

## CHAPTER THE FIFTH

### THE INVISIBLE KING

#### 1. MODERN RELIGION A POLITICAL RELIGION

The conception of a young and energetic God, an Invisible Prince growing in strength and wisdom, who calls men and women to his service and who gives salvation from self and mortality only through self-abandonment to his service, necessarily involves a demand for a complete revision and fresh orientation of the life of the convert.

God faces the blackness of the Unknown and the blind joys and confusions and cruelties of Life, as one who leads mankind through a dark jungle to a great conquest. He brings mankind not rest but a sword. It is plain that he can admit no divided control of the world he claims. He concedes nothing to Caesar. In our philosophy there are no human things that are God's and others that are Caesar's. Those of the new thought cannot render unto God the things that are God's, and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Whatever claim Caesar may make to rule men's lives and direct their destinies outside the will of God, is a usurpation. No king nor Caesar has any right to tax or to service or to tolerance, except he claim as one who holds for and under God. And he must make good his

claim. The steps of the altar of the God of Youth are no safe place for the sacrilegious figure of a king. Who claims "divine right" plays with the lightning.

The new conceptions do not tolerate either kings or aristocracies or democracies. Its implicit command to all its adherents is to make plain the way to the world theocracy. Its rule of life is the discovery and service of the will of God, which dwells in the hearts of men, and the performance of that will, not only in the private life of the believer but in the acts and order of the state and nation of which he is a part. I give myself to God not only because I am so and so but because I am mankind. I become in a measure responsible for every evil in the world of men. I become a knight in God's service. I become my brother's keeper. I become a responsible minister of my King. I take sides against injustice, disorder, and against all those temporal kings, emperors, princes, landlords, and owners, who set themselves up against God's rule and worship. Kings, owners, and all who claim rule and decisions in the world's affairs, must either show themselves clearly the fellow-servants of the believer or become the objects of his steadfast antagonism.

## 2. THE WILL OF GOD

It is here that those who explain this modern religiosity will seem most

arbitrary to the inquirer. For they relate of God, as men will relate of a close friend, his dispositions, his apparent intentions, the aims of his kingship. And just as they advance no proof whatever of the existence of God but their realisation of him, so with regard to these qualities and dispositions they have little argument but profound conviction. What they say is this; that if you do not feel God then there is no persuading you of him; we cannot win over the incredulous. And what they say of his qualities is this; that if you feel God then you will know, you will realise more and more clearly, that thus and thus and no other is his method and intention.

It comes as no great shock to those who have grasped the full implications of the statement that God is Finite, to hear it asserted that the first purpose of God is the attainment of clear knowledge, of knowledge as a means to more knowledge, and of knowledge as a means to power. For that he must use human eyes and hands and brains.

And as God gathers power he uses it to an end that he is only beginning to apprehend, and that he will apprehend more fully as time goes on. But it is possible to define the broad outlines of the attainment he seeks. It is the conquest of death.

It is the conquest of death; first the overcoming of death in the individual by the incorporation of the motives of his life into an undying purpose, and then the defeat of that death that seems to threaten our species upon a cooling planet beneath a cooling sun. God

fights against death in every form, against the great death of the race, against the petty death of indolence, insufficiency, baseness, misconception, and perversion. He it is and no other who can deliver us "from the body of this death." This is the battle that grows plainer; this is the purpose to which he calls us out of the animal's round of eating, drinking, lusting, quarrelling and laughing and weeping, fearing and failing, and presently of wearying and dying, which is the whole life that living without God can give us. And from these great propositions there follow many very definite maxims and rules of life for those who serve God. These we will immediately consider.

### 3. THE CRUCIFIX

But first let me write a few words here about those who hold a kind of intermediate faith between the worship of the God of Youth and the vaguer sort of Christianity. There are a number of people closely in touch with those who have found the new religion who, biased probably by a dread of too complete a break with Christianity, have adopted a theogony which is very reminiscent of Gnosticism and of the Paulician, Catharist, and kindred sects to which allusion has already been made. He, who is called in this book God, they would call God-the-Son or Christ, or the Logos; and what is here called the Darkness or the Veiled Being, they would call God-the-Father. And what we speak of here as

Life, they would call, with a certain disregard of the poor brutes that perish, Man. And they would assert, what we of the new belief, pleading our profound ignorance, would neither assert nor deny, that that Darkness, out of which came Life and God, since it produced them must be ultimately sympathetic and of like nature with them. And that ultimately Man, being redeemed and led by Christ and saved from death by him, would be reconciled with God the Father.\* And this great adventurer out of the hearts of man that we here call God, they would present as the same with that teacher from Galilee who was crucified at Jerusalem.

\* This probably was the conception of Spinoza. Christ for him is the wisdom of God manifested in all things, and chiefly in the mind of man. Through him we reach the blessedness of an intuitive knowledge of God. Salvation is an escape from the "inadequate" ideas of the mortal human personality to the "adequate" and timeless ideas of God.

Now we of the modern way would offer the following criticisms upon this apparent compromise between our faith and the current religion. Firstly, we do not presume to theorise about the nature of the veiled being nor about that being's relations to God and to Life. We do not recognise any consistent sympathetic possibilities between these outer beings and our God. Our God is, we feel, like Prometheus, a rebel. He is unfilial. And the accepted figure of Jesus, instinct with meek submission, is not in the tone of our worship. It is not by suffering that God conquers death, but by fighting. Incidentally our God dies a million deaths, but the

thing that matters is not the deaths but the immortality. It may be he cannot escape in this person or that person being nailed to a cross or chained to be torn by vultures on a rock. These may be necessary sufferings, like hunger and thirst in a campaign; they do not in themselves bring victory. They may be necessary, but they are not glorious. The symbol of the crucifixion, the drooping, pain-drenched figure of Christ, the sorrowful cry to his Father, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" these things jar with our spirit. We little men may well fail and repent, but it is our faith that our God does not fail us nor himself. We cannot accept the Christian's crucifix, or pray to a pitiful God. We cannot accept the Resurrection as though it were an after-thought to a bitterly felt death. Our crucifix, if you must have a crucifix, would show God with a hand or a foot already torn away from its nail, and with eyes not downcast but resolute against the sky; a face without pain, pain lost and forgotten in the surpassing glory of the struggle and the inflexible will to live and prevail. . . .

