the world to God, individually and in masses; and so great a conception could not have been monopolized and divided into fragments, any more than duration and space can.

Will the time ever come when the Church shall be so enlarged and spiritualized as fully to comprehend our Lord's conception of the kingdom and be merged into it? That would be indeed a grand consummation! It will be the further purpose of these chapters to show that such a result, and a result still greater, is some day to be reached, and by what agencies all this is to be accomplished.

IV.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM TO BE-  
COME UNIVERSAL.





## IV.

### THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM TO BECOME UNIVERSAL.

OUR Lord taught us to pray: Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. What does this sublime petition mean? And on what grounds may we be assured that the petition will some day be fully answered? These questions do not contemplate the methods by which Christ's kingdom is to come on earth as it is in heaven, but the great and inspiring fact that it will so come.

One fundamental distinction exists, and must ever exist, that differentiates earth from heaven. On earth physical nature abounds; in heaven, ethereal nature superabounds. While both of these natures are real and not imaginary, there is a deeper reality and one more abiding, and of a higher nature in ethereal than belongs to physical nature. And yet, the two natures are not wholly distinct, one from the other. The physical world in which we live is more than physical. We have in it, indeed, a continual appeal to the senses,—to the sense of

sight, of hearing, of taste and of touch ; but we have more than this. In addition to what is physical, we have thought, feeling, volition and life ; which, though not material, are real. Mind, no less than matter is everywhere revealed in nature ; and, although mind is invisible and intangible to the human senses, it is so chiefly because mind is higher and mightier than sense, or than all material things with which sense has to do. The material is made for the immaterial and not the reverse. It is the truth, the life, the ethereal which dwells in the material, that gives value to the physical world and explains its existence. At best the physical is but the shadow of the spiritual. The sun in the heavens foreshadows the invisible ;—it reveals the infinite and the eternal, even more than it displays its own glory. The seen and the unseen are both needful ; one, as a means, and the other as an end.

As for man himself, he is a compound of the physical and ethereal. Material and ethereal elements enter into his being ; but what those elements are, primitively considered, is something that lies beyond the reach of human ken. We know that the mind is different from, and more than, the body. The spirit, not the body, is the *Ego*, the personality, that resides in the body, much as men

live in houses, and moths in cocoons. The soul is not only the maker and the life of the body, but it is the seat of consciousness, and of all that conscious personality implies and explains. It is that which allies us to God, that makes us His children, and He our Father, and which binds the race, and all moral beings, in the golden bonds of a common brotherhood. Spirit is life, divine life; and when it becomes allied to God in love, confidence, fellowship and sweet sympathy, it becomes consciously, eternal life.

It is doubtless good for the conscious human spirit to begin its moral existence in a material body. Indeed, it could not begin otherwise and be in harmony with divine order, or God's evolutionary method, which is to advance through the less perfect to the more perfect. The spirit needs just that training, discipline and experience which life in an animal body necessitates. The body is the soul's earthly home, and should be treated wisely, tenderly, lovingly, as should all of God's good gifts. At the same time, we should remember that our material bodies are animal and not spiritual, and are to be held in subjection to the spirit, and not be allowed to usurp dominion over it. God has given to man this power; and it is just this that

constitutes him a child of God, and differentiates him from the lower animal creation.

I believe the main purpose of our earthly life to be the cultivation of the spirit; and that this is to be secured, not by any single fiat of man's responsible power of choice, nor by any miraculous fiat of the Almighty, but by a series of struggle and growth in which human and divine agency cooperate. Neither power can succeed without the other. The sad fact is that for the most part the animal in man has dominated the spiritual, so that unreasoning passion and manifold forms of criminal selfishness have, in the past ruled, if they do not still rule human life and destiny.

As the world advances towards the gospel of the kingdom, a change is manifest. The moral world now is far advanced beyond what it was at the dawn of recorded human history; it is still advancing; and the time will come when man's higher nature will hold his lower in complete control. Even now, there are authentic records of experiences where the ethereal element, while yet in the flesh, not only rules the animal nature but, at times, rises to such a spiritual height as to act almost independently of it, much as it will in the heavenly world.

When all men reach that state, or stage in moral progress in which the spiritual body not only dominates the animal, but, on the positive side, rises into the light, and love, and life of God its Father, —then will the gospel of the kingdom, as Jesus saw, and, in principle proclaimed it, be established on earth as it is in heaven.

How great a revolution for our crazy, suffering, sinful world such a change would be! Glance at the best state of society that now exists, which I believe to be the Christian Church, and how far short of what the gospel of the kingdom calls for and makes possible, do most Christian people fall. If we turn to other historical religions in the world, and to the people who embrace them, the moral distance from the final goal appears to be yet further removed. Enter the boundless field of business activity, take careful note of the unrighteous practices that prevail, and of the selfish motives that prompt them, and we see at once what mighty changes must come over the business world before it can enter the gospel of the kingdom. The nations of the earth, past and present, have ever been, and still are, living each for itself. National history is largely the record of gigantic selfishness. Each is scheming for some personal advantage;

and is either at war, or preparing for war against any power that may cross its track. What a change must come over the nations before they can enter the kingdom! It is needless to go further and dive down into the depths of irreligion and immorality for proof that the world, as a whole, is yet far away from the gospel of the kingdom.

But there is a brighter side to this great subject. The world, as we shall see, is everywhere changing for the better. One evolutionary advance, and this along many lines, succeeds another. Old errors are being discarded; new light beams along the world's pathway; and as knowledge increases and human conditions improve, the hearts of men are softening, their higher natures begin to rule the lower, and so it will continue to be, until, in some coming century the gospel of the kingdom will be established throughout the earth as it is in heaven. It is the further purpose of this chapter to give some of the grounds for this belief; not the methods of producing the great result, but reasons for believing that some day it will come to pass.

It has already been seen that the gospel of the Church and the gospel of the kingdom, as regards the end to be secured, are one in thought and purpose. They differ mainly as to the nature and ade-

quacy of the means to be employed in securing that purpose. It has been the dream, the faith and the hope of the Christian Church for nearly twenty centuries that she may draw the whole world to herself and to God ; and throughout a large part of Christendom it is her dream to-day. The most heroic endeavors, costing millions of lives and countless millions of treasure, have been expended for this end. All Christian denominations, with commendable energy, are vying with each other for the accomplishment of this noble purpose ; and surely no thoughtful person could wish to have these efforts of the Churches diminished, although one might desire to see them sometimes, in part, differently directed. It has been objected that those who put the gospel of the kingdom into great prominence are indifferent to the interests and work of the Church. This cannot, certainly should not be true ; because, for the present, and probably for a long time to come, the Christian Churches of the world must be the definite and aggressive force for the extension of the gospel on earth. The gospel of the kingdom, like ships in the offing, is still in the distance, and cannot yet be considered as the central, working force of the world. The Churches are now in the foreground. Let ministers



and people, as best they can, work on, drawing closer together and enlarging their views and operations until, step by step, they shall comprehend the greater gospel of the kingdom, and be merged into it. So much, at least, needs to be said in commendation of the Churches and of the separate and responsible place they hold in the work of the world for the coming of the kingdom.

Returning now to the question,—Will the time ever come when the larger gospel of the kingdom, as Jesus saw it, will be established throughout the earth as it is in heaven? The answer must be an affirmative one, and, among others, for the following reasons:

1. The existence of such a world as ours affords strong presumptive evidence that it will reach, somewhere in the future, a state of ideal perfection. God is back of everything that is finite. Whatever His creative energy undertakes is for some great benevolent purpose. Men appear to act, at times, impulsively, and with no ultimate end in view; but God, never. In all He does, God not only has a benevolent purpose, but what He wills to do never fails of accomplishment. Because men fail so often and so utterly, we sometimes, inconsiderately it may be, assume that some of God's plans

may come to nought. But such a thing has never taken place since the universe began to exist, and never will. God never fails.

This world then, was made for some great and good end. Man, the noblest of God's earthly work, bears the divine image, and so must have some high destiny. When we look back over the past and observe how sin, sorrow and suffering have marked the track of human history, it is not easy for us to find conclusive proof of God's infinite goodness in the creation and condition of the human race. To find that proof in full-orbed completeness we must take in the entire history of earth and man, past, present and future, and not view it in segments. Could such a view be obtained the character of God, at every period, would be to human vision, more glorious than is the sun in the heavens.

Clearly then, God's plan for this earth and its inhabitants, is not yet fully unfolded. The earth itself will some day, in the process of creation, leave behind it the storms, tornadoes, earthquakes, pestilences and manifold causes of suffering that have at times wrought desolation, and then will come in their places, from earth and sky, such health-giving, life-preserving, safety-securing and soul-satisfying provisions, as shall cause men to forget past sor-

rows, because of present joys and future prospects.

But, if the groaning earth is to be regenerated and perfected in the carrying out of God's plan, how much more must His benevolent purpose extend to man, and ensure for him a far higher experience of moral purity, and of divine favor than he has ever, as a race, consciously enjoyed. Such a possibility is full of hope and significance. It means light for darkness, liberty for bondage, love and life for hatred and death. In particular, it means the breaking away from every form of evil, whether in private, social, business, or national life; and a full entrance into the gospel of the kingdom where God shall reign supreme, and whose banner over the world shall be love. This would be the consummation of human happiness, and the end for which man has been in training through all the ages. I repeat that the earth's existence and man upon it affords presumptive proof that Christ's kingdom, which means a Theocracy, is to become universal.

2. A glance at the course of human history brings us to the same conclusion. History is an account of the events and changes that have taken place in past times, and of the causes that produced

them, and which they, in turn, produce. We have only to compare the world as it is to-day with what it was four thousand, or two thousand, or one thousand, or five hundred years ago, to see that the stream of progress has been ever onward, and is still moving with ever increasing momentum towards the kingdom. The progress has not been rapid, but we must remember that the mills of God grind slow, but they grind exceeding small; and also, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Granting that there have been eddies, counter currents and sometimes long stretches of almost no apparent movement, yet, when we compare one generation with another, and especially, if this comparison is applied to the more civilized nations of the earth, progress upward and onward is the one marked characteristic of history. We have only to glance at the savage days of early Old Testament times, and of all ancient history, with the wars of to-day, —horrible as these are,—or to review the bloody persecutions, and wholesale slaughters of Christian people, prompted, even in modern times by the Church in the supposed interests of religion, and compare them with the spirit and practice now prevailing, to see that the world, on its religious side,

is passing from almost blank darkness into clear dawn, if not into broad daylight. Let any English-speaking people, or even half-civilized nation, attempt to-day to repeat the tragic scaffold scenes, or burnings at the stake, that were applauded, even in England, not many centuries ago, and the world would rise against the barbarity, as the United States rose against the cruelties of Spain in Cuba.

All this clearly indicates that both Church and State,—that civilizations indeed,—are steadily advancing towards the kingdom; that the law of love and the principle of brotherhood are at least coming into view, both in the Church and out of it. It may and probably will be, a long time before Church and State, before the religions and civilizations of the world will consent to throw off their excrescences, tear down their useless and worn-out scaffolding and come unitedly, in spirit and in truth into Christ's gospel of the kingdom. But, if history, the greatest of teachers, assures us of anything yet in the future, it points, in the light of the past, to such further triumphs of truth as shall ultimate in the establishment of a complete Theocracy over all the earth, which is the natural, normal government for man, and is only another name for

the kingdom that Jesus preached two thousand years ago. History predicts its coming.

3. The instincts and moral intuitions of man assure the universality of the kingdom. Instinct in animals and intuition, added to instinct in man, never deceive, for God has placed them there as an unfailing guide. Intuition is more than instinct; it is God's voice in the soul, telling us what ought to be, and what must be, if man ever comes into harmony with himself, with the universe and with God. Something within us gives assurance that the "best is yet to be"; and that the best is only to be found and enjoyed in the gospel of the kingdom, where all selfishness is left behind, where the law of brotherhood prevails, where love is the ruling principle, and God is worshiped with supreme adoration. This is the only true ideal of perfected society. Every human soul grows weary at times, if it is not always weary, with the existing condition of the race; man has better ideals than are now actualized, and he cherishes the hope that some day, and by means that he does not clearly apprehend, the evils of the past and present may be overcome, and the good that he longs for, be attained. This is not an optimistic view, cherished by a few; it is the soul-breathing of the human

race. The exceptions are so few, and so unworthy, that they prove the rule, instead of breaking it.

Would such a condition of things exist, would the Creator cause it to exist, if the experience longed for were never to be attained? This argument of longing for and anticipating, is accepted as one of the foremost evidences of continued life after physical death. If it has such weight in that connection it should be almost conclusive in this. The moral nature of man then, its needs, intuitions, longings and struggles, assure the universality of the kingdom.

4. Scripture, prophecy and declaration lead to the same conclusion. Prophetic writings, for the most part, are general in statement, figurative in form, and were never intended to have a strictly literal fulfilment. Reasoning therefore from prophecy, is apt to be uncertain and unsatisfying, except as to general conclusions. But whoever has studied the prophetic parts of the Old Testament, in their descriptions of the kingdom of God as it is to be in the indefinite distance, cannot fail to have seen that a glorious future for the Lord's people and for the world of mankind is, with ever recurring and increasing interest, set forth in glowing colors. Take several chapters in Isaiah, and the Book of Zech-

ariah, for example, and we feel the poetic flow, and see the general import of the message, while yet we cannot expound the words as if they were a didactic discussion of the great subject of the future kingdom. The description is pictorial rather than didactic, and, for this reason, it leaves a clearer and deeper impression as to the universality and blessedness of the kingdom than unpoetic words could convey.

Were I to quote these passages in full, many pages would have to be given to them. It is better, therefore, to rely upon the reader's recollection of what has been described, than to undertake lengthy quotations. Such expressions as these often occur. Gentiles shall see Thy righteousness and all kings Thy glory. Kings shall be Thy nursing fathers and queens Thy nursing mothers. No one shall say to another know ye the Lord, for they shall all know Him, from the least to the greatest. His name shall endure forever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; and all nations shall call Him blessed. Let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall learn war no more. In the Book of Daniel we have the clearest Old Tes-



tament statement of the coming kingdom: In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people and it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Much the same is found in the second of Isaiah: And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow into it.

In the New Testament, Jesus taught us to pray: Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. His whole teaching, and that of His apostles, was, that the gospel of the kingdom is to become universal, and that Christ is to hold at least a millennial reign over all the earth. The closing chapters of Revelation confirm this view, as indeed does the whole Bible.

After all that can be said, our highest ground of assurance that the gospel of the kingdom will be established over all the earth centres in Jesus Christ. The Christ of God, the Son of Man, is the centre and soul of the Christian system. Take Him out of it, and Christianity is destroyed. It is the personal Jesus, not simply as He was on earth two

thousand years ago, but as He is now, a renewing force in the thoughts, hearts and lives of good men, that makes the gospel the power of God unto salvation, and insures finally, its universal acceptance. No moral power on earth compares with that which emanates from Jesus, even as light, heat and life emanate from the sun, flooding, warming and fructifying the whole earth. Such a personality lifted up is drawing and will draw all men unto himself and to God. This is the central ground of hope for the universal prevalence of the gospel of the kingdom.

