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**PRACTICAL
CHRISTIANITY**

*Essays on
The Practice of Religion*

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INTRODUCTION

point. It simply needs to be applied as we are applying the other forces which are progressively being discovered for our uses.

This book is not a systematic treatise or exposition of Practical Christianity; it is rather a series of short essays, which illustrate and interpret phases of the Practical Christian life, which indicate the method of the kingdom and which seek to manifest the Spirit's power in the life and society of our time. Most of these chapters have already been printed as editorials, but it is hoped that they may have a further service in this collected form. Chapter LII, on the Message of Quakerism is now printed for the first time. It is not intended to be a complete interpretation of Quakerism, nor is the point of view here set forth confined to Quakersism by any means. It is merely an attitude of life and teaching which has been characteristic of Friends and which for want of a better title is here called the Message of *Quakerism*.

"Forgive them where they fail in truth
And in thy wisdom make me wise."

Haverford, Pennsylvania, 1899.

CHAPTER I

THE SUPREME DEMONSTRATION

CHRISTIANS are continually being asked to prove that Christianity is true, and they generally point to the various books of "evidences" as an answer. There are historical proofs, monumental proofs, literary proofs, so that the events of the life of Jesus are as well authenticated as any events of antiquity. But we are told that Christianity makes assumptions of a Divine origin and a Divine manifestation which no amount of historical evidence could ever prove after nineteen hundred years. It claims an Incarnation, and it assumes that through Christ God gives men eternal life. How can any book of evidence prove such claims as that? Must we not admit that no proof is possible? The two leading exponents of apostolic Christianity—Paul and John—have given us a method of proof or demonstration which is peculiarly suited to the temper and spirit of our modern ways of thinking and of testing truth. John says, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness

in himself," and Paul, on the top wave of his great inspiration, says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." In other words the supreme demonstration of spiritual truths is an internal evidence—a witness within the soul itself. We know by immediate, first-hand knowledge that two and two are four, or that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, or that a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time. These things are self-evident, we say. The mind is of such a nature that we cannot doubt them. In the same way we "prove" our own existence—we have the witness within ourselves, and no amount of argument could ever shake us out of the conviction, for it is based on first-hand evidence. Now our two apostles bring the whole content of spiritual revelation—the mighty message of eternal life—down to a test of a similar demonstration. It is not dependent upon historical evidence alone; it is open to the same proof as our axioms of mathematics, or even our own existence.

Christianity professes to be a revelation from God; it proclaims salvation from sin, and a new life in Christ; it offers the privilege of sonship with God, and it promises to fill believers with the spirit of love. Now the

only possible proof of such claims and promises is the demonstration of personal experience. "Try it and see," is all we can say to the skeptical. It would be impossible to prove that two and two are four to a person who had no internal faculty of perceiving mathematical truth; it would, too, be impossible to prove to a man that he existed if he had no self-consciousness of it. So, too, the only proof that we have power through Christ "to become sons of God," IS TO BECOME ONE; the only demonstration that He can save from sin and give new life IS TO BECOME SAVED AND TO RECEIVE THE NEW LIFE. Does anybody want any better evidence of the greatest spiritual truths of Christianity? The only evidence of the sunrise is that you see it with your own eyes; the only evidence that one's mother is good and loving is that one FEELS her love.

Thus in our last resort we fall back upon the "demonstration of the Spirit," and cry back with this witness within, "Abba, Father." We know Christ is Divine, for He has worked a divine work within *us*; we know He has power over sin, for He has taken away *ours*; we know that He brings spiritual life, for He has quickened us, and made us sit in heavenly places; we know that the atonement is a reality, for we have been reconciled with God,

and are at peace with Him. Scholastic theology dealt with abstractions, and based its doctrines on logic and authority; apostolic Christianity bases itself on the demonstration of the Spirit of God to the spirit of man, on the witness within, the supreme evidence—the soul's grasp of first-hand truth. The revival of this apostolic position characterizes primitive Quakerism.

CHAPTER II

THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN

IN this world of ours all our spiritual truths, all our eternal realities, have to be *expressed* in temporal, human and changing forms. No matter how pure and exalted the truths, its embodiment must be more or less imperfect. In fact, it is absolutely impossible to find a permanent and unvarying expression for any idea. There have been stagnant centuries which have kept unchanged the crystallized forms which they inherited, and they have supposed that faith would cease to be if this particular form of truth should vanish away. The Pharisee could not imagine a true religion without circumcision and the blood of bulls and goats; the Roman Catholic of the fifteenth century could not believe that real religion would survive if the doctrine of trans-substantiation—the real presence in the bread and wine—should be given up. The Calvinist supposed that his articles of faith were a permanent embodiment of truth and his plan of salvation the only possible one.

They all conceived of truth as something which could be expressed once for all in a form which all coming ages must keep unchanged. As well might we expect to bottle up the daylight to preserve it, or fix this infinite life about us in nature into one unchanging form, to be preserved through all seasons, years and centuries. The moment one tries to "fix" life and crystallize into a set shape, it ceases to be *life*. The characteristic of life is its power to make its own form and expression, ever changing, ever developing, ever modifying its form, and yet keeping its essence. Truth is never some dead thing which can be "laid out;" it is living, moving, quickening, outgrowing its old forms, taking on new expressions and preserving itself, as life does, by endless variations and by infinite embodiments.

There are transitions going on in every age. The things that can be shaken are removed, and the things that have waxed old vanish away. These things always bring trial to faith, for it is difficult for most persons to distinguish between the temporary form—i. e., the human embodiment—and the eternal and abiding truth which lives on in the midst of change and vanishing forms.

Here comes the great test of spiritual power and insight. Those who have "short vision"

and a traditional faith build on the temporal, and cling to the form which has grown familiar and dear to them, but if anything shakes *this* their faith is shattered, and they suffer shipwreck. Those, however, who have real spiritual vision look through the temporal and fleeting, through the transitory forms and embodiments, and settle their hearts and their faith upon the eternal reality,—the Infinite Self who abides and works through all changes. Their faith blooms in the midst of transition periods; they look calmly on while "the things that can be shaken" are being removed, and they have no fear when the things which have "waxed old" are vanishing away, for they know that those things which cannot be shaken must remain. There is no safety in this present time of transition and of changing form and expression to be found by closing the eyes or hiding the head in the sand, as the ostrich is said to do. The only safe and sure course is to reach *through* the outward and find the eternal, to rest back upon the everlasting arms, to have a personal *initiation* into the riches of the glory of this "mystery" "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory," to get free in the living truth. The things which we see are temporal, the things which the spiritual vision finds real are eternal.