But we do not care how long the thorns are drawn, nor how terrible the wounds, so long as he does not droop. God is courage. God is courage beyond any conceivable suffering.

But when all this has been said, it is well to add that it concerns the figure of Christ only in so far as that professes to be the figure of God, and the crucifix only so far as that stands for divine action. The figure of Christ crucified, so soon as we think of it as being no more than the tragic memorial of Jesus, of the man who proclaimed the

loving-kindness of God and the supremacy of God's kingdom over the individual life, and who, in the extreme agony of his pain and exhaustion, cried out that he was deserted, becomes something altogether distinct from a theological symbol. Immediately that we cease to worship, we can begin to love and pity. Here was a being of extreme gentleness and delicacy and of great courage, of the utmost tolerance and the subtlest sympathy, a saint of non-resistance. . . .

We of the new faith repudiate the teaching of non-resistance. We are the militant followers of and participators in a militant God. We can appreciate and admire the greatness of Christ, this gentle being upon whose nobility the theologians trade. But submission is the remotest quality of all from our God, and a moribund figure is the completest inversion of his likeness as we know him. A Christianity which shows, for its daily symbol, Christ risen and trampling victoriously upon a broken cross, would be far more in the spirit of our worship.\*

\* It is curious, after writing the above, to find in a letter written by Foss Westcott, Bishop of Durham, to that pertinacious correspondent, the late Lady Victoria Welby, almost exactly the same sentiments I have here expressed. "If I could fill the Crucifix with life as you do," he says, "I would gladly look on it, but the fallen Head and the closed Eye exclude from my thought the idea of glorified humanity. The Christ to whom we are led is One who 'hath been crucified,' who hath passed the trial victoriously and

borne the fruits to heaven. I dare not then rest on this side of the glory."

I find, too, a still more remarkable expression of the modern spirit in a tract, "The Call of the Kingdom," by that very able and subtle, Anglican theologian, the Rev. W. Temple, who declares that under the vitalising stresses of the war we are winning "faith in Christ as an heroic leader. We have thought of Him so much as meek and gentle that there is no ground in our picture of Him, for the vision which His disciple had of Him: 'His head and His hair were white, as white wool, white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire: and His feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and His voice was as the voice of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength.'"

These are both exceptional utterances, interesting as showing how clearly parallel are the tendencies within and without Christianity.

#### 4. THE PRIMARY DUTIES

Now it follows very directly from the conception of God as a finite intelligence of boundless courage and limitless possibilities of growth



and victory, who has pitted himself against death, who stands close to our inmost beings ready to receive us and use us, to rescue us from the chagrins of egotism and take us into his immortal adventure, that we who have realised him and given ourselves joyfully to him, must needs be equally ready and willing to give our energies to the task we share with him, to do our utmost to increase knowledge, to increase order and clearness, to fight against indolence, waste, disorder, cruelty, vice, and every form of his and our enemy, death, first and chiefest in ourselves but also in all mankind, and to bring about the establishment of his real and visible kingdom throughout the world.

And that idea of God as the Invisible King of the whole world means not merely that God is to be made and declared the head of the world, but that the kingdom of God is to be present throughout the whole fabric of the world, that the Kingdom of God is to be in the teaching at the village school, in the planning of the railway siding of the market town, in the mixing of the mortar at the building of the workman's house. It means that ultimately no effigy of intrusive king or emperor is to disfigure our coins and stamps any more; God himself and no delegate is to be represented wherever men buy or sell, on our letters and our receipts, a perpetual witness, a perpetual reminder. There is no act altogether without significance, no power so humble that it may not be used for or against God, no life but can orient itself to him. To realise God in one's heart is to be filled with the desire to serve him, and the way of his service is neither to pull up one's life by the roots nor to continue it in all its essentials unchanged, but to turn it

about, to turn everything that there is in it round into his way.

The outward duty of those who serve God must vary greatly with the abilities they possess and the positions in which they find themselves, but for all there are certain fundamental duties; a constant attempt to be utterly truthful with oneself, a constant sedulousness to keep oneself fit and bright for God's service, and to increase one's knowledge and powers, and a hidden persistent watchfulness of one's baser motives, a watch against fear and indolence, against vanity, against greed and lust, against envy, malice, and uncharitableness. To have found God truly does in itself make God's service one's essential motive, but these evils lurk in the shadows, in the lassitudes and unwary moments. No one escapes them altogether, there is no need for tragic moods on account of imperfections. We can no more serve God without blunders and set-backs than we can win battles without losing men. But the less of such loss the better. The servant of God must keep his mind as wide and sound and his motives as clean as he can, just as an operating surgeon must keep his nerves and muscles as fit and his hands as clean as he can. Neither may righteously evade exercise and regular washing--of mind as of hands. An incessant watchfulness of one's self and one's thoughts and the soundness of one's thoughts; cleanliness, clearness, a wariness against indolence and prejudice, careful truth, habitual frankness, fitness and steadfast work; these are the daily fundamental duties that every one who truly comes to God will, as a matter of course, set before himself.

