

P.T. Forsyth

"The Conversion of the 'Good'"

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## THE CONVERSION OF THE "GOOD."

### I.

BOTH John and Jesus regarded the public which they addressed as a unity. Their appeal was collective. When they did not speak to the nation itself, they addressed themselves to single communities within it, which were, like Capernaum and especially Jerusalem, capable of common action; and such was the action they demanded. Their audiences they did not regard as sects or groups, but as patches of the whole people. To this unity came the call and the condemnation. It seems sometimes sweeping. Yet Jesus was not indiscriminate in His impeachment. He was searching. He challenged a solidary system and an ambitious programme. And He was public in His note. He did indict a nation. He did save a world. He did think in wholes. The keepers of the vineyard were all bad; there was no distinction between the true and the false among them, the better and the worse. But that was not to say that there were no good and devout people in Israel, even among Pharisees. When we denounce Germany as the world-agent of Satan we do not deny the many fine and worthy lives in that land. We judge it as a collective unit with a solidary policy and ideal. It was a national unit that was in Christ's mind. It was an evil and "adulterous" generation (*i.e.*, a recreant age of Israel, false to its husband God, not a generation of adulterers) that was warned and judged. In that national unity and action the better suffered with the worse. Jesus was preoccupied with the national self, with the general will, as we should now call it, and with the way it worked down into individuals rather than was made up of them.

The call for repentance in particular was directed both by John and by Jesus to the community perhaps even more than to the individual. When Jesus was told of the massacre of some Galileans by Pilate for an outbreak of religious fanaticism He said to His informants (who thought, in the popular way, that a violent end was a judgment for the victim's special sin) that Chauvinism, however religious, was not the line for Israel, and that revolt was hopeless. He said that a nation in arms was not Israel's rôle, that Messiah was of another spirit, that for this people,

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with its election, grace could do more than force, that they must all (collectively) repent of their perversion of God's purpose with them, and turn to a policy of moral permeation as His will in calling them, else Pilate and his legions would do for the whole nation ("likewise") what he had done in the *fracas* in the north. The "you," whether of John or Jesus, was not a group of scattered individuals but the collective people, with its common will, national policy, and national guilt. Each audience they had represented that people. The same line, of course, was taken by the Rabbinate, which both prophets withstood. For them also the unit was the nation. For all that age, indeed, the basis of religion was collective, national, racial. Israel before God was a quasi-personal unity in mission, destiny, crime, and doom. Still, as for the prophets, it was the nation that was God's *vis-à-vis*, rather than the soul. But John and Jesus took this ideal fact seriously and crucially as the true reality. Their call to repent went to all alike, while with the Rabbis it was directed but to a part. These leaders started from the idea that Israel, as a whole, *was* obeying and serving God, and that obedience was its total, normal, and deserving condition. No doubt (they said) many came short, but these, with their need for repentance, were only a deplorable section. Repentance meant no more than a revival of enthusiasm and observance; it did not mean a new birth and a new public spirit. The nation was substantially sound. Its spiritual gentry, its religious *Junkerthum*, was right, and it set the public pitch. Its collective state, therefore, was right and meritorious. Israel as a whole, by its correct service of God's law, deserved God's blessing, and, from God's promise in its election, the lead of the world. Its officers were working for this, with extraordinary faith in an eschatology of Empire, and with the closest attention to preparatory detail in their way of ritual drill. But John did not except the most religious from his call, nor did Christ. Indeed, they pressed it on the "good," the eminently religious, in particular, for whom religion and patriotism were one, whose piety, therefore, had lost the true God and his true Kingdom. With these churchmen especially they had their quarrel. Such were the Pharisees. The really and deeply good Christ found in the silent and obscure saints, the humbly devout, the meek and lowly in heart (as it might be the old Germany of the hymns and the heights), with whom so far He ranged Himself, weary and laden as they were with ritual requirement and its religious eminence. Here lay his private affinities. If not in the Kingdom they were not far from it. (Strangely enough He did not take His twelve from them.) Those whom the people held most pious both Christ and John found most wrong (because most in earnest), and

most in need of repentance. And, if the religious representatives were wrong, then by solidarity the people as a whole was. It was the good chiefly (understood as I have said) that Christ called on for the national response he never got. It was the "good," the believers in chief, and the well-doers of repute, that disappointed Him most. Both He and they believed passionately in God, His will, and His Kingdom. It was those with whose creed and its passion He had most in common that He broke.