CHAPTER XIV

NO SIGN SHALL BE GIVEN

THERE is but one occasion on record which drew a deep sigh of discouragement from the heart of Jesus. Twice He wept; once in sympathy with mourners, though not in hopeless grief, because He was conscious at the same time that He was the resurrection and the life, and again over Jerusalem, because He saw that only on the ruins of the Jerusalem He loved could the more perfect Jerusalem arise. But this "deep sigh" was different. It was called out by a hopeless situation which came before Him in His ministry. The people who failed to feel the power of the truth He taught, and were incapable of appreciating His spiritual revelation, came demanding that He should authenticate or prove His revelation by a physical "sign." "He sighed deeply and said, 'No sign shall be given.'" In fact, from the nature of the case no sign could be given. Spiritual truth must be taken at first-hand or not at all. No physical sign could be given to prove, or authenticate Christ's message of

Divine love, of forgiveness of sin, of sonship with God, or the possibility of a life hid with Christ in God.

One of Christ's severest temptations was the suggestion that He should miraculously make bread for Himself out of stone. It was a temptation to use His marvelous powers, but it threatened His very Messiahship, for if He had yielded He could have brought no redemption to man. If bread is made out of stones by a miracle for Him who comes as a Saviour of men, it at once puts Him out of relations with those whom He came to save. We must toil and struggle, and eat our bread in the sweat of our brows, and if He refuses to taste man's hardship and want, and eats the bread of miracle, He ceases to be in all points like us, and, not sharing our life, He cannot be our complete Redeemer. He could not yield and still be the Saviour.

The impossibility of yielding to the cry for a physical miraculous "sign" is made still clearer during the crucifixion. The mocking priests and scribes ask for a last sign: "If He be the Christ, let Him come down from the cross that we may believe." It was the very thing which would have proved Him no Christ at all. The gift of Himself, the manifestation of Divine love, His faithfulness unto death did

prove His Sonship and attest His message, but the sign they demanded was forever impossible for Him, who even on the cross proves His spiritual power, not by coming down Himself, but by lifting a dying thief out of his old, ruined life, up, up, until he sees the meaning of love and sonship, and can BE WITH CHRIST in paradise.

This power to transform a life, and bring it into Divine relation, is the supreme sign; it is the only sign by which Christ could attest His spiritual message. Magdalen is a "sign;" Simon, the wavering, fickle, impetuous fisherman, changed to Peter, the apostle of Jesus Christ is a sign; John, the son of thunder, wishing to call down fire on the Samaritans, transformed into the apostle of love, is a sign; Paul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, leading men and women to prison, changed to Paul with his life hid with Christ in God, who, so "crucified with Christ," can say in truth, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," he is a sign. Every soul since, which through Christ is turned from its prodigal life, and cried, Abba, Father," has found Christ's truth true, and has become a living sign to others. No other sign shall be given to this or any other generation.

Each generation in its own way asks for a sign. Crowds gather around the spiritualistic "medium" to get a material "sign" that the soul lives after death, but not thus shall the great truth of immortality be proved. One generation expects the astronomer with his telescope to find an indisputable sign in the starry heavens; another asks the geologist to dig up one from the strata of the earth's crust, or the biologist to find a sign in the cells of living forms. It is because of the failure to find God in material things that a modern poet has cried out in hopelessness:

"The God I never once behold,
Above the cloud, beneath the clod;
The unknown God, the unknown God."

—WILLIAM WATSON.

The trouble is, he is looking in the wrong direction for Him, and he is asking for a sign which cannot be given. "God is love," let us remember, and He can be *found* only where love can be, and the sign must be sought in a human heart that can feel and test a spiritual truth.

That is the meaning of Tennyson's great lines in "In Memoriam," written when his own heart was yearning for a sign that God is love and that life goes on. He says:

"I found him not in world or sun,
In eagle's wing or insect's eye;
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun.

"If e'er when faith hath fallen asleep
I heard a voice, 'Believe no more'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

"A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath, the heart
Stood up and answered, 'I HAVE FELT.'"

This first-hand knowledge, by experience—is the only all-sufficient attestation of a spiritual truth, and however much we may long for tests through our senses, and for signs that are tangible, we must at last get where we can receive His beatitude, "blessed are they that have not yet seen, yet have believed," and cry out, because our hearts know Him, "my Lord and my God."

CHAPTER XV

PISGAH VIEWS OF LIFE

"Now I see all of it,
Only I'm dying!"

WHAT lives we might live if we could only begin life with the wisdom which we shall possess when we stand at its close, and look back on it and realize that our earthly opportunities are at an end! How trivial much of one's life must seem viewed from its farther end, and how strenuous and earnest it would be if it could be lived over in the light of the experience which these closing moments bring! It is not well to be haunted by the shadow of death, and it is an indication of an unhealthy and morbid condition; but it might be well occasionally, if we could take Pisgah views of life, and see it—see our own lives—in what the philosophers call an "eternal aspect."

Most of us live for the hour; we do what pleases us at the time. We see a pleasure or a task close at hand, and we enjoy the one and brace ourselves to perform the other, and we live largely as the creatures of circumstance,

CHAPTER XX

A RELIGION OF POWER

THERE have been many ways of regarding religion, and different persons to-day think of it differently. It is very common to speak of it as some thing which one "gets" or "accepts." "He got religion," the neighbors say, or "he has always kept his religion through every trial." It is not uncommon to think of it as a statement of belief or faith which a person holds. "I accept the doctrine of the Trinity, of the atonement, and of eternal life, and eternal punishment, therefore I have religion;" thus many a person explains his religion. To such a one it consists largely of correct definitions. Another class of persons care nothing for definition; they consider religion to be a good life; they say: "I do about right, I live up to my light and I do not believe God will be hard on me."