## 5. THE INCREASING KINGDOM

Now of the more intimate and personal life of the believer it will be more convenient to write a little later. Let us for the present pursue the idea of this world-kingdom of God, to whose establishment he calls us. This kingdom is to be a peaceful and co-ordinated activity of all mankind upon certain divine ends. These, we conceive, are first, the maintenance of the racial life; secondly, the exploration of the external being of nature as it is and as it has been, that is to say history and science; thirdly, that exploration of inherent human possibility which is art; fourthly, that clarification of thought and knowledge which is philosophy; and finally, the progressive enlargement and development of the racial life under these lights, so that God may work through a continually better body of humanity and through better and better equipped minds, that he and our race may increase for ever, working unendingly upon the development of the powers of life and the mastery of the blind forces of matter throughout the deeps of space. He sets out with us, we are persuaded, to conquer ourselves and our world and the stars. And beyond the stars our eyes can as yet see nothing, our imaginations reach and fail. Beyond the limits of our understanding is the veiled Being of Fate, whose face is hidden from us. . . .

It may be that minds will presently appear among us of such a quality

that the face of that Unknown will not be altogether hidden. . . .

But the business of such ordinary lives as ours is the setting up of this earthly kingdom of God. That is the form into which our lives must fall and our consciences adapt themselves.

Belief in God as the Invisible King brings with it almost necessarily a conception of this coming kingdom of God on earth. Each believer as he grasps this natural and immediate consequence of the faith that has come into his life will form at the same time a Utopian conception of this world changed in the direction of God's purpose. The vision will follow the realisation of God's true nature and purpose as a necessary second step. And he will begin to develop the latent citizen of this world-state in himself. He will fall in with the idea of the world-wide sanities of this new order being drawn over the warring outlines of the present, and of men falling out of relationship with the old order and into relationship with the new. Many men and women are already working to-day at tasks that belong essentially to God's kingdom, tasks that would be of the same essential nature if the world were now a theocracy; for example, they are doing or sustaining scientific research or education or creative art; they are making roads to bring men together, they are doctors working for the world's health, they are building homes, they are constructing machinery to save and increase the powers of men. . . .

Such men and women need only to change their orientation as men will

change about at a work-table when the light that was coming in a little while ago from the southern windows, begins presently to come in chiefly from the west, to become open and confessed servants of God. This work that they were doing for ambition, or the love of men or the love of knowledge or what seemed the inherent impulse to the work itself, or for money or honour or country or king, they will realise they are doing for God and by the power of God. Self-transformation into a citizen of God's kingdom and a new realisation of all earthly politics as no more than the struggle to define and achieve the kingdom of God in the earth, follow on, without any need for a fresh spiritual impulse, from the moment when God and the believer meet and clasp one another.

This transfiguration of the world into a theocracy may seem a merely fantastic idea to anyone who comes to it freshly without such general theological preparation as the preceding pages have made. But to anyone who has been at the pains to clear his mind even a little from the obsession of existing but transitory things, it ceases to be a mere suggestion and becomes more and more manifestly the real future of mankind. From the phase of "so things should be," the mind will pass very rapidly to the realisation that "so things will be." Towards this the directive wills among men have been drifting more and more steadily and perceptibly and with fewer eddyings and retardations, for many centuries. The purpose of mankind will not be always thus confused and fragmentary. This dissemination of will-power is a phase. The age of the warring tribes and kingdoms and empires that began a hundred centuries or so ago, draws to its close. The kingdom of God on earth is not a

metaphor, not a mere spiritual state, not a dream, not an uncertain project; it is the thing before us, it is the close and inevitable destiny of mankind.

In a few score years the faith of the true God will be spreading about the world. The few halting confessions of God that one hears here and there to-day, like that little twittering of birds which comes before the dawn, will have swollen to a choral unanimity. In but a few centuries the whole world will be openly, confessedly, preparing for the kingdom. In but a few centuries God will have led us out of the dark forest of these present wars and confusions into the open brotherhood of his rule.

## 6. WHAT IS MY PLACE IN THE KINGDOM?

This conception of the general life of mankind as a transformation at thousands of points of the confused, egotistical, proprietary, partisan, nationalist, life-wasting chaos of human life to-day into the coherent development of the world kingdom of God, provides the form into which everyone who comes to the knowledge of God will naturally seek to fit his every thought and activity. The material greeds, the avarice, fear, rivalries, and ignoble ambitions of a disordered world will be challenged and examined under one general question: "What am I in the

kingdom of God?"

It has already been suggested that there is a great and growing number of occupations that belong already to God's kingdom, research, teaching, creative art, creative administration, cultivation, construction, maintenance, and the honest satisfaction of honest practical human needs. For such people conversion to the intimacy of God means at most a change in the spirit of their work, a refreshed energy, a clearer understanding, a new zeal, a complete disregard of gains and praises and promotion. Pay, honours, and the like cease to be the inducement of effort. Service, and service alone, is the criterion that the quickened conscience will recognise.

Most of such people will find themselves in positions in which service is mingled with activities of a baser sort, in which service is a little warped and deflected by old traditions and usage, by mercenary and commercial considerations, by some inherent or special degradation of purpose. The spirit of God will not let the believer rest until his life is readjusted and as far as possible freed from the waste of these base diversions. For example a scientific investigator, lit and inspired by great inquiries, may be hampered by the conditions of his professorship or research fellowship, which exact an appearance of "practical" results. Or he may be obliged to lecture or conduct classes. He may be able to give but half his possible gift to the work of his real aptitude, and that at a sacrifice of money and reputation among short-sighted but influential contemporaries. Well, if he is by nature

an investigator he will know that the research is what God needs of him. He cannot continue it at all if he leaves his position, and so he must needs waste something of his gift to save the rest. But should a poorer or a humbler post offer him better opportunity, there lies his work for God. There one has a very common and simple type of the problems that will arise in the lives of men when they are lit by sudden realisation of the immediacy of God.