And how did He wish this unity, this community, to act? Through its government? That government, indeed, stood condemned clearly enough in Herod; but it was not such rulers that preoccupied the two prophets, and were specially called to repent and change. If it had been, Jesus would have been more popular. For the rulers, whether political or pious, were not beloved. When Jesus exposed the Pharisees the common people heard Him gladly (though many of the poor were of the Pharisaic party). But His prime demand, though public and corporate, was nothing that a mere government or a court could meet. Christ was not the mouth-piece of a religious party with a forward policy, nor of a Socialist movement. He was extraordinarily conservative of the national past—as Luther would have taken the Pope if he would let him preach the Gospel. He was not the prophet of reform programmes for either belief or action. He was no ideologue. He did not detach the rulers from the whole people who accepted their lead. "Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"—rich and poor, good and bad should perish in a national enlargement of the Galilean massacre. The only morality He knew was the deep kind that culminates not in conduct but in repentance, and still more in regeneration. He had no class interests. The demand was charged upon the whole nation as a unit, upon the common temper of the society around Him, its non-moral type of religion, its low-pitched decent conscience, its vigorous programme, and its common will for a forward policy. For throughout the public religion of Israel the *vis-à-vis* of God (I have said) was not the soul but the people.

What to do? To repent as a nation. To flee from nationalism, and save their true nationality. The repentance demanded was not personal lamentation but moral action, private and public, not misery but change, and a change not in religious zeal but in their heart of hearts, and so in the national note. Was it to live for the Kingdom of God, then? To choose the Kingdom, the Sovereignty, the Empire of God? But the Pharisees were doing that passionately. It was their whole zealotic programme, about which they had no misgivings. No, it was to choose Him, and His reading of their past,

their Bible, their contact with Him, change their past that meant a moral misgiving about the last perdition of their hands. They were ready to choose was not between the Kingdom and the Kingdom—the moral, and the moral, to whom righteousness between a dome was to choose the principle of the Kingdom public excellence righteousness, not of precept, repentance, faith Kingdom, as He made it. This, and the true voice the action required prerogative, not tradition of the regenerated, faith interest of a nation. Those chiefly the ecclesiastical prominently pious parts, for that days, the repression and bustling religion might select the nation, which reason for that State had become the publicly religious cynosures of the To these in chief people of His moral core out repentance, which

their Bible, their call, their mission. And, as the result of that contact with Him, to repent, to so change in heart as to change their public ambitions. Things had so gone that that meant a moral revolution on a national scale. To have no misgiving about current religion was, to an eye like Christ's, the last perdition of a people with the Old Testament in their hands. The true genius of that Law for which they were ready to die was their condemnation. The crucial issue was not between the Kingdom and the World, but between the Kingdom and its King, between two different views of the Kingdom—the imperial, with a tutelary God and a belief in power, and the moral, with a belief in grace, and with a God of holy love to whom righteousness was more than sacrifice. The issue was not between a domestic and a world policy for the nation. The call was to choose goodness and reject evil according to the deep principle of the Kingdom as it stood out in Him. It was to choose public excellence as it was in Him, His principle of national righteousness, His version of Scripture, His manner, the manner, not of precept, conduct, rigour, vigour, and force, but of grace, repentance, faith, and love, the note not of Empire but of the Kingdom, as He, its true King, in its true spiritual succession, made it. This, He said, was the true genius of law and prophet, and the true vocation of Israel. "This is the work of God," *i.e.*, the action required, "to believe in Me." He, and not statute, not prerogative, not conquest, was the soul of Israel, He and not the tradition of the Fathers. It was faith freed from patristics, faith regenerated, faith moralised. The ethical was to be the first interest of a nation.