There is still another way of viewing religion. It is the power of God manifested in life. It does not begin with definitions, it does not consist of living about right, it is not some-

thing one "gets." It comes and gets the person. He does not keep his religion, but his religion keeps him. It is a power, a force, just as real and just as persistent as that which we call gravitation, and its effects are just as sure. No definitions of electricity would ever light a man's house, or move a trolley car. The first step is to let the current in and the house becomes light, or the car moves. Everything bases itself on the ultimate, invisible power, which is simply RECEIVED. This is true of religion as it is of mechanics. There is no religion apart from God, and until a man comes to God and God gets him, the man is not truly religious. It consists first and last of possession—God's possession of us and our joy in the sense of His ownership. A religion without power would be like a gravitation which did not draw anything, or like electricity that had no force. Religion is spiritual gravitation. It draws the soul away from everything else to its true Central Sun. The first effect of it on a person is to beget love. Love is the unfailing sign of religion. A loveless religion is as impossible as a waterless ocean, or a treeless forest. If a man's religion does not flood him with love, it is the wrong kind of religion.

We have been speaking of what religion seems to us to be, now a word about how it comes. There has been in our world but one Person who was perfectly divine and perfectly human. He revealed God and He showed what it means to be a son. He also showed how to be a son, and he plainly said to the whole race, "I am the Way." Religion means getting to God, Christ is the way and love is the sign.

CHAPTER XXI

PENTECOST IN OUR CHRISTIANITY

PENTECOST was a definite date and a definite experience in the early church. It came fifty days after the crucifixion, and the second chapter of Acts gives us all the information we have of the event, as there is no other reference to it in the New Testament.

So far as we know, much that occurred on that particular day has never been repeated. There were visible and audible phenomena which nobody can now clearly explain and which are generally considered to have been a special dispensation for the benefit of the little group of believers who had it laid upon them to carry the Gospel to an unbelieving world.

The one feature of Pentecost which is as possible for us to-day as for apostles and friends of Jesus ten days after their Master had left their sight, is the reception of the Holy Ghost. We apparently do not need the gift of tongues, and the visible fire no longer sits on the head of a modern Christian. Every Christian does, however, need to have a consciousness of the

presence of the Spirit of God, and not one of us can afford to miss the power which comes when the Divine Spirit breaks through a human life. All that was really vital in the Jerusalem Pentecost may be repeated in the experience of every Christian, and our belief is that no one can be at his best until the Spirit of God floods his life and makes him see that salvation is infinitely more than the mere escape from the just penalty of sin.

"He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," i.e., he who apprehends Christ and puts Him on, he whose life is hid with Christ, finds that his human spirit is taken up into the Divine Spirit and the Spirit-life becomes natural and habitual, but the Pentecost experience does not mean that Christ has gone and that we have gained something better. Christ is never gone out of the Christian's life. The very way to gain the full life of the Spirit is to be joined to the Lord; there is no other way to it. Those who profess to get beyond the morality and the teaching and the drawing of Christ into a state above law and order are sailing without chart or compass and are steering straight for the rocks.

We do not say that the minister needs a different kind of experience than the humblest member of the body. No attainable degree of

life or of baptism is too good for the Christian with the one talent or the half of a talent, if they are ever divided. The ministers, the teachers, the evangelists, need a "gift" which perhaps the ordinary member does not have. We call a man a minister because we recognize his gift, but the man who picks stones in the field, who builds the house, who sits at the receipt of custom in the bank, needs to be filled with the fullness of God, as well as the minister does, to enable him to lead the overcoming life, which is after all the only true life. There is a striking difference between the diamond, the sapphire and the opal, but it is the same light which makes all three beautiful. We are all different in our make-up and character, but the thing which makes any Christian, in any walk of life, a man of power is his union with Christ, and his life in the Spirit. Whether we can tell of the rushing, mighty wind or not, we all ought to be able to show that the Spirit has come and has made Pentecost a present reality for us.

and turmoil, the grind of labor, and the search for enjoyment, the clink of wine glasses and the indulgence in dangerous pleasures—with no break or interruption—would leave man a distorted wreck. Upon every life under the blue sky the peace and quiet of the Lord's Day should fall and let the reality of higher things impress itself. Spiritual life demands one day at least in seven, and no people can remain long spiritual if the world gets every day.

This holy day is necessary for preserving the sweet influences of the home circle; the hard pressed laborer must have it unless he is to be made a blind machine with no higher, sweeter life. Around this Lord's Day a circle of separation should be drawn. We must not let it become like other days. It should be to our souls what the spring showers are to the flowers, and we should make it a Lord's Day to all who are weary and heavy-laden. It is to save life, not to destroy. It is to lift hearts into an ampler and diviner life. It is to make earth a holier place, and though we cast no stone at him who picks up sticks on this day, as in the old dispensation, yet it is our sacred duty to make it a day of holy uses for the higher life.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE GOSPEL OF THE SON OF GOD

SOLDIERS are always talking about the enormous "waste" of powder which is a feature of every battle whether on land or sea. For every bullet that takes effect hundreds are shot into the air or into the ground. If this were not so an attacking army would be annihilated before it reached the position it is attempting to carry. The wildness of the aim is therefore one of the merciful features of a battle.

Strangely enough this wildness of aim, this same waste of ammunition, characterizes all our great spiritual contests as well. In the hot and prolonged fight with the forces of sin nothing is more discouraging than this same false aim and waste of energy. Read the history of our nineteen centuries of Christianity and see how few of the shots have been straight at the enemy's head. Look at the militant church to-day and see what a tremendous waste of force there is. Christians seem bound to fight everything but the real enemy, and when they

find a man who does open fire on the central fortress, the others are quite likely to open fire on him, because he isn't shooting nine-tenths of his weapons into the air.

Jesus Christ always refused the random aims and went straight to the mark. The airshooters of His day were always trying to turn Him off the main line to an attack on phantom enemies, but He never swerved an iota. They came with their metaphysical question, whether hereditary sin made a poor man blind, or whether it was his own sin. Christ brushed away the whole logical quibble and showed them that the main thing was the present opportunity to work the work of God on the man who needed help. They never ceased to buzz about Him with hard problems about the Messianic kingdom. He refused to waste force on idle discussion with those who were too blind in their own conceits to appreciate any new truth, and He simply announced that "the pure in heart see God," and the poor in spirit are in the kingdom. Tricky questions about the resurrection and tribute money were simply occasions for Him to unfold the great truth that God is the God of the living, whether in the visible or invisible world, and that we can safely trust Him, and that neither is to be slighted.

It is easy for us to get over our depth on every subject connected with spiritual things if we only allow ourselves to tumble into the slough of speculation. But what is gained by it? Religion wants to keep out of all these quicksands and deal with facts that can be tested.