It was the purpose of this chapter to emphasize, rather than elaborately prove, what is commonly conceded, namely, that this world and all the great interests it represents, is somewhere in the future, to part with its ignorance, and its selfish schemes, and to become intelligently and wholly consecrated to the service of God and man; and so, enter fully into the kingdom as Jesus saw, and in principle, preached it. In accomplishing this purpose I have only called attention to the *fact* apart by itself, and not to the influences and agencies by which the great ideal is to become a reality. This practical aspect of the subject is to occupy succeeding chapters.



V.

EVOLUTION GOD'S LAW OF PROGRESS  
AND MAN'S ADVANCE INTO  
THE KINGDOM.



## V.

### EVOLUTION GOD'S LAW OF PROGRESS AND MAN'S ADVANCE INTO THE KINGDOM.

IF the Almighty has some fixed and definite mode, law, or principle of order, through which He exerts His creative energy, and carries forward His work in the universe, then a clear knowledge of that mode and of how it operates, must be of almost infinite importance to mankind and demands the profoundest study. If any such mode or law of procedure exists, the men of past generations have not discovered it. The fact that such discovery may not have been reached is no proof against the reality of some mode or system of operations, any more than was the failure, for many thousand years, to discover the facts and principles of astronomy or of geology, proof of their non-existence. Ignorance cannot disprove knowledge, though it may reject it, as many chapters in human history clearly reveal.

All, or at least most men, believe in the general fact of creation and progress, while yet they may

have but the crudest ideas as to how such results are produced. When the ancients believed that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that it was a flat surface and must rest on something, they could reach no better conclusion than that the something on which it rested was an elephant's back. Of course, this only meant that they had reached the limit of human knowledge.

With almost equal credulity, the generations of men have believed that the world and the universe were created in six days, out of nothing, by the direct fiat of the Almighty; and that since the work was finished, God has rested from all creative energy. They have discovered no central law or mode of creation, through which the fiat of the Almighty operates, and have not believed that there was any such law. The purpose and direct will of God, apart from any law or system of order, is quite sufficient, they think, to account for all things that exist.

In our times, many wise men have come to believe in the fact of progress, even of creative progress; that this is now going on in many directions, and that God is in some way connected with it, but how He is so connected they do not know, and they think that no one else knows. This class

of people are especially opposed to what, of late, has been called the doctrine of evolution, because in their view it contradicts Scripture and degrades man. On the same grounds, nearly all great advances in science have been charged with contradicting Scripture, robbing God, degrading man and doing violence to religion; but, in the end, true science has always prevailed over ignorance.

Evolution and progress are not interchangeable terms. Evolution lies back of progress and is explanatory of the mode or way by which real progress is secured. Evolution necessitates progress much as cause does effect. Apart from evolution, there is no abiding progress. What is this so much talked of and disputed thing called evolution?

Before answering this question a word of explanation may be allowable. It is the purpose of the writer, in all these chapters, to give in brief and definite form his own views, to avoid learned quotations, or hiding for protection behind great names. If these studies and their conclusions commend themselves to the judgment and moral sense of those who may read them, the writer will be pleased; and if what is written fails in its effort to secure such approval, he will be almost equally pleased to have them rejected, in the hope that



something better may be substituted in their place. Only truth is enduring and sacred.

What then, does evolution, as God's method of creation and advance in this world and beyond, signify? To start with, I have no theory to offer, but some great facts are constantly in evidence that appear to involve a theory of creation and progress that explains the movements of this world and beyond, so far as we apprehend them.

One great fact that seems unmistakable and undeniable, and which enters largely into this study is, that everything in nature,—man included,—is ever struggling with its environment; and that its growth and progress, or the opposite, is largely conditional upon that struggle. Every spire of grass, every leaf on every tree, every blossom, every fruit on the bough and every seed in the ground, has to struggle with its environment; in other words, has to fight for existence, otherwise it will be crowded out and killed. The stronger survive and the weaker die; and in this way progress from lower to higher forms of life is secured. I know of no exceptions to this universal law. Every insect and microbe, even if microscopic, every fish in the sea, every bird in the air, every beast in the field or forest, has to struggle with environment

for life, or die; and with the weaker individuals, struggle is often unavailing.

Man is no exception to a law that is universal. Whether we study man as an individual, or in his family and social relations, or as a literary and professional character, or as to his political, civil and religious life, or in any other set of human relations, constant struggle with environment is the condition of success. Men who drift, without struggling, amount to nothing. When struggle ceases, men remain stationary for a short time and then fall backward and die. This is not theory, but actual experience as found in every department of human history and of world life.

The very earth on which we live was brought into being, and into its present condition, through long and almost infinite struggle with environment, both from within and from without; so that Paul's great declaration that the whole creation has groaned in travail and pain until now, is literally true of this earth, and is probably true of every celestial globe. God creates and secures onward movement everywhere, not by direct fiat, but through one vast system of order which we call law; and the fundamental fact in that system is struggle with environment. This appears to be

and must be the eternal law of nature, as God has established it, and it is of universal application. We know it to be so in man's wide field of experience.

It has come to be a fixed conclusion in science that any law or principle that applies in one department or sphere in nature, applies universally ; so that if we know how God creates and pushes the world forward in one department, we have discovered His method in every other. The universe is unified ; all are but parts of one stupendous whole. The conclusion then, at which we arrive, is this : That struggle with environment is the one fundamental condition of all life, growth and progress. And this law of creation and advance, which is the right hand of the Almighty, is what is, or should be, chiefly meant by the term evolution.

There is however, another aspect to this great question of evolution that calls for brief attention. Some who are prepared to admit the doctrine in general, as it has been here stated, hesitate when it is claimed that the struggle upward, as described, often involves higher forms of life proceeding from lower ones ; such, for example, as a definite species emanating from some simple variety, or some new genus coming up from a lower species ; that this

process may go on from less to greater until, at last, man in this way, appears on the earth. It is claimed, but by some denied, that all life has advanced from what appears to be a common germ; and all, through this universal struggle with environment.

Facts fully attested prove that this general view, at some points, is clearly established. At others, we must wait for further investigation and development. But, because the evolutionary theory is not absolutely proven at every point, we are not, as some do, to refuse acceptance so far as proof is conclusive. What we do know with certainty renders other conclusions along the same line exceedingly probable. They cannot be denied while yet they are not fully established. As we have seen, God's methods are uniform; and what we know to be true in one department, we must anticipate as probably true in every other. Only proof to the contrary can weaken that probability.

Another class of people have a still different view of this doctrine of evolution. With some qualification perhaps, they concede that evolution holds good as to the physical world. They see, in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, including the physical nature of man, that struggle with environ-

ment is the condition of continued life and higher development. But they do not see that this same law is applicable to man's moral and spiritual nature. His spirit, they say, is a direct emanation from God, and that only direct divine influences can sustain and develop it. If this were so, is not the law of evolution as much a divine agency as any other of which we have knowledge? A moment's thought should convince any one that evolution is as applicable to moral and spiritual life as it is to life in any of its lower forms.

The spirit of a man is as much an entity, a form, a real existence, as is the body. The body is the house in which the spirit lives, and which the spirit formed, as the mollusk forms the shell for its own habitation. The shell does not form the mollusk, nor the body the spirit, but the opposite. The spirit then, no less than the body, may be subject to the law of evolution. This not only may be true, but as a matter of experience, it is so. Education of the intellect, as every child knows, means toil and struggle in the schoolroom and out of it, for a long term of years. There is no royal road to learning. We must work for it, or live and die in ignorance. As to ethical and spiritual life, is it not substantially the same? Are we not always

struggling with ourselves, the lower nature against the higher and the higher against the lower, each striving for the mastery? In the spiritual realm it is the same.

How hard is it for man to break away from himself and to find God in Christ, and in Him eternal life! How many make the effort, but the struggle is too great for them, and they fail. And many who succeed for a time are afterwards, through the power of temptation from within and from without, drawn back to the world and its selfish ways. Spiritual life, even when it advances heavenward, is, as all experience shows, a continuous struggle with environment. The strong succeed, the weak fail. There is no exception to this law of struggle except in part, when one becomes so dead to himself, so filled with the Spirit and so conscious of God, that the world and the flesh have lost power over him; and even then, he must be ever watchful and take heed lest he fall. If these things are so, then the law of evolution, which means life and growth through struggle with environment, applies to man's ethical and moral nature, even as it does to his physical. Indeed, this law of evolution, or struggle with environment, as the means of preserving life, and of coming up to a higher and

better life, is the underlying law of God's universe. It is the law of all worlds and of heaven, as it is of earth.

And yet, from some quarters the objection returns that true religion is a supernatural thing and is exceptional; that while it involves human freedom and responsibility, God still is the direct author and finisher of our faith. And it is claimed further, that the doctrine of evolution makes religion the product of natural law and not of supernatural grace; it makes it the work of man and not of God. If the objection is well taken, it is fatal; if not, it is groundless. What are the facts? God, so far as we can see, and for all that man knows, or can know to the contrary, works universally through some great system of order that we call law; and that His spiritual working, though in a different sphere and by different agencies, is as actually in accord with general law as are His operations in the physical world. When the heart of any man is in a right attitude towards truth and God, the Holy Spirit comes to that soul and leads it into life and peace as naturally, and as much in conformity with eternal law, as when the rain and sunshine fall on the parched and seeded earth and bring forth first, the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in

the ear, not miraculously, but in conformity with natural law. And that law, alike in each case, is God's law of evolution ; that is to say, it is struggle with environment, which, when rightly conducted, secures Divine cooperation. Religion is no more supernatural, and apart from the divinely appointed order of nature, as the Almighty has established it, than is the growth of vegetation, the coming and going of animal life, or the birth and death of man. The great system of God's appointment, which wise men have come to call evolution, as an efficient and secondary cause, is back of them all. God works ever through this system and not otherwise, as the facts of observation and experience clearly reveal.

What, I am asked, is the purpose of bringing this doctrine of evolution into the general study of the kingdom as Jesus comprehended it ? The question is a fair one and demands an answer.

We have seen that evolution means creation and progress. It is God's method of uplift and advance from lower to higher conditions, and this through struggle with environment on the part of whatever is to be new-created. God's law of evolution operates in the sphere of mind and of religion no less than in the vegetable and animal kingdoms ; and it



is in the department of ethical and spiritual life and growth that its place and importance in this study of the kingdom clearly appears. If religious life, through struggle with environment, is to be advanced until the Church and the world are merged in the gospel of the kingdom,—as the preceding chapter claims,—then, it is of the highest moment that we understand, as far as knowledge is now possible, the pathways and stages along which the Church and world must travel and struggle from the place where they now are, on to their final and glorious destination in the kingdom. That journey will be a “hard road to travel,” otherwise it would not be God’s evolutionary and creative method. Advance towards the kingdom is as actually a form of new creation as is the making of stellar worlds, but in another sphere of creative energy. The process may be slow and difficult but, at length, when the goal is reached, it will be without violence and will come as naturally and joyously as does the rising sun, or the leaf-bursting and genial springtime, or, as does the prepared soul’s translation into glory.

In the six succeeding chapters I propose to trace the evolutionary lines along which the Church and world must travel, and the process of struggle with

environment they must pass through on their long journey towards and into the gospel of the kingdom. This purpose, added to foregoing suggestions, explains why the law of evolution is given so large a place in so small a volume on a great subject. Evolution is the key to what follows; it unlocks the world's history, and is the working principle in the whole creative and struggling movement of the moral world away from self and up to God.

Let us not complain that God's plan of creation and progress, especially for man, means so much of opportunity and difficulty, of struggle and hardship, of encouragement and disappointment, of pain and pleasure, of success and failure; and that these experiences are ever alternating each other from the beginning to the end of every mortal life.

Let us rather consider that all these and similar experiences, are necessary to our social, intellectual and moral advancement,—that they are rounds in the ladder by means of which we climb up to heaven and to God, and without which such climbing would be impossible. All deep thinkers on the mystery of human life recognize these experiences, and welcome them as optimistic facts, and as the only rational pathway to a glorious hereafter. The

two Brownings make this view of life, as do other poets, the chief burden of their song; and surely it is God's way of leading the world into the gospel of the kingdom. When John, the Revelator, asked of the angel, Who are these ten thousand times ten thousand robed in white? He answered,—These are they who have come up through great tribulation. In this way only can we become white-robed. This has been the experience of good men and women in every age of the world, and will continue to be down to the end of human history and beyond. It relates to individuals and organizations alike. In heaven as on earth there will be intellectual and spiritual advancement; this process will go on endlessly without reaching finality, and the law of progress, there as here, will be struggle with environment. Such a law should have a large place in our thoughts, plans, ideals, and purposes of life.

VI.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CRISIS AND  
THE KINGDOM.



## VI.

### THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CRISIS AND THE KINGDOM.

THE evolutionary work of the Almighty, often through long stages, appears to go on, if it moves at all, by the silent operation of some unseen law ; while yet in every department of nature there come, at set times, more or less distant, periods of crisis, of transition, and even of revolution, that terminate in some new order of life.

Our physical globe appears to have passed through many such changes, as its mountain ranges and volcanic eruptions, its deep sea-soundings and shore-changes, its glacial periods, and great climatic variations and other seismic movements clearly reveal. In vegetable and animal life on the earth's surface the same law of uniform movement, terminating in crises periods, has evidently prevailed, as fossil remains of now extinct plants and animals of different species and classes, one succeeding another, give positive assurance.

In human history there have been comparatively long reaches of apparent uniformity, of silent, often undiscovered growth and preparation for some sudden evolutionary transition, that was the natural result of inherent causes, unobserved by the many, till the crisis was upon them. The briefest outline of human records, ancient and modern, would confirm this view. A glance at the most ancient nations, as we know them, chiefly from long-buried but now discovered records, tells of their many years of prosperity, then of their failure to advance and, finally, of their consequent and sudden overthrow. The great crisis that came to the Hebrew people, and to the Roman nation, when Jesus, the Christ of God appeared and for which the world had long been in a course of preparation, strikingly illustrates the general course of history. The Reformation of the sixteenth century shows that, for a long period, an almost apostate Church, by refusing to "keep step with God," had prepared herself for the great crisis that rent her asunder, established Protestantism, and opened a new door of hope for the world. Almost every century has furnished some illustration, general or local, of protracted preparation for coming events and then, of sudden shocks through which those events, for good or

evil, have changed the current of local or of general history.

The whole world is to-day in the throes of a greater evolutionary transition than has marked any other period in history. It is more general, deeper rooted, more sacred, far-reaching and uplifting than have been any, or many united, of its numerous predecessors. Many people do not see this, and if they did, they would do their utmost to prevent its advance. Vain attempt! As well might they undertake to sweep back the ocean tides with a broom, or to roll back the tide of time, as to oppose successfully the mighty crisis for which the world has long been preparing and which is, even now upon us, and is sure to increase and sweep onward till its great and solemn mission is accomplished! What the end will be, so far as this generation is concerned, will depend largely upon the generation itself. God is back of all and our reward will be according to our works.