Those chiefly responsible were less the political authorities than the ecclesiastical (if in Israel they could be severed), the "good," the prominently pious, the active Churchmen. They were the counterparts, for that day, of our "eminent Christians" in Victorian days, the representatives of national, reputable, prompt, public, and bustling religion, the leaders of the religious world as the press might select them. For Israel was, above all things, a religious nation, which owed to its religion the unity of its existence, the reason for that existence, and the policy of its social leaders. The State had become a Church, and a law Church. Of such a people the publicly religious were bound to be the public leaders. And it is on the religious *élite*, the *haut monde* of observance, the cynosures of the Church, that Jesus places the fate of the public. *To these in chief goes the appeal for repentance—to the "best" people of His religious day.* For to His mind they had taken the moral core out of religion, as they showed by their treatment of repentance, which to Him was the root of all morality. And the

Orthodoxy of the leaders was in this respect abetted by the sentimentalism of the crowd (Luke xi., 27). To a large section of the people Pharisaism was the pink of piety and policy—to Jesus it was its blight. Its falsehood was so unreal as to be unconscious. There was nothing for it, therefore, but a fundamental repentance. For the unconscious falsity was sinking into conscious hypocrisy. A religion severed from the last moral reality of grace was becoming a religion of the worst duplicity. The ideal precepts of the Sermon on the Mount were really a part of this call to repentance. Nothing but despair of fulfilling them could qualify for their fulfilment.

Of old the pure Jews had perhaps always been in a minority in the population of Palestine, amid a crowd that easily gravitated to the indigenous cults and conduct; and even now in every considerable place there was a Brahmanic ring, a junto of religious Rajpoots, a group, or even party, of Pharisees, high separatists from the general public, and respected as such—for the position they took rather than the piety they felt. While at the other end was a mass of common people, too poor to be pious in an expensive religion of observance, passing as "sinners" because sectaries, and disowned by the notables of faith and their set. And Jesus meets both of these extremes, not with a call for more zeal, nor for grave amendment, far less with the promise of reward for patriotic fidelity, but with the demand for a repentance as deep as their zealotry, and the message of a moral kingdom based entirely on grace and forgiveness for all alike. He was more at home with the penitent than with the excellent people; but He came to all not with the invitation to inherit but with the call to repent, to change their mind and ways, to take from Him a new religious type, nay, a religious new birth deeper than repentance, deep as the Holy Ghost and His searching fire. To both classes alike the call came. But chiefly to the chief. The objective of Jesus was the nation through its heads. He did aim at working through Israel on the world, like the Pharisees, but not with the Law. His central religious ethic was national in its note, though more than national in its scope. And the nation was not to be converted only when the "sinners" came to Jesus, but, still more when the "good" came, the reputable, the "righteous," the nation's head and front. He was not so sweeping as He was thorough. It was His searching moral realism that was so unsparing, not His wide sweep. He was always more deep than broad. He blamed not many but much. If all the "sinners" had come to Him one by one, Christ's first call would still not have been met, nor His work achieved. That would not have been the vineyard staff receiving the Son. It would have been a response too atomic for His full call. Israel would not have been saved; nor could it be,

