

4

BR

380

T MEADE
GenColl

THE
GOSPEL IN PAGAN
RELIGIONS





THE GOSPEL IN PAGAN RELIGIONS:

Some Thoughts Suggested by the
World's Parliament of Religions

TO

AN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN

Ἡ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον; οὐχὶ καὶ ἐθνῶν; Ναὶ καὶ
ἐθνῶν. — ST. PAUL.

Nulla falsa doctrina est, quae non aliquid veri
permisceat. — ST. AUGUSTINE.



BOSTON
ARENA PUBLISHING COMPANY
COPLEY SQUARE
1894

127-30
27891-2

4-BR

880

COPYRIGHTED, 1894,
By the ARENA PUBLISHING CO.

All rights reserved.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

CHAPTER I.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS . . . 3

CHAPTER II.

THE GOSPEL CONDITION OF SALVATION . 28

CHAPTER III.

THE GOSPEL IN PAGAN RELIGIONS . 57

CHAPTER IV.

A SAVIOUR THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS, 85

CHAPTER V.

THE CAUSE OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS . 123

PREFACE.

THE Gospel—from Godspell, meaning God's Word—is good news to men, because it tells them how they may be saved. It is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes. Man's faith in God's Word is the condition of his salvation. But God's Word is not confined within the articles of Christian creeds, nor limited by the boundaries of church organizations. God speaks in some way to all men; hence, St. Paul saith to every man of the race, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach." Hence, the gospel, as a saving power, is to be found in pagan religions. God sends into every nation and to every tribe, those "that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things." This seems to be the doctrine of St. Paul, who says: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Thus, as he also saith in another place, "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all

men.” Hence we believe and teach that multitudes in all nations of the earth, and in all ages of the world, are saved without ever knowing the creeds of Christendom. St. Peter in the full conviction of this truth opened his mouth and said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.”

But how can this doctrine be made to fall into accord with another declaration of St. Peter’s, wherein he claims that there is no salvation for men except through Jesus Christ of Nazareth — “For there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved”? There is but one way — the door of mercy opened by the Lord Jesus Christ — through which God can save sinful men; but men may come to this door of salvation along different paths, all converging to it from different directions. The name of Christ, as the power of God unto salvation, does not stand for the pronounciation of a given collection of letters in any language, but for the great fact that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This vital truth, divine mercy unto human salvation, is the undeveloped Godspell that is woven, as a thread of life, in all pagan religions; and through this divine mercy, multitudes may be saved without know-

ing the historical name of him through whom human salvation is made possible. There is back of all the great ethnic religions the universal religion which infuses into them all a soul-saving stream of the water of life. If God is the Father of all men, there must be a way in which he saves all who cry unto him for mercy, by whatever name they call him, and out of whatever depth of darkness they cry. He can be just only by being equally merciful to all. If he saves any, he must put salvation within the reach of all. This is not the doctrine of universal salvation, but of the universal opportunity of being saved. Christ is the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Faith unto salvation is the soul following this light, and the faith required of each is graded by the proportion of light given. Thus every man has an equal opportunity of being saved, and God is just toward all because he is equally merciful toward each.

The late Rev. Dr. Guthrie of Scotland, of whose orthodoxy and evangelical faith there has never been even so much as a suspicion, says: "St. John uses a very broad expression. 'Jesus Christ,' he says, 'is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, *but also for the sins of the whole world.*' 'The whole world!' 'Ah!' some would say, 'that is dangerous language.' It is God's language — John speaking as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. *It throws a zone of*

mercy around the world. Perish the hand that would narrow it by a hair's breadth."

With this declaration of the most orthodox and evangelical of Christian preachers the following words of the Hindu, Swami Vivekananda, fall into sweetest accord. He says: "The same light shines through all colors, and in the heart of everything the same truth reigns. The Lord hath declared to the Hindu in his incarnation as Krishna, 'I am in every religion as the thread through a string of pearls, and wherever thou seest extraordinary holiness, and extraordinary power, raising and purifying humanity, know ye that I am there.'"