Akin to that case is the perplexity of any successful physician between the increase of knowledge and the public welfare on the one hand, and the lucrative possibilities of his practice among wealthy people on the other. He belongs to a profession that is crippled by a mediaeval code, a profession which was blind to the common interest of the Public Health and regarded its members merely as skilled practitioners employed to "cure" individual ailments. Very slowly and tortuously do the methods of the profession adapt themselves to the modern conception of an army of devoted men working as a whole under God for the health of mankind as a whole, broadening out from the frowsy den of the "leech," with its crocodile and bottles and hieroglyphic prescriptions, to a skilled and illuminating co-operation with those who deal with the food and housing and economic life of the community.

And again quite parallel with these personal problems is the trouble of the artist between the market and vulgar fame on the one hand and his divine impulse on the other.



The presence of God will be a continual light and help in every decision that must be made by men and women in these more or less vitiated, but still fundamentally useful and righteous, positions.

The trouble becomes more marked and more difficult in the case of a man who is a manufacturer or a trader, the financier of business enterprise or the proprietor of great estates. The world is in need of manufactures and that goods should be distributed; land must be administered and new economic possibilities developed. The drift of things is in the direction of state ownership and control, but in a great number of cases the state is not ripe for such undertakings, it commands neither sufficient integrity nor sufficient ability, and the proprietor of factory, store, credit or land, must continue in possession, holding as a trustee for God and, so far as lies in his power, preparing for his supersession by some more public administration. Modern religion admits of no facile flights from responsibility. It permits no headlong resort to the wilderness and sterile virtue. It counts the recluse who fasts among scorpions in a cave as no better than a deserter in hiding. It unhesitatingly forbids any rich young man to sell all that he has and give to the poor. Himself and all that he has must be alike dedicated to God.

The plain duty that will be understood by the proprietor of land and of every sort of general need and service, so soon as he becomes aware of God, is so to administer his possessions as to achieve the maximum of possible efficiency, the most generous output, and the least private

profit. He may set aside a salary for his maintenance; the rest he must deal with like a zealous public official. And if he perceives that the affair could be better administered by other hands than his own, then it is his business to get it into those hands with the smallest delay and the least profit to himself. . . .

The rights and wrongs of human equity are very different from right and wrong in the sight of God. In the sight of God no landlord has a RIGHT to his rent, no usurer has a RIGHT to his interest. A man is not justified in drawing the profits from an advantageous agreement nor free to spend the profits of a speculation as he will. God takes no heed of savings nor of abstinence. He recognises no right to the "rewards of abstinence," no right to any rewards. Those profits and comforts and consolations are the inducements that dangle before the eyes of the spiritually blind. Wealth is an embarrassment to the religious, for God calls them to account for it. The servant of God has no business with wealth or power except to use them immediately in the service of God. Finding these things in his hands he is bound to administer them in the service of God.

The tendency of modern religion goes far beyond the alleged communism of the early Christians, and far beyond the tithes of the scribes and Pharisees. God takes all. He takes you, blood and bones and house and acres, he takes skill and influence and expectations. For all the rest of your life you are nothing but God's agent. If you are not prepared for so complete a surrender, then you are infinitely remote from God.

You must go your way. Here you are merely a curious interloper. Perhaps you have been desiring God as an experience, or coveting him as a possession. You have not begun to understand. This that we are discussing in this book is as yet nothing for you.

## 7. ADJUSTING LIFE

This picturing of a human world more to the mind of God than this present world and the discovery and realisation of one's own place and work in and for that kingdom of God, is the natural next phase in the development of the believer. He will set about revising and adjusting his scheme of life, his ways of living, his habits and his relationships in the light of his new convictions.

Most men and women who come to God will have already a certain righteousness in their lives; these things happen like a thunderclap only in strange exceptional cases, and the same movements of the mind that have brought them to God will already have brought their lives into a certain rightness of direction and conduct. Yet occasionally there will be someone to whom the self-examination that follows conversion will reveal an entirely wrong and evil way of living. It may be that the light has come to some rich idler doing nothing but follow a pleasurable routine. Or to someone following some highly profitable and amusing,

but socially useless or socially mischievous occupation. One may be an advocate at the disposal of any man's purpose, or an actor or actress ready to fall in with any theatrical enterprise. Or a woman may find herself a prostitute or a pet wife, a mere kept instrument of indulgence. These are lives of prey, these are lives of futility; the light of God will not tolerate such lives. Here religion can bring nothing but a severance from the old way of life altogether, a break and a struggle towards use and service and dignity.

But even here it does not follow that because a life has been wrong the new life that begins must be far as the poles asunder from the old. Every sort of experience that has ever come to a human being is in the self that he brings to God, and there is no reason why a knowledge of evil ways should not determine the path of duty. No one can better devise protections against vices than those who have practised them; none know temptations better than those who have fallen. If a man has followed an evil trade, it becomes him to use his knowledge of the tricks of that trade to help end it. He knows the charities it may claim and the remedies it needs. . . .