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long as the lawful representatives of its religion stood out against him as such. They had the authority, and they determined the temper and destiny, of a community which was religious or nothing, which had been God's elect, and which was still His true goal. Christ always recognised them as its proper organs. It does not appear that those known as "sinners" were at first singled out by Jesus as specially needing His grace—though they responded much better. "The blindness of the religious was visited with a sterner condemnation than those sensual transgressions which are punished more obviously both by their own consequences and by social censure." But it was one Salvation, as it was one Saviour, for the nation as one. The lost sheep to whom He was sent were the whole house of Israel. When He said the Kingdom was impossible unless their righteousness exceeded that of Scribe and Pharisee, He meant a qualitative difference, and not more of the same. He meant absurd things like brotherhood and service. He meant Redemption where they revelled in piety. He meant a new birth, which was to the Pharisee a foreign idea, one which could only have its place in passing from Paganism to Judaism. For the Pharisee the resurrection meant no more than the replacing of what death took away, not a new life with a new hunger and an unearthly food. But still more, Jesus was not thinking of a group severed from Israel—whoever He might have been addressing at the moment. He was thinking of the true Israel, of the nation as He desired to see it and make it. It was the Cross that first universalised the Gospel, and also finally individualised it. The nation said it was religiously sound as a whole; Jesus, Who, as its very Salvation, was God's Judgment upon it, said it was as a whole hollow. He brought a larger forgiveness and judgment than covered a class or a section—and a more historic visitation. He and His call were on the whole public scale of a nation which had a long life of calls, deliverances, and destinies behind it. Such Grace is the great leveller—and unifier. To every man this penny, even to the best. In the Gospels the great example of a penitent is not Matthew the publican, not Magdalen, nor any other such sinner (as sentiment has selected them) but the rock Peter. And the members of the earliest Church were all alike objects of Grace. There was not an inner circle of the penitents.

As to the vital nature of this repentance for which Christ called, this may be said more particularly. It has been pointed out that the Pharisees, no less than Jesus, believed that it was the Spirit that quickened. This only shows that Christianity is much more than spirituality. It means more than the belief that God is a Spirit—more even than obedience to such a God. It is obedience to God



where and as He has pleased to express His heart and work His will. The Pharisees believed in a Resurrection by God's Spirit—as they believed in some way in many, not to say in most, of the things intimate to the faith of Jesus. But it was a Resurrection which only restored the previous state of things, with new facilities which gave more freely what death had taken away. It replaced the old egoisms and ambitions on a new plane, and substituted an egoism of more culture for one more coarse. There was no dream of being born again by pure grace as the grand destiny of life, the grand necessity of the soul, the grand purpose of death. The spirituality of the Pharisees involved nothing which fundamentally changed the soul's deep relation to God. His intervention meant but a restoration, and in no sense a regeneration, whether personal or national. The national consummation especially, the public perfecting, was to be by a divine *coup d'état*, which should bring Israel world-power without a world gospel, without a new moral principle or spiritual ideal. The Pharisees, full of culture, earnestness, and efficiency, mocking rather than worshipping a God publicly holy, and waiting only for the right moment, were all agog for a great new state of things for the whole earth. It was to come by such a miraculous augment to the national force that Rome should be beaten with its own weapons. Their one business was to get the nation perfectly ready by ritual drill and machine morals for the hour that God would strike. They were not on God's side, but He was on theirs. They were to have Him for their ally against all the rest of the world, and His Messiah for their Emperor and idol. This God was to extend infinitely their will to power which had totally ousted any call to world service. Were they not God's elect, and therefore made to crush and to rule? The result was to strip from the messianic figure of their lordly age all moral features. He was simply to be national, irresistible, imperial, and magnificent. There was no room for the idea of Humanity. The Almighty was to be but a tribal God, in command of the world by a viceroy at Jerusalem instead of Rome; but with the same weapons to secure everywhere the dominance of the Law, which was Hebrew *Kultur*. The *pax Judaica* would just replace the *pax Romana*—with the more vigour and rigour as its impulse was religion, and its fidelity intolerance.

But the principle of Jesus was not power, far less force. It was Grace—the Omnipotence of holy Grace, *i.e.*, of moral redemption. It was not force but love—sympathy between souls, and between nations the righteousness of sympathy and its service, flowing from the faith and love of Himself as holy. He contemplated therefore the hegemony in the world not of Israel but of Humanity, under the Kingship of man's God.