This book has been written, and it is now sent forth to the world, in the spirit of the words of the Rev. Dr. John Henry Barrows, under whose large-hearted sympathies and broad-minded views the Columbian Parliament of the World's Religions was assembled and successfully conducted; he says: "It is perfectly evident to all illuminated minds that we should cherish loving thoughts of all people, and humane views of all the great and lasting religions, and whoever would advance the cause of his own faith, must discover and gratefully acknowledge the truths contained in other faiths."

As intimated on the title-page, the thoughts contained in this volume were suggested to the author, who is an orthodox Christian, by the World's Parlia-

ment of Religions, in which Christians and Pagans sat together as brethren and talked peacefully and sweetly with one another about their different systems of religion. From this unique and most significant parliament of all religions, being at once ecumenical and irenical, Pagans have gone back to their temples with a truer knowledge of Christianity, and Christians have come back to their churches with more correct views and a higher respect for the beliefs and sentiments of many forms of Paganism.

It was something new under the sun for Christians, Jews, Mohammedans and Pagans to take counsel with one another about their respective forms of religion, and to worship together. This was rendered possible by the world-converting power of Christianity, which is gradually bringing unto men a new heaven and a new earth. The unique assembly was held in the temple of Christianity and under the protecting shadow of a Christian government.

The thought of it was so bold, the fact of it was so successful, and the fruit of it is proving to be so precious and profitable, that we cannot help seeing in it the finger of God. There was a divine inspiration in the mind that conceived it, and there was the guidance of a divine providence over the minds that called it together and controlled it while in session, making of it such a wonderful phenomenon that the whole

world was filled with surprise, and is yet filled with admiration.

It was a spectacle never before witnessed in the history of the world, at which men gazed with astonishment, and on which, no doubt, the angels looked with wonder and delight. No doubt the benediction of Jehovah will rest upon the always abiding and ever-expanding influences of that first ecumenical council of all Christian and Pagan religions, making them more and more conducive to the discovery and establishment of the universal truths of religion, throughout all nations and down all the ages to come. We can now see, more clearly than before, that Lady Somerset was not mistaken in what she wrote to Rev. Dr. Barrows in anticipation of the meeting of the council: —

“Christianity has from it everything to hope; for as the plains, the table lands, the foothills, the mountain ranges, all conduct alike, slowly ascending to the loftiest peak of the Himalayas, so do all views of God tend toward and culminate in the character, the life and work of him who said, ‘And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.’ ”

It is now generally conceded that there is at bottom in all the great ethnic religions, a desire, consciously expressed or unconsciously implied, for a divine Saviour—for a human Deliverer who, while being human, is yet more than human. On this point the

Rt. Rev. John J. Keane, one of the ablest and most influential members of the Parliament, read a carefully prepared paper, in which he said: —

“All humanity points back to a golden age, when man was taught of the Divine by the Divine, that, in that knowledge, he might know why he himself existed, and how his life was to be shaped. Curiously, strangely, sadly as that primitive teaching of man by his Creator has been transformed in the lapse of ages, in the vicissitudes of distant wanderings, of varying fortunes and of changing culture, still the comparative study of ancient religions shows that, in them all, there has existed one central, pivotal concept, dressed, indeed, in various garbs of myth and legend and philosophy, yet ever recognizably the same — the concept of the fallen race of man and of a future Restorer — a Deliverer and Redeemer who, being human, should yet be different from and above the merely human.”

The same high authority, reviewing, from the highest standpoint of Christian observation, the result of the Parliament to see what it has taught us, said in a closing address: —

“While listening to utterances which we could not but approve and applaud, though coming from sources so diverse, we have had practical, experimental evidence of the old saying that there is truth in all religions. . . . And, therefore, we have seen how true it

is that religion is a reality back of all religions. Religions are orderly or disorderly systems for the attainment of this great end—the union of man with God. . . .