A very interesting case to discuss in relation to this question of adjustment is that of the barrister. A practising barrister under contemporary conditions does indeed give most typically the opportunity for examining the relation of an ordinary self-respecting worldly life, to life under the dispensation of God discovered. A barrister is usually a man of some energy and ambition, his honour is moulded by

the traditions of an ancient and antiquated profession, instinctively self-preserving and yet with a real desire for consistency and respect. As a profession it has been greedy and defensively conservative, but it has never been shameless nor has it ever broken faith with its own large and selfish, but quite definite, propositions. It has never for instance had the shamelessness of such a traditionless and undisciplined class as the early factory organisers. It has never had the dull incoherent wickedness of the sort of men who exploit drunkenness and the turf. It offends within limits. Barristers can be, and are, disbarred. But it is now a profession extraordinarily out of date; its code of honour derives from a time of cruder and lower conceptions of human relationship. It apprehends the State as a mere "ring" kept about private disputations; it has not begun to move towards the modern conception of the collective enterprise as the determining criterion of human conduct. It sees its business as a mere play upon the rules of a game between man and man, or between men and men. They haggle, they dispute, they inflict and suffer wrongs, they evade dues, and are liable or entitled to penalties and compensations. The primary business of the law is held to be decision in these wrangles, and as wrangling is subject to artistic elaboration, the business of the barrister is the business of a professional wrangler; he is a bravo in wig and gown who fights the duels of ordinary men because they are incapable, very largely on account of the complexities of legal procedure, of fighting for themselves. His business is never to explore any fundamental right in the matter. His business is to say all that can be said for his client, and to conceal or minimise whatever can be said against his client. The successful promoted advocate, who in Britain

and the United States of America is the judge, and whose habits and interests all incline him to disregard the realities of the case in favour of the points in the forensic game, then adjudicates upon the contest. . . .

Now this condition of things is clearly incompatible with the modern conception of the world as becoming a divine kingdom. When the world is openly and confessedly the kingdom of God, the law court will exist only to adjust the differing views of men as to the manner of their service to God; the only right of action one man will have against another will be that he has been prevented or hampered or distressed by the other in serving God. The idea of the law court will have changed entirely from a place of dispute, exaction and vengeance, to a place of adjustment. The individual or some state organisation will plead ON BEHALF OF THE COMMON GOOD either against some state official or state regulation, or against the actions or inaction of another individual. This is the only sort of legal proceedings compatible with the broad beliefs of the new faith. . . . Every religion that becomes ascendant, in so far as it is not otherworldly, must necessarily set its stamp upon the methods and administration of the law. That this was not the case with Christianity is one of the many contributory aspects that lead one to the conviction that it was not Christianity that took possession of the Roman empire, but an imperial adventurer who took possession of an all too complaisant Christianity.

Reverting now from these generalisations to the problem of the religious

from which they arose, it will have become evident that the essential work of anyone who is conversant with the existing practice and literature of the law and whose natural abilities are forensic, will lie in the direction of reconstructing the theory and practice of the law in harmony with modern conceptions, of making that theory and practice clear and plain to ordinary men, of reforming the abuses of the profession by working for the separation of bar and judiciary, for the amalgamation of the solicitors and the barristers, and the like needed reforms. These are matters that will probably only be properly set right by a quickening of conscience among lawyers themselves. Of no class of men is the help and service so necessary to the practical establishment of God's kingdom, as of men learned and experienced in the law. And there is no reason why for the present an advocate should not continue to plead in the courts, provided he does his utmost only to handle cases in which he believes he can serve the right. Few righteous cases are ill-served by a frank disposition on the part of lawyer and client to put everything before the court. Thereby of course there arises a difficult case of conscience. What if a lawyer, believing his client to be in the right, discovers him to be in the wrong? He cannot throw up the case unless he has been scandalously deceived, because so he would betray the confidence his client has put in him to "see him through." He has a right to "give himself away," but not to "give away" his client in this fashion. If he has a chance of a private consultation I think he ought to do his best to make his client admit the truth of the case and give in, but failing this he has no right to be virtuous on behalf of another. No man may play God to another; he may remonstrate, but that

is the limit of his right. He must respect a confidence, even if it is purely implicit and involuntary. I admit that here the barrister is in a cleft stick, and that he must see the business through according to the confidence his client has put in him--and afterwards be as sorry as he may be if an injustice ensues. And also I would suggest a lawyer may with a fairly good conscience defend a guilty man as if he were innocent, to save him from unjustly heavy penalties. . . .

This comparatively full discussion of the barrister's problem has been embarked upon because it does bring in, in a very typical fashion, just those uncertainties and imperfections that abound in real life. Religious conviction gives us a general direction, but it stands aside from many of these entangled struggles in the jungle of conscience. Practice is often easier than a rule. In practice a lawyer will know far more accurately than a hypothetical case can indicate, how far he is bound to see his client through, and how far he may play the keeper of his client's conscience. And nearly every day there happens instances where the most subtle casuistry will fail and the finger of conscience point unhesitatingly. One may have worried long in the preparation and preliminaries of the issue, one may bring the case at last into the final court of conscience in an apparently hopeless tangle. Then suddenly comes decision.

The procedure of that silent, lit, and empty court in which a man states his case to God, is very simple and perfect. The excuses and the special pleading shrivel and vanish. In a little while the case lies bare and



plain.

## 8. THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

The question of oaths of allegiance, acts of acquiescence in existing governments, and the like, is one that arises at once with the acceptance of God as the supreme and real King of the Earth. At the worst Caesar is a usurper, a satrap claiming to be sovereign; at the best he is provisional. Modern casuistry makes no great trouble for the believing public official. The chief business of any believer is to do the work for which he is best fitted, and since all state affairs are to become the affairs of God's kingdom it is of primary importance that they should come into the hands of God's servants. It is scarcely less necessary to a believing man with administrative gifts that he should be in the public administration, than that he should breathe and eat. And whatever oath or the like to usurper church or usurper king has been set up to bar access to service, is an oath imposed under duress. If it cannot be avoided it must be taken rather than that a man should become unserviceable. All such oaths are unfair and foolish things. They exclude no scoundrels; they are appeals to superstition. Whenever an opportunity occurs for the abolition of an oath, the servant of God will seize it, but where the oath is unavoidable he will take it.