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There was nothing inhuman or phantasmal about the Messiah which was the historic form of His Sonship. Because He was Son of the God of holy Love and Grace He was the Son of Man. Because He was the holy Son His Kingdom was moral rule; and because He was the King of love it was a universal Kingdom. We may see from the inhuman and unethical programme of His opponents why He mostly presented His Sonship of God as the Sonship of Man. To rule the world was, for the Messiah of such a God as His (the true God of their national Scripture and Charter) to love it in His name and die for it. His power was the power of holy Grace in a land of national egoism and coarse ideals.

The difference between the two programmes is fundamental. It coincides at last with the difference of Good and Evil. It divides mankind into two great sections, one under the prince of the world and one under the King of Kings. These sections may lie down together when the issue is quiescent, but they meet in blood whenever it becomes acute. There is no discharge in that war except by blood—either the blood of the Cross or the blood of the nations. Between these two moral halves of the race there can be no peace but by surrender or by judgment. Power which trusts power and discards conscience, and Grace which glorifies conscience in atonement can never agree, and the righteousness which triumphs triumphs in blood. And this, unless for Pharisees, is as true for a nation as for a soul.

It was this choice that Christ forced upon His nation. This was the nature of His call to repent. This was His challenge to Pharisaism. And it was one in which He came to see He was destined to fail, and to be God's last doom where He had come to be His last boon. So that the legions which His providence in history marshalled against Jerusalem in 70 A.D. were ranged by the same Christ in judgment as came in mercy a generation before. They were as surely an exercise of Divine force as those catastrophes of physical and social convulsion in which He predicted their present æon would sink, and the last judgment take place. No wonder some find in the destruction of Jerusalem His Second Coming. We can understand, even if we do not quite agree. The blood of Israel's rejected Salvation became its final doom. If Cyrus was God's servant to judge Israel in earlier days, Titus was Christ's in later days—if we still believe Christ to be the King of history. When He comes to judgment thus He comes *with His angels*. He uses the nations, even if they are but comparatively righteous, to execute the judgments He inflicts. If war can in no sense be Christian, we must give up the idea of any providential connection between the national murder of Christ and the destruction of the murdering nation.



This style of condemnation by Christ was like His manner of salvation—corporate. It is the kind of judgment, as of salvation, fitted for such a great crisis as His mission made in the history of a whole people, or of a world as a whole. The good are condemned with the bad, the bad are saved with the good. All were shut up unto judgment that mercy might be on all. Christ judged in wholes and saved in wholes. In wholes, but not in masses. The individual has his place in a whole, but not in a mass. In the mass he is but a unit, in the whole he is a member. Christ, on His way to dealing with the whole world, was not dealing with a mass of individuals, but with a nation. But it was a nation content to be led like sheep by a religion organised round a racial God and an egoist ideal, while the revelation it professed to honour and serve was that of Grace and Humanity. There are those to-day who beg us, at an hour like this, with a flickering will and a charity foreign to Christ, to think of the good features in the Kaiser, or of the many souls in Germany as Christian at least as ourselves. They bid us admire the self-sacrifice of individuals for their country there, or their patriotism, which has as good a right as our own. As if absolute loyalty to Satan were a title to regard. If they find little to choose between the combatants it is because they have lost the faculty of moral choice (or never had it) in a religion of mere sympathy and its irresolution. They may be reminded that the judgment we have to inflict in God's name on Germany, like Christ's on the Pharisees, since it means business has nothing to do at such a juncture with individual cases, and can not tarry on exceptions. They may be urged to escape from a trivial piety, and to acquaint and accustom themselves with this Christianity in the great style. They may be invited to grasp, with New Testament Christianity, the idea of a whole nation's perdition and judgment; its racial solidarity too tribal to emit Christian protest at moral enormity; a whole public too tractable and gregarious to be trustees of Christian principle, liberty, or humanity; a national soul lost, in its own idolatry, to the Kingdom of God; and, falling on these, a national visitation from God which avenges, on the best of the people as well as the worst, their common neglect to watch the Government with a brief for His Kingdom.