The Gospel of the Son of God is the message for to-day as it was when the "blessed feet" trod the hills of Judea. Tell men as He did of the Father's love. Declare everywhere His power and His readiness to forgive sin. Show as He did that the pure heart has an immediate evidence, an unmistakable proof of God. Herald the kingdom of God as a fact, and make men see its reality. Preach the Gospel of Redemption—Christ giving His life for sinners and in infinite love showing how the Divine Heart yearns for every soul. Make men understand that Christianity is not a web of metaphysical and abstract theories, but God revealing Himself in a Son and so giving Life to the world. Oh, friends, the Gospel of the Son is too precious a truth to be wasted in sham battles. Let us present it straight to men's hearts.

CHAPTER XLIII

DOES GOD REALLY LOVE US?

THE main message of the Gospel is the Love of God to men. The proclamation of this Love has always characterized genuine Christianity in every age and in every country. Nobody who rests his faith on the New Testament revelation can doubt the fact of God's Love. But there come times in the personal experience of many when this early faith in God's Love and Goodness is severely tried, when they find themselves clinging in the dark to a single spar, while the billows of doubt break over them. Such times perhaps never come in prosperity. It seems very easy to believe in God's Love when He is giving us just what we want, when all our prayers are answered as soon as we ask.

But when the heavens are as brass and the earth bars of iron, when some hard trial settles over us and we pray and plead for relief and none comes, when the plowshare resistly tears down to our primitive rock and our cries and groans prove ineffectual, then it is that the

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sensitive heart finds it hard to go on with the happy faith in God's Love. "If He loves me, why does He not help me? If He cares for me why does He not ease me of this too heavy burden?" Such words sometimes almost force themselves to the lips, when "He answers not a word." Those who have had no taste of this hard experience can hardly understand the feeling, and they very naturally take the position which Job's "comforters" did, but many a heart knows what it means to stretch lame hands of faith.

Is there any way to help such perplexed souls who are struggling to keep their faith in the furnace of trial, when no rift seems to open in the brazen sky? The first step must be to show that God's Love is not to be measured by the amount of temporal prosperity and comfort which He bestows, nor would it be an evidence of His Goodness if He always gave just what we want. Such treatment would make "spoiled children," not saints! We must strive, too, to help our perplexed friends see the supreme importance of the spiritual over the temporal. While in our short-sightedness we clutch after things which would give us temporary joy and comfort, God is training us to look only at the things which are unseen and eternal. His method of training often

seems like a hard one, but no other method would succeed in weaning us from the things of sense and in preparing us for the enjoyment of spiritual things. Finally we must help our perplexed friends to interpret their lives in the light of Christ's life. His life is the supreme revelation of God's Love and yet His Father never once relieved Him of a hard cup or of a baptism of trial. "If it is possible let this cup pass" is immediately followed by the words, "Thy will be done." The cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" gives place at once to the calm and trustful words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The whole mystery seems solved in that remarkable sentence, "It *became* Him in bringing many sons to glory to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." If we suppose God has no ultimate purposes in view for us, then of course the hard dispensations would indicate that He did not love us or care for us, but as soon as we look beyond the moment and see His purpose, we can join the chorus: "All things work together for good to them that love God!"

CHAPTER XLIV

THE INCARNATION

The time draws near the birth of Christ.'

MEN in all ages have longed for a REVELATION, for it has proved a baffling and hopeless struggle to climb up to God, and to find out God by human searching. Plato spoke for all the ancient searchers after truth when he said, "We shall never find the complete truth until God or some God-sent person comes to us." The glory of Christianity is its message that God has come to us. This is the central fact which gives Christianity its overcoming power, and it is this fact of the Incarnation which opens for man the door to life, truth, salvation and spiritual victory.

The moment we make the Incarnation a metaphysical puzzle, the moment we drift out into a sea of speculation about the Trinity, we lose the mighty significance of the fact. The New Testament nowhere treats it as a puzzle or a problem. It simply announces the crowning fact that God tabernacled with men, and manifested His Grace and Glory, and it

sets forth the end and purpose of this Divine showing—that we also may become sons. God comes to us that we may come to Him. The Word was with God; the Word was with man, and man with God completes the circle. “I am come, that they might have life,” sums up the whole purpose of the Incarnation.

It can never be reduced to a cold and logical doctrine; it must never be pressed as a dead flower and put away in a collection of abstract theological definitions. Let us keep it warm and vital, the perfect blossom whose fragrance still comes as fresh and full of healing as when it broke into flower under the “Syrian blue.” “God with us” is the first half of the great message; “we with God” is the second half, and no one fully comprehends the first half until he experiences the second half as a fact in his own life. He who comes to live his life in God no longer wonders and puzzles over the problem, How could God come to us? He realizes that perfected humanity and Divinity are not alien terms. The Divine nature can express itself in a perfect human life. God does not cease to be omnipresent and omniscient, though He at a definite period shows forth His glory and love in a Person who walks among men and teaches with human lips, who loves and suffers, who blesses and

heals, who forever makes love and sacrifice and sympathy, and grace and gentleness the supreme realities.

In no other way could God speak to us, and make His revelation comprehensible. If He wrote His thoughts on the vault of the sky we could not understand or interpret them. We must have some one, to reveal Him fully, who understands Him and us, and who speaks in terms common to both, one who completely closes the gap, one who brings God to us and us to God. “He became flesh and dwelt among us.” “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” These two sentences complete the circuit. The Incarnation is a twofold revelation,—a revelation of God and a revelation of human nature, a manifestation of what God is, and a revelation of what man is to be when he comes to God. We know well enough of ourselves what we are, away from Him; the Incarnation reveals what is the hope of our calling, and what the riches of the glory of God’s inheritance in us!

CHAPTER XLV

A RELIGION OF FOUR ANCHORS

IN the midst of the racking storm on the Adrian waters, in the darkness of the night, the captain of Paul's vessel cast out four anchors, and waited for the day. It may be only a fanciful symbol, but Paul's words on the ship indicate that he, too, had put out four anchors, which steadied him, and gave him his SPIRITUAL SOLIDITY amid the storms of his life. "I believe God;" "His I am;" "Him I serve;" "God hath given me those who sail with me." This is what we have called a religion of four anchors, and the person who has those four cables out can calmly wait for the day to break.