Great changes must come, almost revolutionary changes; and if they are accepted as God offers them, there is reason to hope that at no very distant day the whole world will be drawn into the gospel of the kingdom. Of course, there will be set-backs and hindrances. Selfishness will every-



where assert itself and struggle for supremacy. Outworn systems, methods and forms will die hard. Conservatism will resist; but, if those who have eyes to see, use them wisely and move on as God leads the way, with confidence and courage, those grand results for which the world has been so long preparing, as many begin to see, will, in time, be successfully accomplished.

The fact to be emphasized is, that the world is entering into a great evolutionary crisis, one in which good and evil, right and wrong, God and mammon stand face to face. Those who do not see this, or who deny it, are blind.

The nineteenth century has been, on the whole, the greatest in human history. The twentieth century will be as much greater than the nineteenth as that has been greater than any of its predecessors, if possibly, the first be an exception. The great work of the last century has been largely preparatory. It has been the discovery and discussion of new aspects of truth, of principles and of revised ideals, as they relate to God, and especially to man with his fellow-man. General principles are now largely settled, and it will be the province of the twentieth century, if possible, to reduce these principles to practice, so that the right shall prevail and

society, in all its parts, be harmonized with the law of love which is the central law of the moral universe and so of Christ's kingdom.

The coming struggle, here called a crisis, means, as the word signifies, separation that leads to a new order of things; and the change may be sudden, or of prolonged duration. The term crisis is here used because no other single word seems to describe existing conditions so well; and it is used in a somewhat limited sense to describe changes rather than the space of time to be occupied in producing them.

In stating some of the foremost issues that must enter into the struggle or crisis of the twentieth century, I shall simply and in a few words give the points in controversy, without discussing them or expressing an opinion. Discussion and settlement are not my work; it is that of the twentieth century. But something is gained for the kingdom by having clearly in view the issues, often interblended, that must be rightly disposed of before the gospel of the kingdom can come on earth as it is in heaven.

Many of the disturbing questions of to-day, that may bring on a crisis, are sociological; and this is comparatively a new field of study that lies much in the mist of uncertainty. When leading writers upon it can agree in their principles, and when

sociology becomes a science, it may be that some knotty questions will find an easier solution than now seems probable.

Some perplexing questions for the twentieth century to dispose of are the following:—I shall number them for the sake of convenience.

1. The inalienable rights of man and of labor. All men are not created equal as to heredity, natural ability, or environment. But all men have an inalienable right to life and liberty, if these rights have not been forfeited by crime. The poor and the rich have their respective rights; but when we attempt to define and differentiate them, opinions clash. The two classes meet together and are mutually dependent, so that neither can prosper without the other. The wage-earner is entitled to a just reward for his labor; but who is to decide what constitutes that just reward? The rich man is apt to say that the law of supply and demand must settle it; but this is denied. Then the rich claim that the poor have no good ground for complaint, since they are better paid, housed, fed and educated than they were a hundred years ago. The poor man's reply is that, if wages have increased, so has the necessary cost of living; and that the laborer's condition relatively to that of his

employer, is not better, but worse, than it was many years ago; and also, that the employer becomes rich from the earnings of the laborer, while he gets as his reward, only enough to keep himself and family in existence, and that this state of things is a violation of the inalienable rights of man. So the two parties accuse and condemn each other. One claims that the other has no need to be poor, and that if he is so, it is his own fault. The other retorts that the rich man becomes rich by oppressing the poor, and that in such a world as this, of want and woe, no man has a right to be rich; that, instead of hoarding his wealth, he should share it with the poor and needy who are as good as he. This central point of controversy is for the twentieth century rightly to adjust.

2. Combination of capital. Once, there was very little of what we call capital to combine; now, it has increased a thousandfold, and a large part of it is in the hands of a few individuals, or of corporations. Wealth is, to-day, being combined in great trusts, under different names; and it looks as if in a short time, these trusts would own and control the world. Have such combinations a right to exist, and if so, under what conditions and for what ends? Those in the "combines" have their

grounds of defense which they deem unanswerable. Their opponents claim that trusts exist for three selfish reasons: 1. To control the price of labor. 2. To control the whole class of business that enters into the trust, and 3. To sell their goods at as high rates as the people will endure;—all selfish reasons. This vital and knotty question of trusts the near future must adjust, if there is to be peace in the land.

3. Combinations of labor. It is, perhaps, not unnatural that when capital combines against labor that labor should, in turn, combine against capital. Accordingly we find wage-earners, especially in factories and mining fields, organizing unions and great societies, under different names, evidently to counteract the supposed intentions of their employers. They, too, have, it is said, three ends in view: 1. To compel employers to pay satisfactory wages. 2. To dictate to monied corporations whom they may and may not employ, and 3. To prevent wage-earners of their own crafts from getting work unless they consent to join their unions. This is a serious condition of things. Two powerful and closely related organizations stand almost in battle array against each other. Adjustment must come or the cord that

binds them together will be broken, and what then!

4. Strikes and strikers. Corporations claim that they have a right to employ whom they will; and laborers claim the right to strike or quit work when, for any reason, they are dissatisfied. And union strikers not only refuse to work themselves, but refuse to allow other workmen to take the places that they vacate. These rights are claimed and denied. Who shall surrender, and on what conditions? is a vital question for the near future to decide.

5. Wealth and poverty. Wealth is power and poverty is weakness, except when roused to madness. The rich charge the poor with shiftlessness, laziness and the spending of their wage-earnings foolishly, as the cause of their poverty. A large class of the poor claim that the rich are bound to share their substance with the needy and especially, with honest workmen whose muscle, they say, creates the wealth of the world. What do justice and the gospel of the kingdom demand?

6. Money and righteousness. This is a materialistic age. Money getting is the craze of our day. It is said that a large part of the business of the world is virtually gambling, or some other

form of overreaching dishonesty; and that this state of things is not only unrighteous, but is becoming intolerable. How shall men, it is asked, be induced, or compelled, if necessary, to observe, in business transactions, the golden rule of Christ's kingdom? Is money to be considered the highest good? And shall its acquisition, as in many quarters it now seems to be, constitute the chief end of life? This is a question for the twentieth century to settle, not as an intellectual speculation but as a fact of experience. Shall practice and principle harmonize or converge?

7. Franchises and government ownership. There seems to exist, in many quarters, evidence of a disposition, on a gigantic scale, to get something for nothing. Corporations ask for great privileges, —trolley roads and franchises are examples,—from city, state, or nation, gratis, on the ground that their enterprises will benefit the people; while, it is claimed that their real motive is to get possession of the people's property to enrich themselves; and that this involves both deception and injustice. And besides, it is claimed that the people, and not speculators, should own and operate most of our internal improvements, in the interests of the public. Here is a great problem for the twentieth

century to solve and it is not likely to be of easy solution.

8. Marriage and divorce. The family institution is as old as the human race. It underlies both Church and State, and without it neither religion nor government could exist. Marriage is the family bond, and whoever undervalues or breaks that bond without sufficient cause, is the enemy of mankind. The institution of marriage is in peril, as any one who reads the daily papers or takes note of divorce statistics, must clearly see. Opinions are divided on this vital subject. Some hold that divorce is never allowable, except for one crime. Others name from one to a dozen grounds on which divorce is allowable. Where, between husband and wife, love and respect have changed to unreconcilable hatred, some would have the parties divorced as the less of two evils; others would compel them to live together so long as life endures. This whole question of marriage and divorce, so vital to humanity, must have fresh thought and readjustment.

9. Religion, theology, the Church and the kingdom. Every observing and thoughtful person must see that religion, to-day, is in a critical, disturbed and transitional condition; not that true religion is in any more danger of being driven out of the



world than light, air and life are in such danger. The danger consists in mistaking the nature of true religion. To the question, What is religion? different answers are given. One class makes religion, all true religion, to consist in love,—love of God and love of man, worship of God and service of man, and in this alone. Another larger and conservative class confuses religion with theology, with creeds, with traditions, with Church membership, and with rites and forms. These two conceptions are as wide apart as possible. One gives a sound basis for Christian unity; the other lays the foundation for denominational and sectarian division and strife. One puts religion in the heart and makes it a life; the other puts religion in the intellect and makes it a belief, a dogma. One view belongs to the gospel of the Church; the other, to that of the kingdom. The question, What is the true and vital religion that must everywhere be insisted upon, and what are other things, which, though important are not the genuine article nor essential to it, must be met and settled, if the Church is to hold her historic position and move on into the kingdom. The crisis is here and must be met.

10. The nature and end of civil government. In

the present state of the world, it is conceded, that civil government is a necessity and is ordained of God. But for what end or purpose should governments exist and be administered? This is a divisive question. A majority of rulers appear to think that governments exist for themselves and for their own enrichment and glorification; while their subjects begin to feel that they should exist for the good of the people, and for that end only. This distinction is radical and one side or the other must, in the coming crisis, be victorious.

Another point in civil government that demands adjustment, is this: Should government be an absolute monarchy, as in Russia, or a limited and constitutional monarchy, as in England, or a republic, as in the United States? On one point there is certainty, namely: That the drift of the civilized world is towards a form of government that shall be of the people, by the people and for the people. The drift is towards larger liberty. These governmental questions cannot be settled hastily, and may await evolutionary and educational developments; but they cannot be long delayed.

11. Politics, as a trade. It is claimed that the great majority of politicians make politics a trade or profession, and that they serve their country for

personal and party ends, and not for their country's good. Political bosses and those who serve under them, it is said, control legislation and secure civil appointments much as if they owned the government, and were running it for what they can get out of it. Their motto is: "To the victors belong the spoils." Of course, there are genuine statesmen; but if half of what is charged against professional politicians be true, here is a crying and perilous crime,—a nest of vipers,—that the twentieth century must attack and destroy. Politics must not be a sham. Is it, or is not so now?

12. The negro question. This nation has about eight millions of negroes. Slavery is abolished, and the black man, by law is, at the polls, the peer of his white neighbor. And yet, the black man is almost everywhere ostracized. While chattel slavery is abolished, shall state laws be allowed to hold him in ignorance and practical bondage? What shall be done with the negro, and what is to be his future condition in this land? is one of the gravest questions of the coming crisis that must be studied and settled on principles of right and justice.

13. International war. War and especially, international war, in past ages, was the business of

the world, or rather, of kings and rulers. By one class wars are applauded and soldiers are patriots of the highest order. Another class holds that war is barbarous, that it is the tax and burden of the world; that it is needless, and that civilized nations should put their ban upon it and settle international disputes in courts of arbitration.

And yet, if we look abroad, we find every nation raising and equipping great armies, building war ships and forts, inventing guns and engines of destruction, and exhausting their resources in preparation for war. Never in the world's history, it is said, were the nations doing so much in the work of preparation for war as they are to-day. What, it is asked, can all this signify, if it does not mean, somewhere in the twentieth century, such an awful international war as history has never witnessed? The war-crisis is here; compromises will not settle it; and it is for this generation to find and apply some principle of righteousness that shall expel the spirit and practice of war from the world and make its ravages never again possible.

This long list of critical situations might be longer; and the question now arises: How is the twentieth century to deal with them? Different lines of action may be taken.

One possibility would be for the century to shut its eyes to existing facts, and to ignore, belittle, or deny them, asserting that no unusual condition of things exists and that it is safe and best to let events take their course and, by evolutionary process work out results. If men were irrational beings and cowards in addition, such a course might be excusable, but not otherwise. Doubtless, some of the many issues stated in this chapter are less urgent and more easily disposed of than others; but most of them demand earnest thought and prompt endeavor, if clashing crisis is to be avoided.

Another way of meeting the coming crisis is to attempt settlement by means of compromises. Compromise has been the American method of settling differences. It was so with the demands of slavery; and this plan is being adopted now, in connection with strikes and their causes. Indeed, in all directions, men seek to compromise; and, to a certain extent it is proper to do so. But compromises are never a finality. They only postpone the real issue. They are only make-shifts for the hour. Jesus never proposed compromise, nor does the gospel of the kingdom on questions of right and wrong.

Still another mode of meeting issues is, for wise

men to study thoroughly, scientifically and without prejudice, the questions at issue, and to continue this investigation until the right and the wrong that are in them come clearly into view and stand over against each other; then, let a square and firm position be taken and maintained for the right and against the wrong, and let the moral and intellectual struggle go on, without compromise, till right, justice and truth are established in the earth. This is the manly and Godlike way of procedure.

But suppose that all these and other pacific measures fail, then, finally, will come violence and the "tug of war." Should such a dire calamity befall the century let the wrong, the selfish, the unworthy, and those alone, be the attacking party. In such a struggle the right would surely win and the crisis come to a glorious termination for the gospel of the kingdom. But my hope is, and it is a confident hope, that the great crises of the twentieth century will be settled by reason and not by violence.

It is by evolutionary movements like these, often slow in preparation, and then, when the ripened time of crisis arrives, rapid in action, that the world is being freed from darkness and bondage, and slowly but surely led into the light and liberty of the gospel of the kingdom. Any attempt to antici-

pate and force the natural order of events may lead to failure; but when, in the providence of God, the time for action has come, as I believe it now has, let the sons and daughters of the kingdom know that this is their day of opportunity, and the harvest time for the fruitage of the kingdom. Should the twentieth century, in this critical hour, falter and fail, it may soon, in reproof, hear a voice from heaven speaking to it, in the words of Mordecai to Esther, at the opening of a great Hebrew crisis. "If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise from another place." If the twentieth century is not equal to the demand, then the twenty-first must take up its work and so on to the end; for, as surely as time endures, the gospel of the kingdom must be established on earth as it is in heaven; and this by the combination of human and Divine agency.

VII.

A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE OPEN  
DOORWAY INTO THE KINGDOM.





## VII.

### A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE OPEN DOORWAY INTO THE KINGDOM.

IT is said of Daniel Webster, (whether the story is literally accurate does not matter) that once, when dining with a company of distinguished men, one of the party asked this question: "Mr. Webster, what of all the great subjects that have occupied your thoughts, and on which you have spoken, do you consider the greatest?" anticipating, no doubt, that he would reply that his greatest theme was the Constitution of the United States, and that his greatest speech was his reply to Mr. Haine of South Carolina. The man was mistaken. Mr. Webster paused a moment in silence, and then answered: "The greatest subject that ever occupied my mind is the thought of Almighty God and the relation we sustain to Him and He sustains to us." A greater and nobler reply never fell from mortal lips.

The world of mankind has many needs, small and great; but the profoundest of them all is the

need of a true, experimental knowledge of God. Such knowledge is, itself, eternal life. It is written: This is life eternal that they might know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

The human soul is full of restlessness, of longing and of rush after something, it knows not what; but something that it does not possess. All history is but a record of the world's struggles for the unknown, yes, at bottom, for the unknown God. The Athenians built an altar to this unknown God and worshiped Him as one afar off and a stranger, though He was not far from any one of them. All the religions of the world, the highest and the lowest, are a search after God. Not religious people alone, but the irreligious, the worldly, the wicked and even sensualists, are in search of something that can satisfy; and only the infinite satisfies. Often they know not what they want, but they do know that they want something not yet possessed.