The service of God is not to achieve a delicate consistency of statement; it is to do as much as one can of God's work.

## 9. THE PRIEST AND THE CREED

It may be doubted if this line of reasoning regarding the official and his oath can be extended to excuse the priest or pledged minister of religion who finds that faith in the true God has ousted his formal beliefs.

This has been a frequent and subtle moral problem in the intellectual life of the last hundred years. It has been increasingly difficult for any class of reading, talking, and discussing people such as are the bulk of the priesthoods of the Christian churches to escape hearing and reading the accumulated criticism of the Trinitarian theology and of the popularly accepted story of man's fall and salvation. Some have no doubt defeated this universal and insidious critical attack entirely, and honestly established themselves in a right-down acceptance of the articles and disciplines to which they have subscribed and of the creeds they profess and repeat. Some have recanted and abandoned their positions in the priesthood. But a great number have neither resisted the bacillus of criticism nor left the churches to which they are attached. They have adopted compromises, they have qualified their

creeds with modifying footnotes of essential repudiation; they have decided that plain statements are metaphors and have undercut, transposed, and inverted the most vital points of the vulgarly accepted beliefs. One may find within the Anglican communion, Arians, Unitarians, Atheists, disbelievers in immortality, attenuators of miracles; there is scarcely a doubt or a cavil that has not found a lodgment within the ample charity of the English Establishment. I have been interested to hear one distinguished Canon deplore that "they" did not identify the Logos with the third instead of the second Person of the Trinity, and another distinguished Catholic apologist declare his indifference to the "historical Jesus." Within most of the Christian communions one may believe anything or nothing, provided only that one does not call too public an attention to one's eccentricity. The late Rev. Charles Voysey, for example, preached plainly in his church at Healaugh against the divinity of Christ, unhindered. It was only when he published his sermons under the provocative title of "The Sling and the Stone," and caused an outcry beyond the limits of his congregation, that he was indicted and deprived.

Now the reasons why these men do not leave the ministry or priesthood in which they find themselves are often very plausible. It is probable that in very few cases is the retention of stipend or incumbency a conscious dishonesty. At the worst it is mitigated by thought for wife or child. It has only been during very exceptional phases of religious development and controversy that beliefs have been really sharp. A creed, like a coin, it may be argued, loses little in practical value because it is

worn, or bears the image of a vanished king. The religious life is a reality that has clothed itself in many garments, and the concern of the priest or minister is with the religious life and not with the poor symbols that may indeed pretend to express, but do as a matter of fact no more than indicate, its direction. It is quite possible to maintain that the church and not the creed is the real and valuable instrument of religion, that the religious life is sustained not by its propositions but by its routines. Anyone who seeks the intimate discussion of spiritual things with professional divines, will find this is the substance of the case for the ecclesiastical sceptic. His church, he will admit, mumbles its statement of truth, but where else is truth? What better formulae are to be found for ineffable things? And meanwhile--he does good.

That may be a valid defence before a man finds God. But we who profess the worship and fellowship of the living God deny that religion is a matter of ineffable things. The way of God is plain and simple and easy to understand.

Therewith the whole position of the conforming sceptic is changed. If a professional religious has any justification at all for his professionalism it is surely that he proclaims the nearness and greatness of God. And these creeds and articles and orthodoxies are not proclamations but curtains, they are a darkening and confusion of what should be crystal clear. What compensatory good can a priest pretend to do when his primary business is the truth and his method a lie? The

oaths and incidental conformities of men who wish to serve God in the state are on a different footing altogether from the falsehood and mischief of one who knows the true God and yet recites to a trustful congregation, foists upon a trustful congregation, a misleading and ill-phrased Levantine creed.

Such is the line of thought which will impose the renunciation of his temporalities and a complete cessation of services upon every ordained priest and minister as his first act of faith. Once that he has truly realised God, it becomes impossible for him ever to repeat his creed again. His course seems plain and clear. It becomes him to stand up before the flock he has led in error, and to proclaim the being and nature of the one true God. He must be explicit to the utmost of his powers. Then he may await his expulsion. It may be doubted whether it is sufficient for him to go away silently, making false excuses or none at all for his retreat. He has to atone for the implicit acquiescences of his conforming years.

## 10. THE UNIVERSALISM OF GOD

Are any sorts of people shut off as if by inherent necessity from God?

This is, so to speak, one of the standing questions of theology; it

reappears with slight changes of form at every period of religious interest, it is for example the chief issue between the Arminian and the Calvinist. From its very opening proposition modern religion sweeps past and far ahead of the old Arminian teachings of Wesleyans and Methodists, in its insistence upon the entirely finite nature of God. Arminians seem merely to have insisted that God has conditioned himself, and by his own free act left men free to accept or reject salvation. To the realist type of mind--here as always I use "realist" in its proper sense as the opposite of nominalist--to the old-fashioned, over-exact and over-accentuating type of mind, such ways of thinking seem vague and unsatisfying. Just as it distresses the more downright kind of intelligence with a feeling of disloyalty to admit that God is not Almighty, so it troubles the same sort of intelligence to hear that there is no clear line to be drawn between the saved and the lost. Realists like an exclusive flavour in their faith. Moreover, it is a natural weakness of humanity to be forced into extreme positions by argument. It is probable, as I have already suggested, that the absolute attributes of God were forced upon Christianity under the stresses of propaganda, and it is probable that the theory of a super-human obstinacy beyond salvation arose out of the irritations natural to theological debate. It is but a step from the realisation that there are people absolutely unable or absolutely unwilling to see God as we see him, to the conviction that they are therefore shut off from God by an invincible soul blindness.