All religious life and power of high quality spring from a faith which believes God. The old-time strength—the quality in Peter which makes Christ call him the rock-man—comes not from a verbal faith, from a belief in second-hand testimony of any sort, or from "flesh and blood," but from a personal acquaintance with God, and an experimental certainty of

Him. The persons who are really anchored are the ones who reach up through all the lower stages of belief and reliance, and rest unshaken in a faith which goes behind the veil—"I believe God." That is the first step in the making of a spiritual "rock-man."

The second anchor is hardly less important, and that is, the sense of possession—"His I am." Our Quaker poet was expressing this sense when he said:

"I know not where God's islands lift
Their fronded palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

What a life a man might live if he could walk the earth possessed of the unfailing conviction, "I am God's!" It is not simply that he cares for me, nor even alone that He loves me, but "I belong to Him"—that sense of relationship ought to make a Christian as different from ordinary men as a Prince is different from a peasant, for it puts him at once into the rank of nobility, and makes it incumbent upon him to live as a son, not as a hired servant. This consciousness of the divine possession is surely the second step in the making of a spiritual "rock-man."

Then out of our belief of God, and our sense of belonging to Him comes the beautiful

certainty that He trusts *us* and gives us His work to do—"whom I serve." Many persons never get grounded in religious experience because they never attain to this certainty that God trusts them and makes them co-workers with Him. Hardly anything strengthens one's life, and solidifies one's faith like active service of some sort. "Backsliders" are generally those who never got to the point of being girded for service, and so never realized how necessary they were to God. It is very significant that after Christ told Peter that he was rock-like, he added also, "I will give unto thee the keys," for the keys in Oriental countries, were the badge of a trusted servant. Our fourth cable of spiritual strength is the realization that our personal faith is not confined in its effects to the narrow circle of our own lives, but that it has a wonderful influence over the destinies of others—"God has given thee those who sail with thee." No man of faith can live unto himself. The mother's faith affects the destiny of her child; the saint in the neighborhood "affects" the neighbors as though holiness were contagious. Much of the power of singularly spiritual men and women comes from their realization that the destiny of other lives is in some measure upon *them*. This sends the missionary and the

slum-worker to their task; this kindles the zeal of the reformer and the prophet, and this is no slight element of strength in the religious life of every profoundly spiritual man. I believe God, I am God's, God trusts and uses me, and I am responsible for others,—these are four anchors, and they are four strands of faith which make solid spiritual character.

CHAPTER LI

THE TEST OF CHRISTIANITY

WE have learned that it is never safe to estimate the worth and value of a man by the number of cubits which measure his stature. No foot-rule test gives the real capacity of a man, because personality cannot be measured by the yard.

Nevertheless the similar mistake is continually made of estimating a man's Christianity by some such inadequate foot-rule test. It would be well for us, if we could, to get back to the standards of Christ and the Apostles and see how they tested religion. The question never is, What kind of a coat do you wear? or what are your "views" on creation and sin and inspiration? or what do you think about the Sacraments? In fact, Christ never asked a man a theological question during his whole ministry. "Art thou desiring to be made whole?" "Dost thou love God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself? "Go and sin no more." "Her sins are forgiven, for she loved much," are some of the wonder-

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ful words which came from His lips when He was dealing with individual cases. When the Jews tried to catch Him with metaphysical and theological questions, such as "what sin caused this man to be blind?" or "whose wife will this woman be in the resurrection?" He immediately brushed away the fruitless abstractions and gave clear, practical answers: "This blind man is an occasion for the exhibition of God's power"—i.e., for working a work of God, and "If you read the Scriptures aright you would understand that God is the God of the living, and that you must not measure the heavenly life by the limitations of the earthly life."

John's tests of Christianity are quite different from those which we use to-day. He again makes no reference to things which we consider tests of soundness: "Every one that loveth is born of God." "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love." "We know that we dwell in Him, because we have His Spirit." "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." "Whoever is born of God sinneth not." "He that hath the Son of God hath life."

It can be quickly seen that these are no light and easy tests, and that a man who could answer all our articles of belief and

make a great display of theological orthodoxy, might at the same time fail in every point of John's tests. He that loveth, he that has the Spirit in his heart and life, he that overcometh the world, he that does not commit sin—what a sifting!

Now there has been and still is great danger of making so much of theological tests of soundness that these deeper, truer and more spiritual tests—which are the only ones of importance to Christ and the Apostles—should be overlooked. There are Christians to-day who decide upon a man's Christianity by his intellectual opinions and conclusions, rather than by the spiritual condition of his heart and his life, though it is an unscriptural position to take. The end and aim of religion—we cannot say it too often—is to bring men to God and to make them Christlike, and religion has never done its perfect work in a man until it fills his life with the Holy Spirit and his heart with love. Right belief upon questions which directly affect the spiritual life is tremendously important, and faith is the very hand by which we grasp and appropriate the divine realities; but we have no more right to rule men out of Christ's kingdom on the test of an intellectual shibboleth than we have to count devils in, simply because they believe

and tremble. The time has come when men's minds must be left free to look at every fact in God's world, and to come to the best conclusions they can upon them, and we must estimate their Christianity by New Testament tests, which are invariably spiritual tests, and measure the life and faith by Christ's standards.

CHAPTER LII

THE MESSAGE OF QUAKERISM

EVERY great religious movement starts out of some single fundament religious principle, but if it is to have extensive and permanent effect upon human society, it must ultimately ramify and illumine the whole realm of thought and the entire range of life and activity. The significant periods of history are those ages when men have caught a new and clearer glimpse of God and have set their lives by new and higher standards. There is a widely accepted theory that the true religion is forever fixed and unchangeable. It is a rigid system of doctrines, mysteriously communicated, not to be questioned by reason, to be accepted by faith and to be guarded as the absolute truth, crystalized into a form suited to every age and every race of men.

A very slight study of history undermines that theory. The moment a religion becomes only a system of thought or a crystalized truth, its service to the world is over, it can no longer feed living souls, for it offers only a

stone where bread is asked; and furthermore, such a religion becomes a dangerous hindrance to the advance of truth and a menace to a free access of the individual soul to its living God. On the contrary, religion can never become a fixed and unchangeable thing, for religion is the soul's life in God and its response to Him; and therefore it must be as free as life, and it will have its high tides and its low, its ebbs and its floods, as history shows us has been the fact.

Religion always begins with a manifestation, a revelation of God and the soul's answer to it. Heathen religions sprung from a sense of awe awakened in the presence of manifestations of power, in thunder and lightning, in mighty storms, in sun-rise, in the rush of a great river, in the sublimity of the dome of the sky. The Christian religion begins with the revelation of God's *love*, in an Incarnation, in a Personality.