Unbelievers, skeptics and agnostics are no exception. They try to solve the mysteries of life. God's infinity and the vastness of His evolutionary operations bewilder and create uncertainty, so that doubt and unbelief are not unnatural. Honest denial,

with earnestness of purpose may be more acceptable to God, and more helpful to men than thoughtless, traditional faith that leads only to formality, profession and perfunctory service can be. Character resides in the hearts of men, and if the heart is set on finding the truth, it is then following, unwisely it may be, after God, and so far is accepted of Him. My point is that all men, the good and bad alike, are reaching out in different ways after the supreme good, and they will possess it when they come to find and know the only living and true God.

Of course, no finite being, in this world or in any other, can have a complete or perfect knowledge of the infinite God. Only infinity can perfectly comprehend the infinite. And yet, the processes of evolution are continually bringing God more and more within the comprehension of men, and so within the range of personal experience. Some of the processes by which we approach God and gain such knowledge of Him as leads into the gospel of the kingdom are the following :

1. Pure reason, in the department of metaphysical philosophy, leads to some vague conception of God. It gives us the universal law of causality, and traces that law back to the first cause, which it affirms must be eternal, infinite and absolute.

Reason reaches a conception of the infinite, partly from the study of the finite and the not finite, and partly infinity of space and duration suggests the idea of causal infinity. Reason affirms alike the necessity and the incomprehensibility of a first cause. Whether that first cause is a personality, endowed with intellectual and moral attributes, or, whether it be simply force, or, at most, some power in the universe that makes for righteousness, reason alone can neither affirm nor deny. Little as this may seem, it is something to know that whatever is finite, is not self-existent, but has back of it an infinite cause. And it would seem to be self-evident that finite nature cannot be self-originated, since potentiality can never become actuality, except as it is produced by a cause back of itself. If strict Pantheism is an absurdity, then there must be an infinite, absolute Being back of what we call nature, from whom all movements proceed. We have then, here, a philosophic foundation that necessitates and partly discloses, God as infinite and supreme.

2. Traditional and authoritative testimony concerning God does something, and with many much, towards revealing God and leading into the gospel of the kingdom. A traditionary belief in God, and

of religion as being the worship and service of God, has been handed down through all the ages. This belief has been taught in homes and in Sunday-schools to children, has been formulated in creeds, printed in books and preached everywhere from the pulpit. As a natural and necessary result, most people in Christian lands believe in God and in the Christian religion. This, certainly, is a vast gain over what would exist had such teaching been entirely withheld.

Still, the great fact must not be overlooked that a belief in God and in religion from personal conviction and experience, is one thing, and that a belief in what others think and say about Him is often quite another. One is a first-hand and the other a second-hand faith. One is a personal faith, an experience of God, the other is a belief in what others say about Him; a second-hand traditional faith that great multitudes possess without being at heart, Christians at all. Such a faith leads often to profession, to formality, to perfunctory service. It often makes people sectarians, zealots for doctrine, bigots in their treatment of others, heresy-hunters and most uncharitable towards all who differ from themselves.

Or, a second-hand faith may lead to utter indif-

ference. The Pharisees in Christ's day are good illustrations of a traditionary faith. Authority is largely the bond by which the Roman Catholic Church is held together. It is this second-hand traditional faith that sustains and perpetuates Mohammedanism and that accounts for the tenacity with which Buddhists cling to Buddhism. While its value to Christianity is not denied, still, the religion that Jesus taught and that man needs is personal experience, and not formal second-hand assent; it is a thing of the heart more than of the head; it is life and peace and not cold acceptance of what others believe and teach.

3. If we would find and know God truly, we must begin by seeking Him in ourselves. Man is created in God's image. Not as to character, but as to attributes, he is configured to the Almighty, not in degree, but in kind. If this be so, then God is mirrored in ourselves, and in ourselves we must find His reflection. I do not speak of form, but of spirit. What I am in a limited finite sense, God is in an unlimited and absolute sense. If I find in myself the power of thought and rationality, even in a low degree, I know that God, my Maker, must possess this power in infinite perfection. If I find myself possessed of will power, I must infer that

God, who imparted this to me, has the same power in unlimited measure. If I find myself in the possession of moral faculties, of conscience, of a sense of right and wrong and of clear convictions of responsibility and of duty, then I know that these gifts came from God, and that He has the same in infinite proportions; for what God has in any degree, He must possess in an infinite degree. Human intuitions must be the reflex of divine intuitions.

It is no contradiction of terms to say that we must find God in ourselves, and then to add that we must find ourselves in God. Only as we know God, do we really know ourselves; for in God alone do we come to realize our privileges, possibilities and final destiny. This seeking to find God in ourselves and ourselves in God, is not a new idea, but it is a mine of precious truth that has been more worked of late than ever before. The deeper we delve into it, the richer is the reward. And when we come to find God as fully outlined in ourselves, and ourselves as fully revealed in the light of God, then we shall have an open door into the gospel of the kingdom. This is the need and privilege of the whole human race.

4. God is revealed to men still further in the



realm of physical nature, if only we have eyes to see and hearts to feel the great revealing. It is largely through the imagination and not by logical process, that we find God in His works. Whether we study God in the minute atom, so infinitesimal that the best microscope can hardly reveal it, and yet, that may contain potentialities that make and mould living beings on the face of the earth ; or whether we study Him in the acorn that contains the spreading oak in embryo, or whether we study Him in the starry heavens deep and infinite, “ ever singing as they shine, the hand that made us is divine,” or whether we study Him as He reveals Himself in human hearts and lives,—in whatever way we penetrate the archives of nature,—we find ourselves standing face to face with God ; and we feel His inspiration and His uplifting power. If “ An devout astronomer is mad,” equally so is the man who can look upon the leafy and flowery outbursts of springtime, or upon the glorious wealth of autumn and not have his soul attuned to the spirit of lofty praise and adoring worship.

Until of late, and in some quarters until now, this finding God in the realm of nature, “ in rocks and rills, in lakes and hills,” has been depreciated and distrusted as inimical to the Bible, the creeds

and the pulpit, and as conducive to sentimental and feeble Christian life. Thoughtful men are beginning to see that, indeed and in truth,—The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork; that day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; that their line has gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world.

5. This brings us to a fifth and closely related avenue through which God may be seen and known. It is the avenue of Divine Immanence. In some general dogmatic sense, the idea of the omnipresence of God has been accepted; but the modern conception of Divine Immanence carries a new and larger meaning. The old thought was that God is seated somewhere in the heavens, on a great white throne from which, in some mysterious way, He regulates and controls the affairs of the universe. That conception is now enlarged and has had breathed into it the spirit of life.

The finite universe is an emanation from God. It is not independent and self-existent; nor is the finite and natural created out of nothing. Such a thing is unthinkable. From nothing, nothing comes. There is something of God in everything that exists; in the solid earth and in every living

thing on its surface, there God is. Nature is not God, but God is in, through, above and beneath all that we call nature. Evolution is creation; it is God revealing Himself in His works. God is in everything that we see, hear and think about, in every storm and wind and wave, in every star that studs the heavens, in every plant, tree, and flower that grows on earth, in every animal and, most of all, in man who bears His own image. This is not Pantheism, because all emanations or created things are finite, and God is infinite and is infinitely more and beyond all that emanates from Him.

This conception of God brings Him near to us. In Him we do indeed live and move and have our being. He is as near to us as we are to ourselves. To realize all this as a truth of experience is a long step towards finding and knowing God and is a doorway into the kingdom.

6. If God is revealed to men in nature He is much more fully revealed in Jesus Christ who is God manifest in the flesh. Jesus Christ revealed the moral character of God, the heart of God, His fatherhood, His love His mercy and the brotherhood of man, as they had never been revealed before. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. To know Christ is to know God. These now

familiar truths are the highest and fullest revelations that God has made of Himself to men; and they could only be made through one who personates and represents Himself. How do we find God in and through Christ?

There are three ways in which one rational being can be truly found and known of another. How, for example, might one have known, in the fullest sense of that term, such a man as Abraham Lincoln? 1. By listening to what those who knew him well had to testify in his behalf and by reading what had been written about him. 2. By reading what he himself may have spoken and written as expressive of his own thoughts on great subjects. 3. By enjoying the opportunity of intimate personal acquaintance and a lifelong friendship.

In all these ways we may know Jesus Christ and His and our Father whom He personated and perfectly represented. Thousands upon thousands of the living and the dead bear testimony concerning Jesus and God in Him, that is full of divine and blessed revelation. Then, the words that Jesus spoke and the things that He did while on earth, lead us more and more into a knowledge of the heart and purpose of God. Now, if we can add to all this an intimate personal acquaintance with

Christ and with God in and through Him, as many do, it would seem that such knowledge must be almost complete. In these three ways what multitudes of people have found God and been led into the gospel of the kingdom!

7. And yet, God is to be found in another, a deeper and more experimental way than any of the preceding indicates. We may become as personally conscious of God as we are of ourselves and of the objects that surround us. Consciousness is a knowledge of one's own states and experiences. It is not interior experience only, but knowledge and experience of things exterior to ourselves that come within the radius of consciousness. We may then become conscious of God in whom we live and move and have our being. Jesus was conscious of God as He was of Himself when He said: "I and My Father are one. He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." And in His prayer that His followers might be one in Him, and He in them, as He and the Father were one, showed that it was possible for His disciples to be conscious of God, even as He was conscious. When Paul says: I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and, again, For me to live is Christ,—he must have had an experience, a consciousness of God even as he had of

himself. He had attained to such an inter-dwelling with God, his purpose and life were so merged in the divine purpose and life that they seemed to be one, and they fell equally within the field of consciousness. In his prayers he talked with God as friend talks with friend, and with the same consciousness of a double presence. This experience of God-consciousness is not something that one can communicate to another. Each must know it for himself, or he cannot know it at all. "What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him. Man possesses a double nature, consisting of body and spirit. The spiritual or ethereal body is our real self, and, at times, spirit rises so above material things as to see and feel the invisible, to see and know God, and divine things, almost as they are seen and known in the etherealized world. The least that can be said is that such an experience is soul-satisfying, and is itself eternal life. It is being in the kingdom.

8. How may this state of God-consciousness be attained and perpetuated? I answer, it is the fruit of the Spirit who takes the things of Christ and reveals them unto us. The dispensation of the Spirit is the greatest of all dispensations, because it is more spiritual than any other. It brings the

heart of man into direct, unveiled contact with the heart of God; it brings to him clear vision and lofty inspiration, and enables him, in the full consciousness of the Divine presence to exclaim, Abba Father.

But there are conditions upon which this inter-communication and consciousness of God may come into human lives. What are these conditions? It comes, so far as man is concerned, of a longing desire to find and know God, and of utter self-surrender to Him. No partial surrender, with mental and conscious reservations, no mere intellectual assent avails anything. There must be universal, unconditional surrender, including all one has, is, and hopes to be in this life and beyond, as the price of securing consciously the witness of the spirit. In such a surrender the Holy Spirit comes to us with wonderful revelations of God's presence, pouring such measures of divine light, love and life into our souls as satisfy every conscious want. All doubt vanishes, the heart is filled with satisfying peace and great joy. Such ones come into the Holy of holies where they are as conscious of God as they are of themselves. They now understand and have entered into the gospel of the kingdom.

Enough, I hope, has been said, in illustrating so briefly these eight ways of finding God, to show that a true knowledge of God is possible, and that it constitutes man's greatest need, and is the open doorway into the gospel of the kingdom. Countless thousands have entered Christ's kingdom along this avenue, and have finished their course and received their crown. Great multitudes now living, of all lands and of all religions, are seeking and finding God. Many have already found Him, and others are pressing on, often with obscured vision, but with inspiring hope, after a true knowledge of the living God. This great experience is broadening throughout the world. Never was there such a search after God by so many people throughout the earth and of all ranks and conditions in life, as there are to-day. This is a great and hopeful omen. Every one who finds the prize draws others after him. The time must come when the whole world, in a broad and liberal sense will know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, and this knowledge is eternal life. This day will come through evolutionary struggle with environment in the moral and spiritual world. It may be long in coming, but the end is sure, for God is back of all, and in all, and His plan and purpose never part.



God is not a failure. When it comes, evil will fly away and the gospel of the kingdom will be established on earth as it is in heaven. God speed the day!

## VIII.

# RELIGIOUS AND CHURCH AGENCIES THAT LEAD INTO THE KINGDOM.



## VIII.

### RELIGIOUS AND CHURCH AGENCIES THAT LEAD INTO THE KINGDOM.

THE world is full of agencies that work directly or indirectly for the gospel of the kingdom. One class of these agencies is professedly religious and belongs largely to the Christian Church. Another class makes no such profession, while yet it is working for the kingdom. This chapter will be occupied with agencies of the professedly religious order.

And first of all, what is religion? Religion is truth vitalized. All truth is religious, and all religion is living truth; not truth in the abstract, but truth as a vital principle in the hearts and lives of men. Truth and religion are inseparable, and are unified in God, who is the source and sum of all living truth and of all true religion. The heart of living truth is love, and God is love, and love is God; and this because love is life, is purity, is holiness, justice, mercy and truth combined. Religion then, is the joint product of truth and love, not

either apart, but the two combined in human hearts and lives. Such religion not only leads towards the gospel of the kingdom, but it is that kingdom in its fulness and power. When the living truth of love comes into the hearts of all men, then Christ's kingdom will have come on earth as it is in heaven.

This is religion from an intellectual point of view. Practically considered, religion finds its best illustration in the life of Jesus.

The Old Testament prediction of the Messiah and of His mission, as quoted by Jesus in the Synagogue at Nazareth is in these words: He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captive and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. This was practical religion. It was Christ's mission, and how faithfully He fulfilled it. From first to last His sympathies were with the poor, the weak, the afflicted, the sorrowful, the neglected, the discouraged and the wronged. He went about doing good and this was literally the work of His life.

Jesus emphasized the duty of repentance, and the need of turning from all selfishness to a life of benevolence and well-doing. He proclaimed great

principles of truth and righteousness, and declared that true freedom comes through a practical knowledge of the truth. And yet He placed practical duties above intellectual theories. He taught, and insisted upon, the most rigid of ethical systems, and especially, that every man should love his neighbor as he loved himself. Love from the heart, expressed in life, was the sum of Jesus' religion, and it is the religion of the kingdom.

In the light of this standard we may study that class of agencies for the kingdom that is called religious, and that centres largely in the Christian Church. The Church herself is the foremost of these agencies, and claims our first attention. We have already seen that the Church is less than the kingdom; we have also seen what the Church has been and done in the past, and we have glanced at her present condition. We have now to ask, What is the Church, as a world agency, to be and do in the future for the gospel of the kingdom? What she could and should be and do is one thing, and what she actually will or may be and do is quite another.