It is very easy to believe that other people are essentially damned.

Beyond the little world of our sympathies and comprehension there are those who seem inaccessible to God by any means within our experience. They are people answering to the "hard-hearted," to the "stiff-necked generation" of the Hebrew prophets. They betray and even confess to standards that seem hopelessly base to us. They show themselves incapable of any disinterested enthusiasm for beauty or truth or goodness. They are altogether remote from intelligent sacrifice. To every test they betray vileness of texture; they are mean, cold, wicked. There are people who seem to cheat with a private self-approval, who are ever ready to do harsh and cruel things, whose use for social feeling is the malignant boycott, and for prosperity, monopolisation and humiliating display; who seize upon religion and turn it into persecution, and upon beauty to torment it on the altars of some joyless vice. We cannot do with such souls; we have no use for them, and it is very easy indeed to step from that persuasion to the belief that God has no use for them.

And besides these base people there are the stupid people and the people with minds so poor in texture that they cannot even grasp the few broad and simple ideas that seem necessary to the salvation we experience, who lapse helplessly into fetishistic and fearful conceptions of God, and are apparently quite incapable of distinguishing between what is practically and what is spiritually good.

It is an easy thing to conclude that the only way to God is our way to

God, that he is the privilege of a finer and better sort to which we of course belong; that he is no more the God of the card-sharper or the pickpocket or the "smart" woman or the loan-monger or the village oaf than he is of the swine in the sty. But are we justified in thus limiting God to the measure of our moral and intellectual understandings? Because some people seem to me steadfastly and consistently base or hopelessly and incurably dull and confused, does it follow that there are not phases, albeit I have never chanced to see them, of exaltation in the one case and illumination in the other? And may I not be a little restricting my perception of Good? While I have been ready enough to pronounce this or that person as being, so far as I was concerned, thoroughly damnable or utterly dull, I find a curious reluctance to admit the general proposition which is necessary for these instances. It is possible that the difference between Arminian and Calvinist is a difference of essential intellectual temperament rather than of theoretical conviction. I am temperamentally Arminian as I am temperamentally Nominalist. I feel that it must be in the nature of God to attempt all souls. There must be accessibilities I can only suspect, and accessibilities of which I know nothing.

Yet here is a consideration pointing rather the other way. If you think, as you must think, that you yourself can be lost to God and damned, then I cannot see how you can avoid thinking that other people can be damned. But that is not to believe that there are people damned at the outset by their moral and intellectual insufficiency; that is not to make out that there is a class of essential and incurable spiritual defectives. The



religious life preceded clear religious understanding and extends far beyond its range.

In my own case I perceive that in spite of the value I attach to true belief, the reality of religion is not an intellectual thing. The essential religious fact is in another than the mental sphere. I am passionately anxious to have the idea of God clear in my own mind, and to make my beliefs plain and clear to other people, and particularly to other people who may seem to be feeling with me; I do perceive that error is evil if only because a faith based on confused conceptions and partial understandings may suffer irreparable injury through the collapse of its substratum of ideas. I doubt if faith can be complete and enduring if it is not secured by the definite knowledge of the true God. Yet I have also to admit that I find the form of my own religious emotion paralleled by people with whom I have no intellectual sympathy and no agreement in phrase or formula at all.

There is for example this practical identity of religious feeling and this discrepancy of interpretation between such an inquirer as myself and a convert of the Salvation Army. Here, clothing itself in phrases and images of barbaric sacrifice, of slaughtered lambs and fountains of precious blood, a most repulsive and incomprehensible idiom to me, and expressing itself by shouts, clangour, trumpeting, gesticulations, and rhythmic pacings that stun and dismay my nerves, I find, the same object sought, release from self, and the same end, the end of identification with the immortal, successfully if perhaps rather insecurely achieved.

I see God indubitably present in these excitements, and I see personalities I could easily have misjudged as too base or too dense for spiritual understandings, lit by the manifest reflection of divinity. One may be led into the absurdest underestimates of religious possibilities if one estimates people only coldly and in the light of everyday life. There is a sub-intellectual religious life which, very conceivably, when its utmost range can be examined, excludes nothing human from religious cooperation, which will use any words to its tune, which takes its phrasing ready-made from the world about it, as it takes the street for its temple, and yet which may be at its inner point in the directest contact with God. Religion may suffer from aphasia and still be religion; it may utter misleading or nonsensical words and yet intend and convey the truth. The methods of the Salvation Army are older than doctrinal Christianity, and may long survive it. Men and women may still chant of Beulah Land and cry out in the ecstasy of salvation; the tambourine, that modern revival of the thrilling Alexandrine sistrum, may still stir dull nerves to a first apprehension of powers and a call beyond the immediate material compulsion of life, when the creeds of Christianity are as dead as the lore of the Druids.

The emancipation of mankind from obsolete theories and formularies may be accompanied by great tides of moral and emotional release among types and strata that by the standards of a trained and explicit intellectual, may seem spiritually hopeless. It is not necessary to imagine the whole world critical and lucid in order to imagine the whole world unified in religious sentiment, comprehending the same phrases and coming together

regardless of class and race and quality, in the worship and service of the true God. The coming kingship of God if it is to be more than hieratic tyranny must have this universality of appeal. As the head grows clear the body will turn in the right direction. To the mass of men modern religion says, "This is the God it has always been in your nature to apprehend."

## 11. GOD AND THE LOVE AND STATUS OF WOMEN

Now that we are discussing the general question of individual conduct, it will be convenient to take up again and restate in that relationship, propositions already made very plainly in the second and third chapters. Here there are several excellent reasons for a certain amount of deliberate repetition. . . .