"Think, Abib, dost thou think?
So, the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands have fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power, nor may'st conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love
And thou must love me who have died for thee!'" *

"An Epistle."—Robert Browning.

Christianity begins with the appearance of a Being who is genuinely human so that he can speak to human conditions and genuinely Divine so that he can reveal God. This revelation through Personality—the Word made flesh—shows the Divine thought *i.e.* that man was meant to be in the Divine image, to be a son, and it shows the Divine heart beating for us in our errors, our struggles, our sins. The whole gospel is summed up in the story of the Prodigal who comes to himself and goes to the Father and finds His love still warm and His arms still out for the embrace that welcomes to sonship. Christianity, then, was meant to be a free river to grace and life flowing from God through human lives and making all things new.

It soon crystalized into a church that was partially paganized by contact with the old world. It shut out all approach to God except through its narrow channels. It claimed that God could speak only through the hierarchy of priests, that grace could come only through certain fixed sacraments, that truth could be found only in one book. God became a distant being, Christ became a mystical messenger from Him to found an infallible Church. The Virgin and the saints became the real intercessors between human hearts and

the distant God. The glowing truths given to the world at such tremendous cost and sacrifice hardened into cold dogmas which had to be accepted on pain of condemnation for heresy and those who thought were forced to agree with the interpretations of the past or to stop thinking altogether. The world sank into decrepitude, a condition still preserved in Spain. Christianity seemed dying a natural death. Then came an age of awakening, an emancipation. A new world was discovered. Printing was invented and books were made for rich and poor alike. Copernicus made a complete revolution of thought by his discovery that the sun is the centre of our system of worlds, and the earth only a planet which revolves about it. This discovery made modern science possible. Luther inaugurated another revolution in thought in his profound spiritual discovery that "justification is by faith." It seemed a simple truth, but it broke the power and dominion of the Latin Church and exalted at once the importance of the individual. Each man stands in an individual relation to God and he is responsible directly for his soul and for his faith. Protestantism is the gospel of individuality. Like the discovery of Copernicus, it finds a new centre. Before, everything revolved about the Church and the

hierarchy. Henceforth, Christ is the centre and each man's orbit is determined by his relation to Christ. But it was impossible for the Reformers to break entirely with the historic Church. They were the creatures of their age, and their roots had grown deep in the soil of mediæval thought. The time had not then come, perhaps it has not yet fully come for the realization of the Christian ideal. But in the middle of the 17th century in England, an honest effort was made to set forth a constructive principle which should transform man and society and which, when worked out in practical life should affect the entire race, and it contains, I believe, the seeds of apostolic Christianity transplanted in new soil and after long centuries of waiting.

The central note of Quakerism, as it was originally promulgated, is the truth that man's salvation and higher life are personal matters between the individual soul and God, that the living Christ brings the soul into newness of life in Him, and that there is a clear witness of the fact established in the consciousness of the believer and in his changed life and nature. It is what the Apostle calls "the demonstration of the spirit."

It is the kind of evidence a man has of light when he opens his eyes and the sunlight

streams in. It is the kind of evidence an artist has of beauty when he stands caught by the glory of a sunset; it is the kind of evidence an experimenter has of the power of electricity when the current from the dynamo thrills through him to the ends of his fingers and the roots of his hair. It is an evidence not from external authority but from the immediate perception of the soul. Paul dates his religious life from an experience which he compares to a *fiat lux* of creation. "God," he says, "shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." In language which means almost precisely the same thing, George Fox dates his religious crisis. "When all my hope was gone so that I had nothing outward to help me, then O! then, I heard a voice which said 'There is one, even Jesus Christ, that can speak to thy condition' and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy." The whole spiritual life springs immediately from God and that is why there is no danger that religion will come to an end. So long as God continues to surround our lives and break in upon sensitive hearts, there will be those who find in Christ an incarnation of God who is near us all and who only waits for a window to open when his light breaks in and makes

life seem clear and real. As Sabatier has said, men are "incurably religious," and sincere and earnest souls will continue to find God and know Him when He reveals Himself to them in the face of Jesus Christ. We live in an age when the worth and meaning of everything are tested. We do not care how old a theory is, or how sacred it was in the middle ages; we ask at once, is it true? Does it meet our need, does it speak to our condition? Now the message of Quakerism carries men beyond the props and scaffoldings and stands them face to face with a living God. It declares that men were meant for God and that a man can never be his true self until God possesses him. That his darkness is made, like that of the earth, because he lives in his own shadow. Wheel about and the light fronts you, and has been shining all the time. You made your own darkness. Now, no amount of ceremony or of subscription to theological dogmas will save a man who still keeps his face away from God, and still lives in the dark while he is holding in his lean hands the rags of his external profession. Life, religion, sonship begin with the creation of a new man within a man, and there is no substitute for this. The Christian religion is not a theory, not a plan, not a scheme, but a dynamic force, *i. e.* the

power of God unto salvation, and every soul who comes to himself and goes to the Father has a more immediate consciousness of God as a reality than the most philosophical man has of the reality of the earth on which his feet stand, for the earth must always be a foreign object of inference, while the Quaker message tells of a Christ who becomes a part of our very life and "is closer to us than breathing, nearer than hands and feet." There, then, the Quaker message comes with sure help to our agnostic age, to men who have seen the old land marks vanish one by one. It begins by saying, put Christianity to a practical test. Try it as you try the great laws of science. How do you know that the law of gravitation is true? You feel it tug upon you. You see every particle of matter in the visible universe obey it. It swings satellites and planets before your eyes. It draws the whole ocean and dashes it up the beach twice each day. You cannot doubt it. How do you know there is any spiritual power, any Divine truth, any God of love, any Christ who can redeem from sin? There is only one sure test. Try it. Throw yourself on God as you plant your foot on the rock. Act as though God walked by your side every minute. Turn your face to Christ, follow Him, obey every gleam of light

you get. Set yourself stubbornly against every shadow of a sin that crosses your track and resolve that if there is a God in the universe, you will find Him, know Him, love Him. The result is—the testimony is universal—the soul that does that always finds God, always does get led into the truth, always does become renewed and transformed. Quakerism builds upon this demonstration of the Spirit, and in so doing, it is in harmony with all the great leaders of modern philosophy, notably, Descartes, Kant, Fichte and Hegel, all of whom build their systems on the immediate testimony of self-consciousness. No discovery of science, no conclusion of criticism, no possible advances of thought, no separations by time from Divine transactions on which the historic Church is builded, can for a moment endanger this immediate and dynamic faith. In place of external sacraments, which at best could never be more than outward symbols of some reality, and which could only have had a use in the transition period when the Church was hampered by its Jewish swaddling clothes, the Quaker message substitutes an efficient baptism, a direct incoming of Divine forces for the transformation and control of the whole man, and a feeding of the soul with spiritual

bread which shows its effect in deepened life and an ever increased spirituality.