I confidently believe that if the Church fully realized her power, her opportunity and her privilege, and if she were fully prepared to meet exist-

ing and coming exigencies, that, in a comparatively short space of time, she would herself fully enter, and draw the whole world into the gospel of the kingdom. My hope is that after some further unsuccessful struggle, the Church will come to see and feel her deficiencies, and her need of a broader platform than the one on which she is now standing. If she does this, as both internal and external pressure is strongly urging her to do, then her continued prestige and power are assured. If the Church leads the way the world is prepared, or is preparing to follow her lead, as the wake follows the ship on a smooth and open sea. Denominational and sectarian barriers are breaking down; restlessness is universal, the door of hope is opening, and there is ground for confident expectation that the Church will be the greatest of all agencies for the coming of the kingdom.

Observation from all quarters encourages this hope. On every hand the Christian Church is modifying and enlarging her view of religion. Compare the present with one hundred or even fifty years ago, and how much less exclusive, and more generous towards each other the Churches are now than they were then. In doctrine, although creeds may remain the same, ministers and members are

less creed-bound and they enjoy greater freedom than they did formerly. Preaching the gospel means more now than it was once thought to mean. It covers a wider range of subjects. The pulpit has a larger liberty. The majority of Church members desire and expect their ministers to study the moral aspects of all questions of public interest and to expound them to the people. These and other corresponding changes inspire hope that the Church will continue to move onward, enter fully into the kingdom herself and draw the world after her.

Then, again, this general view is yet further encouraged if we study the class of religious agencies that have been organized from the Church, and many of them by the Church, and that are working largely for the gospel of the kingdom. I know it has been claimed, and with some reason, that the Church now has within herself, and hanging upon her skirts, too many of such separate organizations. Their great number, it is said, is explained by the fact that many things need doing, and that, as the Church is not ready or willing to undertake them, individuals in the Church and out of it organize societies to meet the emergency. The Church, it is said, is too much organized; that is to say, she ought herself to do the work that these separate



societies undertake to perform. Granting this, it yet remains true that most of these "wheels within wheels" are doing work that needs doing, and that otherwise would be neglected.

Christian missions, home and foreign, twin daughters of the Church, head the list of religious agencies that are working towards the gospel of the kingdom. Christ intended that His kingdom in the world, by whatever name it was called, should be a missionary movement; and He commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. How this commission throughout the centuries has been regarded by the Christian Church cannot now be told.

Organized modern missions, in Protestant Christendom, had their origin at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Since then, missionary boards, home and foreign, have been organized and are controlled by the denominations they represent. Others, and some of the most efficient, were organized and are conducted by Christian men outside of Church control; but they, none the less, belong to the kingdom.

The necessity for efficient missionary work, if Christ's kingdom is to come on earth as it is in heaven, is obvious. How otherwise could the

gospel news of the kingdom be carried to unchristian people? Settlements in the newer portions of our own country, and of other lands, are largely dependent, often for years,—if churches are to be sustained,—on outside support. In unchristian lands this necessity is still greater. Hence the need of both home and foreign missionary societies is imperative. There is work for them everywhere, and the congested portions of great cities are not the least needy.

The good that missionary labors have accomplished in their various fields is incalculable. Where would our country and the world be to-day but for mission service and support! Criticize this class of operations as some do, still the fact remains that mission work is indispensable. The time will come when the gospel of the kingdom will have enlightened the whole earth. Then, it will be found that Christian missions will have had more to do with laying foundations, breaking up dead forms, sowing the seeds of truth and life, preparing the way of the Lord, and in bringing darkness into light and death into life, than is now even imagined, especially by those who look on missions through eyes of prejudice.

Right or wrong, missionary boards are, just now,

on trial in the court of the world. Their management at home, and their work on their fields is criticized. As a result, missionary treasuries are not filled; and vast sums of money, not less than \$50,000,000 a year is given, most of it by Christian men, to educational and other institutions outside of Church control, and partly for that reason. Such facts suggest not that missionary work is unnecessary, but that missionary managers and workers should review and revise their methods and make them conform, if they do not, to sound business principles, and to existing conditions and needs, as seen in the new light that observation and experience have cast upon them.

Great changes and improvements have been made in the last fifty years in methods of missionary work in unchristian lands. Previously missionaries were expected simply to preach the gospel, while the establishment of schools, and all efforts in the direction of general enlightenment and civilization were discouraged. Now it is far otherwise. Schools, often of high order, are established, and have great prominence; and while formally only delusion and evil were seen in the religious ideas and teachings of pagan nations, now missionaries are disposed to look on the better side of the

religions with which they come in contact. Other great improvements, both in management and in work on the field, that should do much to silence criticism, and inspire confidence have been adopted. Missionary work, at home and abroad, is advancing in excellence as the decades come and go. Not till the gospel of the kingdom shall have come on earth as it is in heaven, can missionary agencies be set aside as unnecessary.

Another class of almost sacred agencies which belong to the gospel of the kingdom, even more than to that of the Church, all born of Christianity, is the system of eleemosynary institutions, for the relief of suffering humanity, that we find honoring and blessing the people of every Christian land. These institutions are as numerous and varied, almost, as are the needs of a suffering world. Hospitals for the sick, homes for the aged and infirm, asylums for the blind, for the deaf and dumb, for orphans, and for imbeciles,—these are among the agencies that the gospel of the kingdom and, to some extent, that of the Church, have established and are supporting in all Christian lands as works of charity and love for the amelioration of human suffering. That all this is in accord with Christ's example and His teaching of

the kingdom, is clearly revealed in the gospel record.

Up to Christ's day suffering humanity, especially if joined to poverty, was left to suffer on and die of sheer neglect, and often with little feeling of sympathy. Among some of the ancient peoples it is said that the aged and helpless were often put to death, so that society might be rid of them and that their "living death" might come to a speedy end. Not till long after the gospel of the kingdom began to be preached were institutions for the unfortunate established; and for generations later, they were few in number, narrow in range, rude in form, uncomfortable, and but poorly sustained.

All this has passed away. Charitable institutions are now palatial structures; and, as a rule, they occupy the most sightly and commanding positions in our large towns and cities; and besides, they are richly furnished, largely endowed and are in the hands of managers and experts, so that now sickness and misfortune have almost lost their terrors. While the Churches have done something, and in some directions much, towards bringing about such desirable results, yet, it must be conceded that a large part of the countless millions that have gone into the establishment and operation of eleemosy-

nary institutions, have not come from Churches directly, but from parties who have been acting for themselves outside of Church control or responsibility. Nevertheless, this whole class of work belongs to the gospel of the kingdom, as Jesus comprehended and, in principle, proclaimed it. It is one of the great channels along which the world and the kingdom are flowing together towards the great consummation.

It is due to the Christian Church to explain that while some of the agencies just referred to are not organized and controlled by the Church, as such, that still a large part of the money given and work done, is by Church members; and, in this sense, these agencies are Christian if they are not strictly Church enterprises. Should Church people withdraw their support, it is probable that not one of them could long survive. This great fact may not be obscured.

Other religious agencies clustering around the Church, but not always of it, as they are of the kingdom, and that deserve larger notice, may be grouped together. I refer to such as relate chiefly to young people. Prominent among them are Sunday-schools, Societies of Christian Endeavor, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Asso-

ciations and many other organizations having different names, but all working in the interests of young humanity. If the Church were as large as the kingdom, such separate organizations might not be called for; but as things now are, they seem necessary and of great value. These institutions, though generally not under church control, have been the training schools of the Church, from which multitudes have come into its fellowship, bringing with them abundance of zeal and progressive energy. Where would the churches be to-day had they continued as they have been, and these young people's societies had never existed!

It cannot be expected of the "rank and file" that make up these societies, that many of them will be very large in experience, or profound in thought. But what they lack in experience, they make up in zeal; and deficiency in knowledge is offset by activity. They delight in great and showy conventions; they run to and fro, and constitute the flying brigade in the Lord's army, and are a source from which great leaders in the work of the world are likely to arise. As their membership is drawn from all the Churches, their working together in the spirit of love and fellowship does much to break up sectarian exclusiveness, and so to

help broaden the Church into the gospel of the kingdom. May Divine guidance attend their steps.

Another important religious movement, and one that belongs more to the gospel of the kingdom than to that of the Church, lies in the department of general reform; and of reform, not so much in individual lives, as of reform where great evils and wrongs have entrenched themselves in communities and, sometimes, in nations. The Church has always been persistent and zealous in her efforts to convert individuals from the world and bring them within the fold of the Church; but as to great reformatory movements outside of the Church, but not outside of the kingdom, she has had comparatively, as an organization, but little to do. Regarding them as not in her province, she has been often indifferent to them, and, sometimes, opposed where she should have been a faithful ally, if not the brave leader.

When Copernicus discovered and brought to light a new universe, and when Galileo affirmed that the earth went around the sun, the Church was then the chief foe that had to be met and vanquished. So it was when the age of the earth and the antiquity of man were made to extend far back of six thousand years; and so it has been when any



great scientific discovery has seemed to interfere with Church traditions.

But it is with moral reforms rather than scientific movements that we are now chiefly concerned. Let us select one or two examples as illustrations of many others. The slavery question naturally suggests itself. Viewed in the light of Christ's law of love and of the gospel of the kingdom, "slavery was the sum of all villainies." And yet our Churches, for a long time, would not attack it. Indeed, they were often its bulwark of defense, declaring that to preach against it was to preach politics and not religion, and to contradict Moses. But the reform belonged to the greater gospel of the kingdom; the evolutionary upheaval was underneath slavery, and it had to fall; and when the popular tide changed, the Church, as always, changed with it, and it now changed gladly.

In what is known as the temperance reform, the Church has been far more active, but the larger gospel of the kingdom has been the foremost worker and must, in the end, accomplish the Divine purpose. In the field of socialistic reform, including capital and labor, now agitating the world, and with which the gospel of the kingdom is so deeply concerned, because human interests are so deeply

involved,—the Church very generally stands aloof and often gives as a reason, that the subject lies outside her field of labor. On questions of Biblical criticism and revised theological statement, such as advancing knowledge and the gospel of the kingdom call for, our Churches are only in a position to accept the inevitable when the reform is carried and assent becomes a necessity. To these statements there are numerous individual exceptions, and some Church exceptions.

Prison reform, reform in the homes and houses of poor people, are questions in which the gospel of the kingdom and, in part, of the Church, is deeply interested. Indeed, the world is yet full of evils that call for correction, and the mission of the Church, as commonly understood and accepted by her leaders, is not large enough to enable her to meet as they should be met, the many cries for help that are coming up from all quarters. Even if she would gladly respond to them, her narrow platform would make such a response impossible. The gospel of the kingdom, which is large enough to embrace them all, must be chiefly relied on for reform work, and the Church can become an efficient helper just in proportion as she broadens and moves on into the kingdom. The central point we are

ever to keep in view is, that the kingdom is greater than the Church, and that the Church must flow into the kingdom if she is to be a world-wide reformer.

Thus have passed in review a class of religious agencies that belong largely to the gospel of the Church and wholly to that of the kingdom. From this study, it is evident that the Church is moving, slowly it may be, but still, moving towards the kingdom. She is far in advance to-day of what she was fifty years ago, while yet, the gospel of the kingdom is vastly greater than is that of the Church. The future must determine as to whether or not the Church will throw off her denominational and sectarian bonds, broaden her thoughts and plans of work and keep pace with the evolutionary providence of God, until she is merged in the gospel of the kingdom. If she does this, the whole world will be drawn after her and heaven will be set up on earth.

But, on the other hand, should she halt by the way and refuse to advance, other agencies would be raised up to take her place and do her work. In such a sad case the world would still move on, leaving the churches behind, a fleet of dismantled ships, drifting listlessly and helplessly on the troubled sea

of the twentieth or some succeeding century. Standing on my crumbling watch-tower and surveying the scene, past, present and future, I am encouraged to believe that the Church will recognize the voice of God and be enlarged into the kingdom as Jesus saw and, in principle, proclaimed it to all the world.



IX.

AGENCIES FOR THE KINGDOM THAT LIE  
OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH.



## IX.

### AGENCIES FOR THE KINGDOM THAT LIE OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH.

WE have seen that all useful uplifting agencies, work for the kingdom, and that these agencies are of two classes. One class is of the Church and relates to religion, including the will, sensibility and in part, the imagination. The other is of the intellect, and includes the exercise and cultivation of all one's intellectual powers. Both are educational and elevating, and lead along different lines into the kingdom.

The preceding chapter was upon agencies of the religious order. We are now to consider the other class of agencies that does not claim to be religious, that certainly does not belong to the gospel of the Church, but does belong to that of the kingdom, in the sense that it elevates mankind, socially, industrially, intellectually and morally, and so prepares the world for the coming of the kingdom.

I know it has been claimed that intelligence, morality, physical comfort and possessions are not



religious. Well, all I care to say now, on that point, is that they are so essential to religion that a religion which is destitute of them must be of a very low order. It can be little more than superstition miscalled religion. Possibly men like Mr. Buckle,—and he represents a class,—may have exalted intellectual culture and physical prosperity too highly as compared with moral and spiritual advancement; but they are right in claiming that these are a part, and a necessary part of the religious life of the world.

What I now propose is to consider some of the second class of agencies which so belong to the gospel of the kingdom that it could never be established on earth as in heaven without their uplifting support. Indeed, they must stand in the first rank of influences for that end. This is so evident that further argument on this point is unnecessary.

Foremost among these agencies are schools, great and small, for the education of the people. Where Christianity is not the prevailing religion, children grow up in ignorance, and ignorance is the mother of superstition and of vice. In most anti-Christian lands but few of the people are able to read or write. This has always been so, and is still. In nominally Christian nations where the Church

undertakes to control education in the interests of the Church, as in Spain, Italy, and Russia, the business is so miserably managed that one-half of the inhabitants are wholly illiterate. The value of education is happily illustrated in what we see and enjoy in the United States. Our free school system, sustained by the government, and open to every child and youth of the land, secures general intelligence; and intelligence is the basis of civil liberty, of individual and family prosperity, and of national advance in all that is worth possessing. Our free school system is the nation's glory, and belongs to the gospel of the kingdom.

In addition to public schools, we have academies, colleges, universities and professional institutions almost without number; and the best talent of our land, and its profoundest scholars have the guidance of these schools, especially in their upper ranks. And what limitless sums of money as well as of labor are expended upon them year by year. A part of this vast and ever-increasing investment is collected by taxation, but schools of high grade are nearly all of them supported by the voluntary gifts of men who know and appreciate their value. Men of vast wealth are coming to see the worth of great institutions of learning to the people, to the

nations, and to the kingdom of God ; and to see and feel their own responsibilities and privileges in relation to them. It is estimated that about fifty millions of dollars annually are freely given, often millions at a time, for the enlargement and support of higher educational institutions. In the schools of the land about sixteen millions of children and young people are being educated ; and what vast multitudes go out annually into business or professional life to help build up and swell the tide of influences that sweep on into the gospel of the kingdom ! Educational movements are, indeed, a part, a large part, of that kingdom. Take the educated men and women out of the world and what would there be left, either in fact or in prospect ! Where then would the gospel of the Church or of the kingdom be ? If sound education is not an essential and necessary element of Christ's kingdom, then nothing is.