All the mystical relations of chastity, virginity, and the like with religion, those questions of physical status that play so large a part in most contemporary religions, have disappeared from modern faith. Let us be as clear as possible upon this. God is concerned by the health and fitness and vigour of his servants; we owe him our best and utmost; but he has no special concern and no special preferences or commandments regarding sexual things.

Christ, it is manifest, was of the modern faith in these matters, he welcomed the Magdalen, neither would he condemn the woman taken in adultery. Manifestly corruption and disease were not to stand between him and those who sought God in him. But the Christianity of the creeds, in this as in so many respects, does not rise to the level of its founder, and it is as necessary to repeat to-day as though the name of Christ had not been ascendant for nineteen centuries, that sex is a secondary thing to religion, and sexual status of no account in the presence of God. It follows quite logically that God does not discriminate between man and woman in any essential things. We leave our individuality behind us when we come into the presence of God. Sex is not disavowed but forgotten. Just as one's last meal is forgotten--which also is a difference between the religious moment of modern faith and certain Christian sacraments. You are a believer and God is at hand to you; heed not your state; reach out to him and he is there. In the moment of religion you are human; it matters not what else you are, male or female, clean or unclean, Hebrew or Gentile, bond or free. It is AFTER the moment of religion that we become concerned about our state and the manner in which we use ourselves.

We have to follow our reason as our sole guide in our individual treatment of all such things as food and health and sex. God is the king of the whole world, he is the owner of our souls and bodies and all things. He is not particularly concerned about any aspect, because he is concerned about every aspect. We have to make the best use of ourselves for his kingdom; that is our rule of life. That rule means neither

painful nor frantic abstinences nor any forced way of living. Purity, cleanliness, health, none of these things are for themselves, they are for use; none are magic, all are means. The sword must be sharp and clean. That does not mean that we are perpetually to sharpen and clean it--which would weaken and waste the blade. The sword must neither be drawn constantly nor always rusting in its sheath. Those who have had the wits and soul to come to God, will have the wits and soul to find out and know what is waste, what is vanity, what is the happiness that begets strength of body and spirit, what is error, where vice begins, and to avoid and repent and recoil from all those things that degrade. These are matters not of the rule of life but of the application of life. They must neither be neglected nor made disproportionately important.

To the believer, relationship with God is the supreme relationship. It is difficult to imagine how the association of lovers and friends can be very fine and close and good unless the two who love are each also linked to God, so that through their moods and fluctuations and the changes of years they can be held steadfast by his undying steadfastness. But it has been felt by many deep-feeling people that there is so much kindred between the love and trust of husband and wife and the feeling we have for God, that it is reasonable to consider the former also as a sacred thing. They do so value that close love of mated man and woman, they are so intent upon its permanence and completeness and to lift the dear relationship out of the ruck of casual and transitory things, that they want to bring it, as it were, into the very

presence and assent of God. There are many who dream and desire that they are as deeply and completely mated as this, many more who would fain be so, and some who are. And from this comes the earnest desire to make marriage sacramental and the attempt to impose upon all the world the outward appearance, the restrictions, the pretence at least of such a sacramental union.

There may be such a quasi-sacramental union in many cases, but only after years can one be sure of it; it is not to be brought about by vows and promises but by an essential kindred and cleaving of body and spirit; and it concerns only the two who can dare to say they have it, and God. And the divine thing in marriage, the thing that is most like the love of God, is, even then, not the relationship of the man and woman as man and woman but the comradeship and trust and mutual help and pity that joins them. No doubt that from the mutual necessities of bodily love and the common adventure, the necessary honesties and helps of a joint life, there springs the stoutest, nearest, most enduring and best of human companionship; perhaps only upon that root can the best of mortal comradeship be got; but it does not follow that the mere ordinary coming together and pairing off of men and women is in itself divine or sacramental or anything of the sort. Being in love is a condition that may have its moments of sublime exaltation, but it is for the most part an experience far down the scale below divine experience; it is often love only in so far as it shares the name with better things; it is greed, it is admiration, it is desire, it is the itch for excitement, it is the instinct for competition, it is lust, it is curiosity, it is

adventure, it is jealousy, it is hate. On a hundred scores 'lovers' meet and part. Thereby some few find true love and the spirit of God in themselves or others.

Lovers may love God in one another; I do not deny it. That is no reason why the imitation and outward form of this great happiness should be made an obligation upon all men and women who are attracted by one another, nor why it should be woven into the essentials of religion.

For women much more than for men is this confusion dangerous, lest a personal love should shape and dominate their lives instead of God. "He for God only; she for God in him," phrases the idea of Milton and of ancient Islam; it is the formula of sexual infatuation, a formula quite easily inverted, as the end of Goethe's *Faust* ("The woman soul leadeth us upward and on") may witness. The whole drift of modern religious feeling is against this exaggeration of sexual feeling, these moods of sexual slavishness, in spiritual things. Between the healthy love of ordinary mortal lovers in love and the love of God, there is an essential contrast and opposition in this, that preference, exclusiveness, and jealousy seem to be in the very nature of the former and are absolutely incompatible with the latter. The former is the intensest realisation of which our individualities are capable; the latter is the way of escape from the limitations of individuality. It may be true that a few men and more women do achieve the completest unselfishness and self-abandonment in earthly love. So the poets and romancers tell us. If so, it is that by an imaginative perversion they have given to some attractive person a worship that should be reserved

for God and a devotion that is normally evoked only by little children in their mother's heart. It is not the way between most of the men and women one meets in this world.

But between God and the believer there is no other way, there is nothing else, but self-surrender and the ending of self.