This means, then, that the Quaker message is a call for a perfected man and a perfected society. It builds on the belief that man was not meant to live in sin. That salvation does not mean a scheme for escaping the penalty due for our sins; but it is a power by which we are enabled to destroy sin itself, subdue it, put it down, triumph over it in the strength of a new life which comes from participation in the Life—the Vine of which we should be organic branches. Its goal is to put man in the condition Adam was in before he fell, or rather into a higher condition still, for the man who has faced the moral struggle, who has tasted the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and has through Divine grace won his way upward to the shining height where he is a king and priest—crowned and mitered—is almost inconceivably higher than a being that has not yet felt the tug of temptation.

Quakerism does not limit the promulgation of this truth to any single channel. It draws no hard and fast line between clergy and laity. Every person, whether male or female, who receives the demonstration of the Spirit and finds himself joined the Lord, as a member, is a propagator of this holy order, this spiritual

society, this City of God, this Kingdom of Heaven, this priesthood of saints.

It is not dependent for its faith on anything which investigation or criticism can touch or weaken. We stake our whole case on the fact that our lives are circled by the Divine Life, that the Christ who was in the flesh at a definite period of history is a living Christ and forms Himself within all souls who turn to Him, that religion begins with an immediate consciousness of our need of Him and a voluntary choosing that He shall be our Redeemer and Controller. It mounts higher and higher as our creative faith lays hold of Him as a present reality and works its effects in transformation, in victory over sin, in manifest power, in fruits of character and the production of Christlikeness. Out of this consciousness of Christ, already found and His will revealed to us, we have an absolute ground to build on.

Every line of Revelation, every lesson of history, helps us see God's purpose. In the New Testament we have revealed the life and mission of the Christ who still works as of old. We see there the Divine Heart, His sorrow for sin, His method of redemption, His idea of society, His estimate of the worth of man. This whole story unfolds with overwhelming power upon those who know its truth in the

experience of their own lives, for it comes as the word of the Father whom the child knows already. Everything about this religion is vital. Its test is life; it begins in a birth; it proves itself true by its increasing life and it is as sure of eternity as God is, for it is what it is through living union in Him.

This is a religion which not only makes us sure of heaven ultimately, but free in the truth *now*, conscious of His forgiveness and immediate presence *now*, able to withstand temptation *now*, victorious over sin *now*, possessed of peace and secure from fears *now*, triumphant in the power of the living spirit and in present possession of an earnest of eternal life.

We are not called to the *other* wordly but *this* wordly. Here is our sphere, here is our arena. We are not to stand gazing up into heaven. We are rather to build in our layer in the walls of a new Jerusalem here on the earth. Our knighthood is not to be spent, or our spurs won in searching for some mystical Holy Grail, some sacred cup which would heal disease, and transform society and usher in the new and perfect order, if we could only find it. We are rather called to manifest the power of God in a practical Christian life. Let disease and misery find from our own

hands a healing and comforting touch. Let the sore-tempted and erring learn from our life how sin can be conquered and victory gained. May our faith burn and glow so that some hard beset and doubting one may kindle his faith from ours. Let our fight with sin and evil and corruption be so genuine and strenuous that we shall use only the weapons of righteousness and truth. Let us never forget that we are serving God and truly engaged in religious service when we are working and struggling to uplift and enlighten mankind, and to create a better and a truer citizenship and a cleaner political life.

Religion is not a one-seated chariot, with horses of fire to carry us safely to heaven above and apart from the din and the stress of this imperfect world. The palm and the robe are won by the saints who fight the good fight and lift at the real burdens of the world.

It is a part of our business to demonstrate that modern thought, and scholarly research do not undermine religion and that Christianity is not outdated and superseded. We must stand for and illustrate a type of Christianity which affects and vitalizes the whole man, which animates and vivifies every strata of society and which expands to meet the growing need of the world.

Instead of closing our eyes let us see all the facts and go where the truth leads us. So long as God reigns and our Alpha and Omega is alive forever more we are not going to suffer shipwreck simply because we are discovering that some of the notions which the mediæval church taught us must be revised in the light of further thought. It used to be believed that the earth rested on an elephant and the elephant on the back of a tortoise. Alas, we have had to give up this childish theory, and now we find that nothing holds us, except an invisible and intangible power of gravitation, whatever that may be! But who would prefer an elephant and tortoise and who feels afraid that this unseen cord will break or that something will unbind the sweet influence of the pleiades or loose the bands of orion?

Little by little we have been pushed back from one material outpost to another until at last we find that our faith must ultimately rest upon an invisible and intangible God, an impalpable Spirit of Life and Love, who never writes on the sky with His finger, who never shows His face to telescope or microscope, who never lets us catch Him at work.

" Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky and in the mind of man—

A motion and a spirit that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things."

But who that has seen the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, who that has felt his own heart drawn by that manifestation of Love, who that has had his own life transformed and made victorious by that spiritual power wants the material sign, or feels afraid for his religion because he has only God left? No, the foundation stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. Let us

"Correct the portrait by the living face,
 Man's God by God's God in the mind of man."

CHAPTER LIII.

THE EFFECT OF DISCOURAGEMENT

FEW of us realize how much our view of things is affected by our sense of success or of defeat. People who are continually prosperous, and who have no knowledge of the dead strain of pushing on in the face of insuperable obstacles, naturally have different views of life from those who tug day after day at a great burden which their human hands cannot roll off, and who see failure and defeat follow their best efforts. The successful man finds it hard to sympathize with those who are steadily unsuccessful, for he cannot put himself in their place, he cannot possibly feel as they feel, and consequently he does not understand how they can hold such views.