Works of art belong to the class of subjects here indicated ; and this, because of their æsthetic nature and tendency to enlarge, beautify and ennoble the human mind. Greek art, especially in the form of sculpture, which was carried by the Greeks almost to perfection, and was a part of their religion, had much to do with the civilization and elevation

which distinguished that people above all others of their day.

Architecture, almost equally with sculpture, is an ancient, as it is also a modern art. Some of the structures of Greek art, the Parthenon, for example, have been the admiration and models of all succeeding ages. Their three styles of column, always so attractive, have never been improved upon or superseded.

During the renaissance period, in Europe, architecture, especially in the erection of cathedrals for Divine worship, took on a new form, in which nature and her forests became the model for imitation, and the Gothic style of architecture, succeeding severer forms, was the almost worshipful passion of several centuries, and the craze still continues.

In this same period, painting, as a religious art, came into a prominence that it had never previously attained. It was idealistic rather than realistic in character; and it meant helpfulness in the field of Christian conception and worship. If, in subsequent generations, painting has become more showy, imitative and realistic, it has never reached the moral power, the æsthetic beauty which it attained in the Raphaelistic age, as the great interest still

felt in old masterpieces, evinces. And yet, now and always, painting is the handmaid of religion; and, with art, in every good form, is a large element in the gospel of the kingdom.

Literature, using the word in its largest sense, is another great factor in the gospel of the kingdom, and is a powerful agency for its advancement. In ancient times there were comparatively few books, and these were all written by hand, and, when not chronicles, were, for the most part, books of religion. As such, even while abounding in errors, they led the human mind Godward, A half truth, or truth and error more or less commingled, has its mission for good, otherwise what book would be of value?

In modern times, and especially in the nineteenth century, books and libraries, public and private, have increased and are still increasing beyond all precedent. As for magazines, newspapers and other periodicals, the total amount is almost beyond the reach of computation. And their influence as public educators and in moulding the thought, character and life of the people is beyond that of any other single agency. Even our schools would be powerless, but for the books that are published in their interest. Mr. Carnegie is

right in the estimate he puts on free libraries for all the people, and in giving his tens of millions for their establishment among the English-speaking people of the world.

True, many books and periodicals should have been better than they are, and many others are worse than worthless, and should never have been published. But for all this, books and papers, what is called the world's literature, is one of the great uplifting agencies that, in many ways, is drawing the world into the gospel of the kingdom. Indeed, the pulpit itself, has now to vie with the printing press; people are so educated and informed that the pulpit must be intelligent and progressive or lose its power. The Church must reckon with the press and with growing knowledge more than she has in the past, and with creeds, traditions and platitudes less, if she would meet existing necessities and work with, and not apart from, the kingdom of God. She must enlarge her conception of Church privilege and responsibility; and, indeed, she is doing it in many quarters. Men now care for good sermons, but not for poor ones.

Coming now to the question of *Invention*, we have another of those influences that lie outside the Christian Church, and yet that belong to the gospel

of the kingdom, and have much to do with its advancement. But for great discoveries the world might be to-day essentially where it was a thousand years ago. In every department of human activity we have inventions, and processes for doing things that were unknown to the people of one hundred years ago. The steel pen I am writing with was then a goose quill that required constant whittling. Our clothes are better, cheaper and differently manufactured. All the mechanic arts have graduated from old time processes. The agricultural implements of to-day were not dreamed of as possibilities a century ago. Think of one man cultivating one hundred acres of grain alone, and raising great crops; or of his harvesting from twelve to fifteen acres of heavy wheat, cutting, binding and shocking it, all by himself, in one day! In the manufacturing world the change has been still greater, so that in many departments one man, or woman even, can accomplish from ten to fifty times more than the same amount of labor produced within the memory of some now living. Whitney's cotton gin has performed miracles, if real miracles do actually take place.

Not to deal with small things, let us glance at three familiar illustrations. The invention of the

printing press marked a new era in the world's history ; it brought first-hand knowledge to the common people and made education a necessity. But the printing press of to-day, that can throw off a hundred thousand copies of great newspapers in an hour, all folded and ready for delivery, would indeed have been a marvel to the old German who invented the clumsy hand-press and the still more clumsy type. Surely, in these days many run to and fro and knowledge is increased, all of which points and leads to the kingdom.

Again : Take the application of steam,—one of the simplest and commonest agents in nature,—to various kinds of machinery, once wholly unknown to man, and what wonders have been wrought ! Think of huge iron vessels, sometimes with twenty thousand tons of carrying capacity, sweeping across the ocean, regardless of wind and wave, in as many days as was once required weeks, for a small wooden ship to make a summer voyage ! One vessel now does the work that a hundred formerly did. Turn from the ship to the railroad and the marvel, if possible, is still greater. See that great iron horse running fifty miles an hour, on an iron track, with a long line of parlor cars full of people at its heels ! Or see him again, dragging swiftly a hundred great



wagons loaded with coal, holding ten tons each ; and as he winds past, half a mile long, one can hardly refrain from taking off one's hat and bowing in holy reverence ! No wonder that when Mr. Stevenson was told that the time would come when men would ride after steam engines at the rate of twenty miles an hour, he exclaimed, "I would as soon think of crawling into one of Congreve's mortars and being shot off for a rocket, as to risk my life in a train of cars running twenty miles an hour." What would he say now were he living on the earth ? Would he not think that he was, indeed, riding into the kingdom of God !

But the greatest of all modern inventions is in the department of electricity. Lightning flashing in the heavens, amid peals of thunder, has always been an object of dread, as well as of admiration, to mankind ; and it was never conceived that so violent, and restless an element could ever be tamed, harnessed and held under men's control. Behold the change ! The whole continent, and every continent, is now strung with telegraphic and telephonic wires, and people separated by long distances converse with each other as freely almost as if they were seated together in an ordinary room. Nor is this all. Oceans separating conti-

ment from continent, no longer seem to exist. If San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg and cities in the far East, till we should come back to our starting-point, were all consolidated, as departments of one vast city,—as Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx are consolidated,—they would not, in reality, be much nearer each other, or more intercommunicable than they are now. Every morning before breakfast, we read from the daily papers of everything of general interest that may have taken place in any part of the globe in the preceding twenty-four hours.

And yet, we are told by the wise ones that discoveries in the field of electricity are still in their infancy, that we are only at the portals, or, at best, in the vestibule of the great temple of electric wonders. What the future is to reveal, the future only can disclose. When the revelations come, they will not be appeals to the imagination, but matters of actual observation and experience that all men will see and enjoy. Such discoveries and their fruits help to merge the gospel of the Church and the world into the kingdom, and to hasten its consummation.

Commerce, or the interchange of commodities between commercial states and nations, now so de-

pendent on electricity for intercommunication, is another agency that works in the interests of civilization, and so of the kingdom. Commerce has always been in the world ; but what vast proportions it is now assuming ! Every available means of conveyance by sea and land is taxed to its utmost in conveying to and fro, the products of mines, farms and factories from places of production into the reach of consumers in all parts of the world. This interchange of commodities is a great civilizer. It supplies needs and comforts, and creates friendly feeling, mutual interest, general information, a sense of brotherhood and of mutual dependence, and, in many ways leads into the gospel of the kingdom. Let commerce cease and the world would stagnate and return to barbarism.

One other subject remains for brief notice ; and this is the great scientific movement of the world.

Science, as represented by a class of studious men known as scientists, and religion, as represented by the Christian Church, have not, throughout the centuries, been in mutual sympathy and accord. They could not be. To a great extent they have been antagonistic ; and this antagonism has not been accidental, or incidental. It has grown necessarily out of the radically different methods of investiga-

tion and conclusion adopted respectively, by the two classes of investigators.

The scientific method has been, certainly for the last two or three hundred years, inductive, rational and evolutionary. That is to say, scientists, in place of beginning their investigations by laying down hypotheses or propositions to be proven, have begun with the collection and study of unmistakable facts lying in their special fields of study. These facts when collected as numerous as possible, have been classified, and then the question has been raised,—What conclusion do these undeniable facts lead to and necessitate? What principle or truth of nature do they clearly reveal, establish and illustrate? That conclusion is accepted as a logical sequence. It is no longer a problem, but a reality to be adhered to and followed, lead where it may. This is the scientific way of finding truth.

The Church's method of reaching conclusions has been, and to a great extent still is, quite different. It often begins, not with facts, but with some postulate, or dogma to be proven, and if stern facts rise in opposition, they must somehow be argued down or ignored. The fundamental assumption of the Church throughout the centuries has been and

still largely is, that the Bible, in all its parts, is the inspired and inerrant word of God, and is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Many are ready to accept the concensus of the Church, and ancient traditions written down in creeds and in ancient documents, as of almost equal authority with the Bible. But the point to be made is, that the Church rests her conclusions upon authority, rather than upon original investigation. Hence, any departure in faith or in practice from this rule of authority is denounced as heresy, as infidelity, to be dealt with accordingly.

It is obvious that when two such systems of investigation and conclusion meet on some common ground, there will be more or less of disagreement and contention, and so it ever has been.

When, as we have seen, the new astronomy supplanted the old; when the new geology carried creation back a million, instead of six thousand years; when evolution pushed aside the idea of separate and independent creations; when the Bible began to be studied by the scientific method, as a book of literature, and when what is called the new theology, growing out of newer and better methods of investigation and interpretation began to be preached, in all these cases, and in others of

lesser note, the Church took alarm and entered solemn protest. From her point of view, she could not have done otherwise. At first, the Church declared that these new doctrines were utterly false. When this did not avail, it was declared that the Bible was being contradicted and destroyed, and that religion itself was in great peril. But, afterwards, when the new way of thinking came to be fully established and generally accepted, the Church, by some new processes of interpretation, adjusted herself to the situation, and suggested that these new views were of no consequence, that they were not new, and that the Church had always, for substance, held them.

I am not complaining of the Church's attitude on questions of scientific advance. According to her method of accepting conclusions, largely on authority, she did the most natural thing possible, and she could not have done otherwise. The Church is right up to a certain point, and her only trouble is that her gospel is not large enough to meet the necessities of the case and the wants of the world. What the Church needs is expansion of view and of life. Truth that rests on a scientific foundation must, in the end, prevail. I cannot recall a single historic record of any important conflict where

science, on the one hand and the Church on the other, have been engaged, in which science was not victorious; and this, in the interests of both truth and religion. Yet science is not religion and cannot be, until a certain heart quality, a loving acquiescence, is added to that of cold intellectual apprehension and assent. True religion is light and love combined.

Between the gospel of the kingdom as Jesus saw, and, in principle, proclaimed it, and the onward march of true science, there is and there can be no real friction. Between science falsely so-called, and religion that is only such in name, there must be antagonisms. Nor is the fault all on one side. Scientists are often as narrow, as imperious, as bigoted and sectarian as they charge Christians with being. People who live in glass houses had best not throw stones. What the world needs most is a deep and sincere love of truth, regardless of the source whence it comes, and of the pathway along which it leads. Jesus said: Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. All truth is religious, because it is an emanation from God and leads back to the source whence it came.

The gospel of the kingdom is the gospel of the

truth. It embraces all truth comprehensible by man and the privileges and duties into which truth leads the way. All knowledge, all science, all reform, all religion, all that is useful and good in the world, belong to the gospel of the kingdom. The kingdom demands that science shall be religious, and that religion shall be scientific. When this demand is fulfilled, the two can no more antagonize than a house can be divided against itself, than one truth can contend against another. All truth is unified and centres in God.

The conclusion of the whole chapter is this: That education as an uplifter, that art in its various forms, and that literature, in its profusion, are all broadening, enlightening and Christianizing the human mind; that the spirit of invention, and invention itself, is inspiring and leading the world; that science is unfolding the works of God and bringing nature and religion into a common fold; and, finally, that all these influences combined with others, are drawing the Church and the world out of their narrowness and selfishness, through an open door, into the gospel of the kingdom, where God shall be all in all, and Jesus shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. A long time



may pass before the world reaches its goal. Evolutionary advances move slowly,—but they move; and the universality of the kingdom is as certain as that God is God. When the Gospel of the Church and the Gospel of the Kingdom become one, joined together in holy wedlock, then the day of the world's redemption draweth nigh.

## X.

ALL THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD TO  
BE UNIFIED AND HARMONIZED IN  
THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.



## X.

### ALL THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD TO BE UNIFIED AND HARMONIZED IN THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

THE history of religion as it has existed in the world, and in the hearts and lives of all men from the beginning, has never been written. It never can be fully written,—partly because of the vastness of the subject; partly because no man is so free from prepossessions and prejudices as would enable him to write with perfect fairness and lucidity, upon every aspect of the great subject; and partly, because true religion is so personal, and so much of the heart rather than of the lip, that outside reporters cannot discover its best qualities and reduce them to writing. Good people are always shy about opening their inner lives to the inspection of the outside world.

As man's moral nature is the highest and noblest part of our common humanity, so, religion is the deepest and best of all earthly experiences. The body has its physical necessities; the intellect of

man requires cultivation and enlargement through discipline and the acquisition of knowledge; but man's moral nature that allies him to God, and through which he knows God and truth and duty, is the seat of religion. True religion is worship, is service of God and man, is good-will, and therefore, it must be higher and more sacred than any physical good, and growth of intellect, apart by themselves, can be. This explains why religion is the one fundamental and universal fact in the world's history. The nature of man necessitates religion and clothes it with a sacredness and power that are never absent, and which nothing else can give or take away.

And yet, religion more than anything else, unless it be the vaultings of human ambition, has been the great subject of contention and division among men. People always strive most about things that are dearest to them, and which they most value. At first glance, and even on closer observation, it would seem that the world is full of religions, all different in kind, and each clashing with the other. The adherents of every religion think their own the best and purest of all, at least, for those who embrace it, if not for the whole world. There are lords many and gods many; and religion seems to

be as diversified as are the different classes and races of men. Even among believers in the same system of religion, there often exist broad differences of opinion, and divisions into sects and sectarian strifes, seemingly without limit. This is not only true of one system of religion, but of every system. All this goes to show that the work of evolutionary creation is not yet completed, that religion is still in its inchoate state; but that all religions, high and low, are a search after God, and are leading directly or indirectly away from earth and self, towards and into the infinite and eternal, where alone the spirit of man can find rest.

And yet, this apparent diversity and contradiction that we seem to find in the religions of mankind are more seeming, more superficial and unimportant than most people suppose them to be. A mere surface view sees little in common and much in discord. To some minds, when glancing over the field of the world, the whole question of religion seems to be one of mystery, of uncertainty, of superstition and of endless contradictions that have but little, if any foundation in reality; and so, they are at times inclined to cast off the whole subject as not worthy of serious attention. And yet, however men may wish to think and do this, the thing

is impossible ; for there is something that God has put in every human soul which tells him that religion is a deep and divine reality. It is something that finds and holds him, struggle with or against, as he may.