It is not hard to make caricatures of Pharisaism, and to waste powder on such guys, to picture obvious humbugs and pillory them. The view of those who so regard the old Pharisaism is quite unhistoric. It is quite blind to its religious earnestness, so faithful in its faithlessness, so false in its truth, so sincerely and sacrificially devoted to its egoisms and ambitions, and therefore so much the more deadly. The real Pharisee is the last person to be able to put his finger on real Pharisaism. It is easy to voice

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the obvious verdict, which it needed no Son of God to pass, on Pecksniffs and Chadbands; while the subtle judgment of His searching and startling Spirit on themselves or their age people evade, along with the bracing repentance, the revolutionary ethic, the mental reconstruction, it would stir.

## II.

The conversion called for by Jesus was thus a conversion from the most reputable and national Churchmanship of the day. And to be quite explicit we may observe two things.

(a) It was not the sin of the *wicked* that troubled Jesus so much as the sin of *goodness*.

(b) Nor was it the *sins*, or lapses, of the good he was most severe with, but their *goodness*, the kind of goodness that left such sin possible, as troubled Him most, sin public or social.

Bad religion may do more mischief than none. There are worse things than ill-doing. The morality that urges reform was worth less to Christ than the morality embedded in repentance. It was not so much the glaring sins, nor the social anomalies, that Christ denounced—the things everybody could see to be wrong and cheer their denouncer. He did not delight in shaming men by the exposure of single sins, nor of individual sin, or wrong, or inconsistency, in the way of the slashing preacher. Love prefers to be somewhat silent in the knowledge of such things. Christ was most popular, not when He was preaching His Gospel, but when He was bearding the upper and more religious classes. It was only on such an occasion (as I have said) that we are told the commonalty heard Him gladly. They cheered the attack rather than the message. The context of Mark xii., 37, makes this quite clear. And this was the class-popularity that forsook Him and fled.

As to (a). Judgment begins at the House of God, and Jesus was more severe with the leaders of His native faith. There are demagogues, even Christian demagogues, and champions, who never once have turned to rebuke their own side or to criticise their own followers; these are always fine fellows and always right. Those champions would lose their lead if they did. They have criticism but no insight; they are partisans but not prophets; tribunes of the people rather than eyes of the Spirit. They represent party egoism. This Lover of children, this Magdalen-Blessor, whose words to her were richer than her oils and tenderer than her tears, was almost as rough with His disciples as with the Pharisees. And this mind of His was a spirit that the first Church quickly caught. The Evangelists are at least as careful to record the rebukes of Jesus which judged the disciples as those which condemned the Pharisees or the outside world. And these Gospels

make it clear that it was Christ's judgment on the "good," the pious, of His day, coming to a head in His clearing of the Temple from their commercial monopoly, that brought the Cross to pass—as it is Mammon that has precipitated, if not made, the judgment of our present war.

As to (b). Jesus called the religious to repentance not merely because He condemned their sin, but because He condemned the goodness that left it possible. It was egoistic religion, whether in the individual or the national form. It was really egoist, though it thought itself devoted to God. It was seeking security while God sought service. This was the fundamental hypocrisy, which bore its fruit in due season, when the self-delusion worked out to delude and betray others. The wickedness of the world is not so hopeless as the self-satisfaction of Christians can be. The self-sure Kaiser, the Antichrist of the hour, is head of the German Church.