Consciously or unconsciously, our ideas of God and of heaven, and all our religious conceptions, grow colored as we look out through successes or through defeats. The theology of the Puritan was in harmony with the gloom and struggle which filled such a place in his life. He found himself in a world where the good

His nature, or that we are afraid to trust Him. The real trouble often is that we pray without thinking of what our words imply—we are not putting our real meaning into our words. Such praying will not help us grow spiritually, for mere lip praying may easily become an empty form. The lesson we all need most to learn is how to make our prayers always voice the sincere purpose of our *hearts*.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

THERE is one thing which even the simplest Christian of us may learn from the scientist. He will never be satisfied with any theory or hypothesis until he has tried it. He goes straight to work to see if it can stand the strain and test of facts. Every page in the history of science is strewn with rejected theories and dead hypotheses. The laws and principles which are taught to-day are held because they have survived the hardest test of actual facts which so far are known. Everything in the world gains in value as it proves able to stand tests. This is especially true of the great things by which we live. There is a whole world of difference between second-hand accounts of somebody else's experience and first-hand experience itself. We begin, of course, with truths which others have tested and which we accept on authority, but we never quite *possess* our truth until we have worked it out in practice and put it to the strain of living by it. Little by little we pass over from mere views and opinions

which have been given to us to the deeper, solid faith which is the fruit and product of the actual practice of our principles and doctrines. Christianity first begins to be something mighty when a person is found who goes beyond views and theories and really practises in his life the great truths which lie at its heart.

Every Christian creed which has held its place in the world has announced in one way or another the Fatherhood and Love of God as a central fact. For ages men have said, "I believe in God the Father," but too often they have gone on living as though this belief made no difference to them. It never seemed to occur to them that they had to *practise* it—i. e., that they ought to live as though they knew God as a Father. We all find it easy to say over John's great words, "God is Love," but we are very slow in practising this truth until it has all the reality of the things which we touch and see. Think what it means! Let us start out to translate all our creed, all our doctrines into actual practice. We will live to-day, this week, this month, this year as though we knew that our life solidly rested on the love of God. It is to be as sure a fact for us as space or gravitation. Wherever we move we are enveloped in it. Well, the effect would be, first of all, to wipe out completely our anxiety and our worry. We

worry because we lack confidence in the future, but the man who lives in the love of God knows that He who clothes the lily and guides the bird is shaping his life toward good ends even when he cannot see the way, and so he trusts and is happy. He stops being burdened with himself because this very practice of the love of God makes him care more for others than for himself, and he forgets his own troubles in his joy to help ease somebody else's trouble. Furthermore, if we actually realized what the love of God means and lived as though we knew its meaning, we should stop sinning. We sin because we want something for our own selves. We are blind to what our sin will make God suffer. We forget that the mightiest thing in the universe is the love of God, and we blur the cost of His sacrifice for us in our desire to get some petty thing for ourselves. The moment we feel the tug of His love upon us and go to living with a sense of the fact that every sin in the world crucifies Him afresh and spoils His purpose for us and in us sin becomes a hideous thing, and His infinite love constrains us to live not unto ourselves, but unto Him.

Then, too, he who truly practises the love of God can face the mysteries which look so dark from the outside. "I am not afraid," said the little fellow at sea in the storm, "because my

father is the captain." That is the secret of all triumph in this world of trial and loss—"I know my Father is pilot on this sea of life, even though the mists are thick." There can be no shipwreck for the soul that practises that faith. To live in the love of God is to win eternally everything which is lost in time and space. He who loves us to the death cannot bring into our lives anything which defeats or breaks our human loves. That is impossible. His whole purpose is to perfect and heighten our love, never to crush or weaken it. As we live in the confidence of His love and practise it we shall rise above the faith which is only belief and opinion to the faith which is the very substance of the things we hope for, the test of things not seen.

CHAPTER LXIV.

HAS CHRISTIANITY BEEN TRIED?

THE remark is sometimes made that Christianity has failed. On the contrary, it has not yet been fairly tried. Wherever it has really been tried it has proved to be a transforming force of the highest order. "Give me five hundred men," cried Phillips Brooks; "nay, give me one hundred men of the spirit that I know to-day in *three men*, and I will answer for it that the city shall be saved." Yes, so would we all answer for it, if we could get the hundred men. But Christianity means, or ought to mean, new men of this sort, the Spirit of Christ reproduced in men's lives. That is just what apostolic Christianity was, and does anybody think *that* was a failure? Why is it, then, that we look in vain for our hundred men who shall save the city? Because so few of us realize at all that we are expected to re-live and reproduce Christ's life in the world. Paul knew it, and John knew it, and they did it; and wherever they went there were dynamic results.

But little by little Christianity became some-

thing else, something quite different. The religion of personal spiritual life, lived in the power of the resurrected Christ, was changed into an Institution, with elaborate machinery for dispensing everything essential to man's salvation. Conformity to the Institution took the place of obedience to the living Lord. The simple, living faith in a personal Christ was changed into a system of thought, a body of intellectual views, to be "held" as a creed. Priestly meditation took the place of the free intercourse of the soul with the loving, forgiving Father whom Christ had revealed at such infinite cost. This seemed a much easier religion than the original apostolic type because it was not difficult to stand fairly well and yet be only a "nominal" Christian, *i. e.*, a Christian in name. The bad habit grew, and alas, came right over into Protestantism. For lo, these hundreds of years Christians have been trying to settle a lot of questions which have no more bearing on real, essential Christianity than the question whether Mars is inhabited has. These questions have steadily kept Christianity running off on side tracks, and, worst of all, have continually produced dissension and bad blood.

Meantime, the world is losing all interest in these quarrels and dissensions. They help nobody, they comfort nobody, they save nobody.

"The hungry sheep look up and are not fed." That sort of thing *has failed*. It does no good work in the world. Its knell is struck. But that does not mean that Christianity has failed. We are learning that the real question is, "Am I manifesting Christ"? We are coming back to the early basis of Christianity, which was faith in Christ, and obedience to Him. As soon as a man appears who has the Spirit of Christ, and whose life reflects the divine goodness and love, he does what the apostolic men did—he moves and influences and transforms men. Those who live in the power of God shake the world as of old. The thing most needed now is just a genuine trial of real Christianity, which means HUMAN LIVES TRANSFORMED BY CHRIST AND FILLED WITH GOD. Our cities, our rural districts, aye, our nation itself can still be saved if we could get a living nucleus of such lives. Thou, dear Friend, who readest this, may be one of the hundred in thy community.