Religion is not that contradictory and superficial thing that, viewed casually, it often seems to be. As to fundamental and essential facts, all the religions of the world, great and small, evolved or spiritually revealed, historic or otherwise, are essentially one and inseparable. Their differences relate to the scaffolding that has been built up around them, to the wood, hay and stubble that ignorance and tradition have wrought in with the precious stones and pure gold. We have only to cast off these useless and hurtful encumbrances and we shall find that the heart of every religion is true to the heart of every other. In non-essentials, they differ ; in essentials, they hold together as a manifold cord that cannot be broken. Let the correctness of this statement now be tested.

We have three things to consider, so far as space permits : 1. The peoples of the world in their relations to religion. 2. The religions which they profess and illustrate, and 3. The relation of these religions to the gospel of the kingdom.

If we look back to the dawn of history, we meet with the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Aryans, and other peoples who lie more in the myths of uncertainty. However they severally differ in other respects, they all come together in the one great fact of earnest religiousness. Their religions differ widely in many things, but still, they are religions that the people of all classes love and cherish, and for which, if need be, they would lay down their lives. All these nations have their sacred writings, many of them brief, and graven on bricks, tiles and stones; they have their priests and teachers, their temples and altars, their services and sacrifices, and their religious rites at the burial of the dead. Doubtless there were irreligious and profane people in those days, and unbelievers, as there have been in every age and nation since their day. Selfishness abounded then, as now. In that remote and early period people were not exempt from ignorance, error, superstition and general wickedness, any more, or as much, as they are now. One religion is apt to judge another, not by its excellences, but by the evils with which it is more or less associated. Tried by this unfair standpoint, and every religion, Christianity not excepted, is doomed. The only point I now make is, that the



people of those early nations were, according to the light they had, truly and earnestly religious.

If we come down to later times, we meet the Greeks of different names, whose philosophers taught religion, whose art, of the highest order, was an expression of religious thought and feeling, and whose altars and temples are standing monuments of their sacrifices and devotion to their gods. Of the ancient Romans, almost the same words may be spoken. Their reverence for law was an element of their religion.

Turn now to the living peoples of Asia, as the western world has come to know them in the last century. The Japanese, the Chinese and the people of India are more religious in their way—and they have much in common—than are the people of almost any Christian land. Their civilization is wholly different from ours. They care less for material things, they search less into the areana of nature, they are less rich and enterprising, but they worship their noble ancestors, they think of God and duty, and of great teachers, inspired men as they believe, who were forgetful of themselves and of the world, and were absorbed in a conscious sense of God's immanence in whom they lived and moved and had their being.

Of the Mahometan world it may be said, that if the people are not religious, they are not anything; and they are not ashamed of their religion. Watch them, wherever they may be, as, at the hour and call for prayer, they prostrate themselves in devout worship. If there be another side to their character, as most people have more than one side, this does not change the fact of their religious devotion, and of their devotion to religion. I need not characterize Christian nations. We know what they are to their credit and to their discredit. It is enough to say that religion dwells among them, and that there are millions of devout worshipers. It is needless to go further to establish the great fact that religion is a characteristic of mankind. Man must worship; God is in his nature and must, in some degree, be recognized and adored.

We come now to inquire into the nature of the religions that prevail among the nations of the earth, past and present. Among them, Monotheism, Fetichism, Parse or Mageanism, Buddhism, Brahmanism, Polytheism, Judaism, Islamism and the Christianity of the Greek, Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches hold prominent positions. It is not intended, nor is it necessary to

my present purpose, that these religions should each be studied separately. The great point I make is that, however much they may differ in unimportant and secondary matters, they all contain and emphasize most of the central principles and truths, imperfectly I admit, that must enter into and constitute the one universal religion that constitutes the gospel of the kingdom, which is, some day, to prevail in all the earth. Let me particularize :

1. All these religions recognize and teach the existence of one supreme Being whom Christians call God. This conviction is the foundation on which all religion rests. Of course, it is not meant that all of these religions, or that any of them, fully comprehend God. The infinite is incomprehensible to finite beings, except in some negative or partial sense. This fact explains the crude and wrong notions that have prevailed, and do still, as to the nature and character of God. It explains why men and religions have tried to find God by conceiving of Him as existing in finite forms, or as being represented in them. Sometimes God is personated in the heavenly bodies, at others, in heroes and great ancestors ; sometimes in rivers, in animals, and even, in blocks of wood and stone, and

in pictures, as in some parts of Christendom. But the thing to be kept in mind is that, through it all, the Infinite One is recognized in every religion of the world, and, according to the light men have, God is feared and adored, if not obeyed. On this central fact of the universe, all men with insignificant exceptions, stand on common ground.

2. All religions not only have some code of morals, of ethical duties, which they deem to be obligatory, but, to a great extent they all have the same and a common code. Jesus was the best and the profoundest ethical teacher the world has ever known; yet, there is not, probably, a precept upon man's duties to his fellow-man, in the four gospels, that is not duplicated, in word, or in substance, in the teachings of all, or nearly all, of the historic religions that lie outside of Christendom. These precepts are, it is true, often mixed in with other things that, to us, seem puerile and very faulty; but we must allow for the age, and darkness of the age, in which they were written; and we must remember also, that if the Christian religion were to be judged by all the absurd things that, at times, have been fastened upon it, it would fare as badly at the hands of Orientalists as their ethics do at ours. We are to judge of religions as of men, not by their worst

but by their better features, a lesson that Christians need often to learn in dealing with religions and people other than their own.

3. All religions have more than an ethical basis; they are religions, and not mere intellections or formulas of morality. Most of them have their sacred books, written by inspired men, as they believe; Buddha, Zoroaster and Confucius are examples. They hold these writings to be as sacred as we do our Bible; and rightly they resent ignorant attacks upon them, as if the devil were their author.

In addition to teachers and books, all these religions have shrines, altars, temples, sacrifices and holy services, that are as real and sacred to them as corresponding things are to Christian people. They believe in the awful fact of sin, in the need of repentance, of trust in God, in the law of love, and in good works, as we do; and it is possible to find as devout and holy men and women in the Orient as Christian culture has produced. They are not as learned in many ways, and they may have things clinging to them which we could wish were not there; but their simplicity of character, heart sincerity and purity of purpose, can only be questioned by ignorance or by men of Pharisaic integrity. Much of the world

that lies outside of Christendom is more religious, and more bold and outspoken in its devotional services, than is the greater part of the Christian world; and if we compare the best of one class with the poorest of the other, it would be hard to decide where superstition and ignorance most abounded. It is a better religion, rather than more of it, that is most needed.

4. In particular, all religions teach alike the cardinal doctrine of life after death. It is in human nature, in instinct and in intuition to believe this. Necessarily, all people have vague and crude ideas as to what the future world is like; it lies outside the testimony of our senses. We have nothing to compare it with; and if we try to form definite conclusions about many things, we are only dreaming and romancing, instead of standing on any reliable evidence. This explains why it is that, in all lands, Christian and otherwise, there is so much of extravagance connected with the conception of life after death. Men have no real data for their conclusions. But this does not change the main fact that all religions, and their adherents, believe alike, and with confidence, that when the body dies the spirit goes from it and lives on in the spirit world. Some of the ablest arguments for immortality have

been written by men who lived before Christianity was born. Socrates, Plato and Cicero are shining examples. Death is but a change in life.

5. Once more: All religions teach that character and condition are inseparable. Holiness is allied to happiness, and sin to misery, by the changeless law of necessary sequence. If only the nature of true happiness, and of real misery is rightly understood, this law obtains alike in this world and that which is to come. The seen and the unseen are closely allied. The good are blessed and the bad are cursed; it is so in the nature of things, wherever moral beings exist. This general statement all religions teach, and religionists of every sort believe in their hearts, and are ready to confess. They would be false to themselves, to God and the universe, if they did otherwise.

The above specifications, while they are not exhaustive of religious truth, involve the great underlying doctrines of the universal religion. They are not exhaustive of Christianity. Nearly every religion has some characteristic of its own. That which differentiates the Christian religion from every other is Jesus Christ, and that fulness of grace and truth and life that come to the world through Him more than through any other. Christ's gospel of

the kingdom contains the truths and influences that must enter into, and dominate the religions of the world. Jesus revealed God as a God of love, and also, in His fatherly relations to man; He revealed the fact and extent of human brotherhood, and expounded the law of love as the central principle of the moral universe; and these are surely the central truths of the universal religion, that are nowhere else revealed as in the gospel of Christ's kingdom, and without which a religion suited to the whole human race is impossible.

It is indeed the personality of Jesus Christ,—His personality impressed upon the whole Christian world,—that mainly constitutes Christianity and makes it what it is. Take Christ out of the system and what would then be left? His is an ideal character which has not only held its place in the moral firmament through all the Christian centuries, but has been ever growing in brilliancy and power, until now, His influence in the whole religious world, and in the department of advanced civilization is greater than that of the founders of all other religions and philosophies combined. Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, Mahomet and the philosophers of Greece and Rome were noble characters, and they established religions that embody much of truth;



but their own personalities are not essential to the systems they represent, as Christ's personality is essential to the gospel of the kingdom of which He is the centre, soul and life. Take Jesus out of the gospel, and I repeat, there would be but little left to distinguish it from other historic religions older than Christianity and, perhaps, of larger following, but which have never succeeded in uplifting the world. Jesus Christ is the ideal character for all ages. What He has been in the past, He will continue to be in the future, except that, as the world advances towards the universal religion, His influence will steadily increase; and when the universal religion and the gospel of the kingdom are merged in a common unity, it will still be found that Jesus Christ is the sun and centre around whom all peoples will gather and before whom all knees will bow as being the foremost revealer of God to man, of man to himself, and of that life eternal which is the hope and final destiny of mankind.

And yet, every religion has some real contribution to the great result towards which the world is moving, and every religion, as men now see it, has much useless and harmful material to throw off, as well as much to conserve. The loss and the gain come from every side. The gospel of the kingdom,

I repeat, has more to give, than it has to receive ; because, in addition to greater knowledge, greater energy, and a clearer vision of duty, it has the Christ of God, His personality, His life, His teachings, His promises and His spirit, to pour into the religions and the heart of the world ; so that in the final adjustment, when all religions shall have their just dues, and are merged and harmonized in a common system, the gospel of the kingdom will be paramount, will be found to include what is good in all the others, and will have the willing and universal acceptance of mankind.

But before this great day arrives, there will be masterful struggle with environment. The process must be a steady growth, not one sharp battle,—a victory and a conquest. In this struggle, the historic religions will vie with each other, and do it honestly, for the mastery. The gospel will be carried to every land ; and the religions outside of Christendom, believing that they have something to give, as well as to receive, will set up their banners in Christian communities, as they are now doing in New York city and elsewhere, to preach the doctrine of divine immanence and kindred truths as held by themselves, and held as being an advance upon Christian teachings on the same subjects.

Thus, from all sides the movement will go on as it is now going; one worse than useless element will be dropped here, and another there; denominations and religions will come to understand each other better, will be drawn into closer relationships, will find that they have, after all, a common cause, and that division is a source of weakness, that in union is strength, that God in Christ is drawing all men, and all they possess, into the gospel of the kingdom! Then will the struggle cease, harmony will be restored, the world saved and God's purpose be consummated. Towards this evolutionary result all things are now tending, and the kingdom is the goal.

XI.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM ON EARTH  
*AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.*



## XI.

### THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

WHEN a thoughtful traveler approaches, for the first time, some imposing scene in nature,—the Niagara Falls, the Yosemite Valley, the “Garden of the Gods,” the Golden Gate, the Gorge of Pheffers, or some snow-capped mountain range,—he instinctively pauses, as if on holy ground, that he may be prepared to comprehend, appreciate and describe the great scene that is opening before him. So, the aged man, after a long and eventful life, when he finds himself standing on the verge of two worlds, glancing back over the past, and gleaming into the unseen beyond, comes to a solemn pause, that he may gain strength and preparation for the discoveries and glories that await his vision. If, in imagination, one were permitted to look off upon this world and beyond, into heaven, and discover that the kingdom had come alike in both, what a field of revelation and of wonders would come into view!

First of all he would be amazed at the wonderful changes that had come over the whole earth; and almost equally, because of striking likenesses between the two worlds. Heaven itself would be an amazement to him, as it will be to all of us when we enter it from our earthly homes. At first, no one thing in particular would strike his vision, for all things would have been made new; the holy city would have come down out of heaven, and there would be a new heaven and a new earth, and God's tabernacle would be with men. Old things would then have passed away, and all that the eye could rest upon would seem as strange and wonderful as they were new. He would see that the end for which the human race was created, but which had been veiled from view, had now, indeed, come. Many great problems that were once thought to be insolvable, will then have reached solution. The mystery of moral evil, of human struggle and of slow progress will then be explained. The intellectual world may not be disentangled from error, and the search after truth may be intensified; but the moral and spiritual world will be at rest, because of the love and unfaltering trust that will then everywhere prevail.

Not only will this earth and the life upon it, in

that day, appear in a new light, but heaven itself of which this world will then be the counterpart, will have emerged from the mists that now envelop it, into the light of almost clear vision. We shall then have a new heaven as well as a new earth.

One of the first great facts then to be established beyond doubt, will be the cardinal fact of continued conscious life after physical death. While a general belief has ever prevailed that death "does not end all," yet this conclusion has never had the support of scientific, or of demonstrated certainty. Men have tried to prove what, by argument was never satisfactorily proven, and by that process alone, never can be. Only a clear consciousness of God and of life in Him, such as will be general when the gospel of the kingdom is established on earth as it is in heaven, can give assurance of eternal life. In this life, and in the ethereal world alike, the proof of immortality is a vital union and oneness with God as He is revealed to us in Jesus Christ. All this is clearly apprehended in heaven, and it will be on earth, when heaven and earth become one in thought, feeling, purpose and life; as, in that "good time coming" they will be.

And yet, in one respect, at least, heaven and earth must ever widely differ. In this world, as



we have seen, physical life abounds, and in the ethereal world, spiritual life superabounds; and the two are widely different. Here, we have each of us two bodies, a physical and a spiritual, one dwelling in the other; and that change which we call death relates to the physical body only. The spirit never dies; it only changes habitation and environments. Heaven and earth are nearer each other than we think. Heaven is more an experience than a place, so that when the spirit rises above the body and lives with and in God, there is heaven, whether it be on earth or beyond. Still, physical nature, however sanctified, is physical and not ethereal; it is a thing of sense, the shadow of things to come.

This distinction between the two worlds,—of body and spirit,—is so fundamental that we cannot reason from one to the other, as otherwise might be possible. General facts and principles apply to all moral beings wherever they exist. Beyond this, we on earth have no data, no clearly defined ideals that enable us fully to map out and describe the spirit world; and when we try to do so, we make it physical and not spiritual, and so we mistake imagination for reality.