Not that Jesus denies the goodness of the "good," and calls it an evil effort. He does not, any more than He calls the sinners saints. The objectionably good really believe that obedience is the one thing needful, and that they obey with all their might. If only obedience were all! But it can be public perdition. It is so. It is His insight they lack into that God whose revelation gives obedience moral value (Matt. ix., 13). Obedience is no virtue unless the command be such as makes it a duty. The Pharisees differed from Jesus less by their spirit of obedience than by their insight of what should be obeyed. They had no moral imagination or sympathy. On the other hand, the "sinners" really sin, and know it as well as the "good" know their goodness. But it is far more hopeful to know well that you are a sinner than to be quite sure you are a saint. It is the sickly sentiment of the *littérateur* to say that the "sinners" were really the sound at heart, and that the "religious" were rotten; that the "bad lot" is at bottom "a good sort." Jesus never extenuated evil because those who did it were also likeable people, and did some good with a temperamental kindness. That is modern and maudlin when it is made the ground of moral judgment. The Bible aggravates evil, it does not extenuate it. Jesus never said that badness was good, or that it was not so very bad; only that those who were sinners and knew it were more hopeful and tractable for His purposes of mercy than those who were good and who knew it. But "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The "good" specially needed conversion, not because there was sin mixed with their obedience, but because their type of goodness was, or became, or tended to become, sin. What they lacked was moral insight. They did not know majesty nor mercy when they saw it. They were right in a wrong way. Their hardness was as

demoralising. God's right and ruined according to asylum. So that he is a good fellow brings.

In Christ are in more damnation. The goodness education of than badness. sion to sin unhumiliated passion. V create a strong Heaven in. may be more popular said be an alms.

There is apocalypse there is a P regard for those who also the pre into his carnality a justification and religious devotees of to-day is—Christ would of grace; i than the C which has de-ethicised for a nation among the of Luther: Rome.

demoralising as our softness. They were as keen as Christ about God's righteousness; it was their conception of it that debased and ruined them. Paul owned that they had a zeal to God, but not according to knowledge. The earnest piety was that of a blind asylum. So it will not do to say of a vendor of spiritual poison that he is a good earnest fellow. The need is not the religion of good fellows, but true positive religion, and the discernment it brings.

In Christ's teaching, the good, who are sure of their goodness, are in more peril than the bad who are sure of their badness. The damnation is greatest of those to whom it will be most of a surprise. The goodness, that stops short at a point satisfied, with its moral education finished, is more dangerous, because less practicable, than badness that does not think its education begun. The occasion to sin that rises out of self-satisfied goodness, unbroken and unhumiliated, is a worse temptation than that which rises out of passion. Well-doing becomes such a temptation because it may create a stronger sense of self than even passion does, by bringing Heaven in aid. Self then has God for guarantor. So the devotee may be more hopeless than the debauchee. The self-will of the popular saint, or the spiritual "side" of the cultured pietist, may be an almost incurable malady.

There is a Pharisaism of culture which has had an appalling apocalypse in the war. To say nothing of intellectual priggery, there is a Pharisaism of the ideal, which has a Greek ethic, a Jewish regard for proud, good form, and the incorrigible self-respect of those who have never seen the Holy in His burning bush. This also the prophet of a searching grace and a living faith must sweep into his call for the repentance that is the foundation of the new morality and the source of the last religion. The doctrine of justification by faith, says Wernle, is the one meeting point of ethic and religion. The Pharisees who made the Antichrist in Israel were as religious, scholarly, earnest, and efficient, and they were as much devotees of the Union of Church and State as the German Church to-day is—and as false to the Kingdom of God in any sense that Christ would have recognised. They worshipped power at the cost of grace; in their modern antitype the barrack goes for far more than the Church in the schooling of the public. Surely a Church which has so definitely rejected Christ's Kingdom of God, and so de-ethicised religion as to abet the official repudiation of morality for a nation has ceased to be a Church, and must become a pariah among the Churches of the future righteousness. This is the end of Lutheranism, and its reversion to an Antichrist worse than Rome.

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