But this one fundamental point of difference be-

tween earth redeemed from sin, and heaven, must not be so magnified as to shut out from view great matters in which the two worlds will then be essentially alike. God is the central fact, the all and in all of both worlds. What the light of the sun is to this earth, God is to heaven, and would be to us, if we had heavenly vision. How the spirits of the just made perfect see God, we do not know. Physical eyes like ours they cannot possess, but they have a spiritual vision that far exceeds human capability. Man has, I believe, in this life, some rudimental elements of spiritual vision, and it is through this occult power, partially developed, that some persons on earth see God and have heavenly visions. When the kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven, it is probable that the vision of saints below, and of saints above, will be more alike than they are now. At any rate, in both worlds, God will then be the one great personality, of whom all will be conscious, and whom they will adore and serve as the sum and source of all good. His will is their law.

This brings me to say that in heaven, and on earth, when it becomes heavenly, something in the nature of law and government will still exist. Government, as we now see and understand it, is

unknown in heaven, and when earth and heaven are one in spirit and in life, government, in its present form, will be unknown everywhere. The one eternal law of the moral universe, and so of heaven and earth, is the law of love. Around this one commandment,—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself,—all true and enduring government centres. Love is the fulfilling of the law. He that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not is of the devil.

Doubtless, in heaven there are simple and natural arrangements for different classes of service, and for the orderly carrying out of the law of love. On earth, when the kingdom shall have come, it will be essentially the same. Such orderly arrangements as the law of love may suggest, or make necessary, will be established and observed. But every organization and operation that is based on selfishness, or that selfishness demands, will have passed away. This means that the whole world will be one; that national antagonisms, if not their separate existence, that all war measures, all protective tariffs, all gigantic monopolies, and everything not in harmony with the law of love will have passed away, and that such government as remains will be

heavenly ; that is to say, it will be a government of love and nothing else.

This is not to claim that in the great day coming, when love is law and law is love, that there will not remain, both on earth and in heaven, large fields of ignorance, of mystery, and of consequent mistaken apprehension. Perfectness of love which is the only perfection possible to finite beings, does not mean perfectness of judgment ; if it did, then it would mean omniscience, which is an attribute of God only. Doubtless, in heaven knowledge will be more extensive than it ever can be in this world. Some persons appear to think that there can be no ignorance, no real mystery, and no mistake in heaven. Far otherwise. The highest archangel knows infinitely less than infinite, and, consequently, in many directions must be in attitudes of uncertainty and of profound mystery.

If this be true in heaven, how much more must it be true on earth, even in the light of the kingdom. The advance in knowledge that has come to men in the last one thousand, or even, one hundred years is immense ; and, as the world moves on towards the kingdom it will increase more and more. When prejudice and prepossession shall have disappeared and when all men shall become

honest and earnest seekers after truth, and in all directions, and for the sake of the general good, as they will do in the kingdom, then, as compared with now, the world will be full of light on all subjects. And yet, even then, science will be only in the vestibule of God's infinite temple of living truth. Then, as now, in directions where it might seem that all darkness had fled away, a deeper insight into mystery would reveal the shallowness of human knowledge.

If knowledge is to be limited in heaven and on earth, when earth becomes heavenly, then in both worlds there must be wide differences of opinion, and earnest discussion on many great questions. There and then, as here and now, the same subject will be seen by men and angels from different points of view; and although both sides may be partly right and partly wrong, they must, of necessity, often reach different conclusions. What may seem truth to one, may be the opposite of truth to another; and so very earnest and prolonged discussions and differences of opinion may exist in heaven.

But such disagreements would not be conducted as they now are on earth. The disputants there, and in both worlds, are sanctified beings; they live

up to the light that is given them, and the law of love rules every heart, so that differences do not beget alienation, strife, and division into parties and sects, as they do here. There is no denominationalism or sectarianism in heaven, and there will be none on earth, when the gospel of the kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven. Unity of spirit, oneness with God, and a life of love,—these, and not uniformity of belief, even upon great subjects, are what make heaven harmonious and fill it with the divine fullness. Were it otherwise, even heaven itself would be a place of discord. So long as finite beings are finite, there must be among them, if they are reflective and progressive, divergencies of thought and conclusion. In the nature of things it cannot be otherwise.

If all this be accepted as true, then it follows that the standard of estimate in heaven and on earth when the kingdom is established here as there, must be very different from the standards that now, with us, are for the most part used to measure values. With us, money or its equivalent is the chief standard of measurement. One rich man outweighs a hundred of the unfortunate poor. If one wishes to know the value of his neighbor, he asks, How much is he worth? and

if he is *worth* a million dollars, or only one hundred, he is valued accordingly. There are other standards equally absurd that suggest themselves.

In heaven, worth as to moral character, and not wealth as to possessions, measures the place one is to hold in any and every department of life, and the day is coming when this will be the human standard as well. And this standard of worth versus wealth will be carried, with approving gladness, into every human relationship. This surely is God's standard, and why should it not be ours? Who is most likely to be mistaken, God or man? As the kingdom advances, the world will approach the heavenly standard of estimate, and what a changed world we shall have when that standard is universally adopted!

It does not follow that when the standard of estimate on earth and in heaven are one, that all social distinctions, personal preferences and natural affinities will cease to exist. We may love truly, as God loves, persons whom we would not care to select as our most intimate and lifelong associates. There, as here, "birds of a feather flock together," so that beings who are similar in temperament, in talent, in taste and in occupation will be more to each other than they could be if they were oppo-

sites in all these respects. Occupations, and training for special occupations, and natural adaptations differ in heaven as they do, and ever must on earth. Some are born poets, while others are didactic and prosaic in their nature; some are lovers of philosophy; some find truth and God through the intellect, and others through the sensibility or the imagination. Some are social and communicative, while others are silent and reflective; some study theology and others natural science; some are practical, and others theoretic; but all, in degrees, live spiritual lives. So it is on earth, and so it will be in heaven. As a result, persons and spirits of like sympathies will be drawn together and form circles and classes in part, by themselves. Not selfishness, but intuition and affinity lead to this, and so prepare the way for every line of useful and holy work to be better done both on earth and in heaven.

Progression, onward and ever onward, must then be the motto and experience of the heavenly life, and of life in the perfected gospel of the kingdom on earth. Ignorance necessitates progress. The spirit of man is an emanation from God. It has something of divinity in it. It bears the divine impress and is susceptible of divine inspiration.



It is endowed with a longing desire for knowledge. Even in this materialistic and selfish age, the world is ever making new discoveries; and when it shall have advanced into the gospel of the kingdom, this thirst for knowledge, and success in finding it, will be far greater than ever before. And in the glorified heaven, where spirit vision is substituted for physical, and the powers of the soul are greatly intensified and enlarged, knowledge will be attained more easily and rapidly than is possible to man in his earthly habitation.

And what infinite fields for investigation are open in all directions! The world has already learned much, and yet we can go but a step anywhere without finding ourselves in the presence of unanswerable questions. If we ask what is light? What is heat? What is electricity? What is gravitation? What is matter? What is spirit? What is life? What is death? and a thousand other such questions, no man living can answer them. The field for study is as infinite as God, and space, and duration are infinite. The further one advances, the wider is the unexplored field, and the more one has to learn.

When the mountain climber is ascending some height, he sees nothing beyond; but on reaching

the summit, he discovers in the blue distance, and in all directions, other summits higher than his own, to be explored. Peaks on peaks and Alps on Alps arise. So it must ever be on earth and in heaven. Let men and angels progress in knowledge, physical, ethical, theological and spiritual, as they may, and let their longings for truth, and their inspirations and successes be what they may, still, their advances will be as nothing compared with the infinities that lie beyond. Onward progress will be forever the law and experience of all dwellers in the kingdom, whether on earth or beyond.

An experience such as the gospel of the kingdom ensures must be one of satisfaction and of great blessedness, because it is one of conformity with the will of God, and so, of moral perfection. Ideal perfection belongs only to God. Finite beings are perfect when they obey the call of duty and privilege and have their life hid with Christ in God. This state on earth and in heaven is one of blessedness. Some appear to think that blessedness and sorrow, pleasure and grief, are incompatible, and cannot dwell together in the same life. It is not so with God who grieves over the sins of men, nor with Jesus, who was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who bore our sicknesses, and who

died for us that we might live. A mother's suffering for a child, a wife's sympathy with a pain-stricken husband, a daughter's anguish at the bedside of a dying father, are all painful; but they would not, through absence or ignorance, have it otherwise. There is often happiness in suffering that brings deep peace of soul which the world can neither give nor take away. If this be so on earth, how much more in heaven. To live fully in the gospel of the kingdom is highest blessedness, and this, regardless of environment.

It is the hope and belief of the Christian world, that when spirits from the earthly kingdom pass over into the heavenly, that they will meet, recognize, and in proportion as character and condition permit, associate with the spirits of loved ones who shall have gone on before. Spiritual communion in Christ's earthly kingdom will, in that day, be intimate and precious, and how much more so will it be in heaven. This thought and anticipation has comforted millions of weary souls as they journeyed through their earthly pilgrimage to the home of the blessed. "We shall meet in heaven," are the words spoken on dying beds, and what would life be without such anticipation; or heaven itself, without its realization!

I cannot and would not avoid the belief that when the gospel of the kingdom is established on earth as it is in heaven, that a closer and more conscious relationship will be established between dwellers in the two worlds than has ever yet existed. Even now, it is said, that the angels and redeemed ones encamp around us and help to shape our thoughts, lives and destinies. What we accept on faith, now, may have demonstrative certainty then. It is undeniable that the signs of the times look in that direction. But what, and how, all this that has the support of probability is to be in experience, only the future can fully disclose. If it be God's will that earth and heaven shall meet together in conscious fellowship, it will come to pass.

The points of resemblance and of separation between earth and heaven as they will appear when the gospel of the kingdom is fully established, have now passed in review. That Christ's kingdom will some day come on earth *as* it is in heaven, is the burden of this book, and has been the inspiration and hope of the ages. That it will come, and how it will come, I, for one, have not a shadow of doubt. But what mighty overturnings and changes in all directions must take place as the inhabitants of

earth, churches, religions, men of business, and nations break from their old moorings, and sail over boisterous seas, into the harbor of the gospel kingdom! Such a glorious ending is worthy of all the toil, suffering, struggle and death that have been experienced through all the centuries of that slow, upward movement, that God alone could comprehend and control. He saw the end from the beginning and willed it. What may lie beyond our open vision, God and heaven only can reveal.

XII.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.



## XII.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

ONE great practical purpose for which this book is written, and that has ever been kept in view, is, the enlargement of the ideal of religion ; and such an enlargement as shall make it to include the whole, and not a part only of human activity and life. One of the greatest mistakes ever made by man consists in dividing human life into two great sections, one of which is called religious, and the other secular, and apart from religion. Attending and supporting the Church, giving to religious institutions, reading the Bible, prayer, outward observances and a few other such things are often thought to constitute the whole of religion ; and it is assumed that secular life,—which is made to include business of all kinds, politics, recreation and the whole round of sports and pleasures,—lies wholly outside of religion. This view shuts off from religious responsibility, privilege and duty, the greater part of human life. A more monstrous and fatal heresy never possessed the minds and hearts of men ! If, by any manipulation, such a



view can seem to harmonize with the gospel of the Church, it surely is in direct contradiction of the gospel of the kingdom which demands that whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, all must be done to the glory of God. While I would not claim that one day, or one class of actions can be no more sacred than another, it must yet be insisted upon that every day and every act of life does something to make and mould moral character, and should be regarded as religious, and should be regulated by religious principle. Man's whole life, and in one department equally with another, should be in perfect conformity with the law of love, supreme towards God and impartial towards man. This is the law of the kingdom, and is the central law of the moral universe. It is that on which all just law and good government is suspended. Love is the fulfilling of the law, so that whatever is apart from love is apart from the gospel of the kingdom.

This then, is the conception of religion that underlies all of the preceding chapters, and which I would, in these concluding words, emphasize as fundamental principles of the gospel of the kingdom. If the true idea of religion does not embrace and control the entire life of man, then, it is a house divided against itself and cannot stand.

The central purpose of the whole book, I repeat, is to show that the gospel of the kingdom, which reaches and controls the whole of human life, is some day, to come on earth as it is in heaven, and to note the steps by which it is to be accomplished. The proof of all this may be further unified and accentuated by a brief summary of the chapters that lead up to, and assure, so great and glorious a consummation.

We have seen that the idea of a kingdom, in which God is sovereign, and man subject, is as old as the human race. It was cherished by the oldest nations, and is fundamental in the Old Testament Scriptures. This doctrine of the kingdom was the great theme of our Lord's preaching; and the principles He taught were so broad as to include in that gospel every agency and instrumentality, that works, or should work, towards the elevation and spiritual life of the world.

We have seen that, and how, this great conception of the gospel of the kingdom came to be set aside or narrowed down to the smaller conception of the gospel of the Church; all because the apostles and their associates were not able fully to comprehend their Master's meaning when He spoke so constantly of the kingdom. We have traced the ad-

vantages and disadvantages of this transfer; its advantages being that the world was not then prepared to apprehend more than was contained in the gospel of the Church; and that the preaching of that gospel, from apostolic times till now, has resulted in incalculable blessings to mankind; while at the same time, the transfer has led to vast evils. It laid the foundation for a narrow, rigid ecclesiasticism that darkened the early centuries; and it formed narrow creeds that were divisive in tendency, and that in the end, split the Church, that should always have been one, into a thousand rival and contending fragments.

We have further seen that the time must come when the gospel of the kingdom will be restored to its rightful place as Jesus conceived it. Then, will the Church, in all its branches, the wealth and good influences of the world, and the nations of the earth, all flow into the kingdom, and establish it on earth as it is in heaven. Reasons were given for this expectation. This great change, it was seen, is not to be brought about suddenly, or by violence, but is to be a growth, by creative energy, under the operation of God's central law of evolution that works silently, but never fails to reach its end.

Then, we considered the great struggle and crisis that is coming upon the twentieth century ; and the crucial questions, full of portent, that the growth of the world is bringing to our doors, and that must be settled, and settled rightly, if this century is to lead on into the kingdom. The place and importance that the growing view of Divine immanence, and of God-consciousness was to hold in the great movement heavenward, was next considered. The religious and benevolent enterprises of the world, emanating largely from the Church, such as the Church itself, eleemosynary institutions, Christian missions, Home and Foreign, Sunday-Schools, and Young People's Societies for Christian work were studied as augmenting the flow-tide that sweeps into the kingdom. To the same end, other agencies, almost wholly outside of the Church, such as schools, art, invention, literature, and the growth of natural science, were considered and found to belong largely to the gospel of the kingdom.

The various religions of the world came under review ; and it was seen that, while all of them contained much that was temporary, still, they all embodied the great principles of the universal religion ; and that the gospel of the kingdom, with Christ made prominent, is to be established in all

the earth. Then comes the closing chapter descriptive of the kingdom on earth *as* it is in heaven.

Surely, the theme is an inspiring one, and, if its treatment, owing in part, at least, to the wear and weight of many gladsome years, is not equal to the demand, it may, perchance, open windows through which other minds may discover truths that the writer's dimness of vision did not enable him to see, except in golden vision.