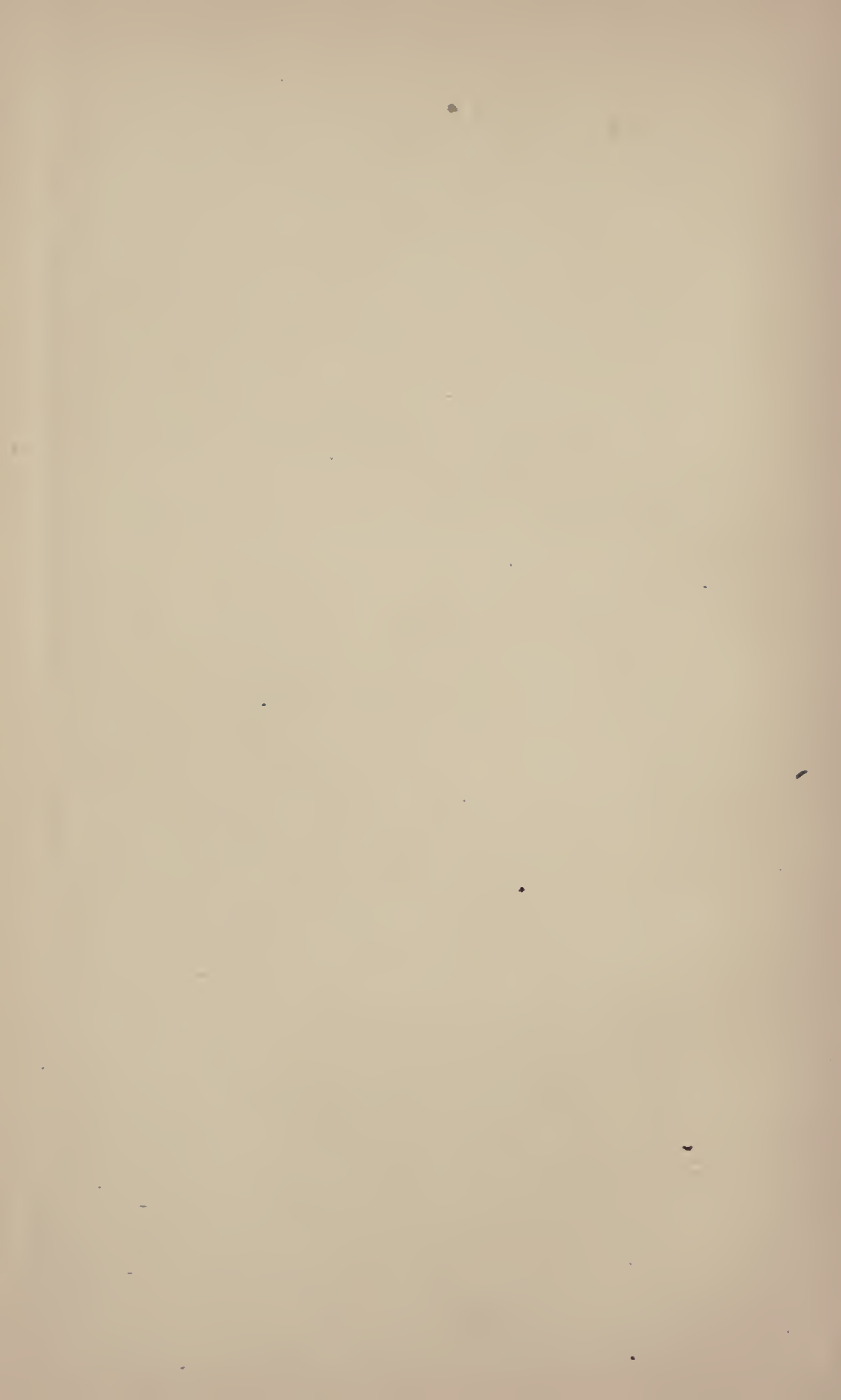
“The Parliament has shown that all the attempts of the tribes of earth to recall and set forth God’s teaching, all their endeavors to tell of the means provided by the Almighty God for uniting man with himself, logically and historically lead up to and culminate in Jesus Christ. We have seen that all the great religious leaders of the world declared themselves gropers in the dark, pointing on toward the fulness of the light, or conscious precursors and prophets of him who was to be the Light of the World. . . . The world’s longing for the truth points to him who brings in its fulness; the world’s sad wail over the wretchedness of sin points, not to the despairing escape from the thralls of humanity, but to humanity as cleansed and uplifted and restored in redemption. The world’s craving for union with the Divine finds its archetypal, glorious realization in the Divine Incarnation; and to share in that wondrous union all are called as branches of the mystical Vine, members of the mystical Body, which lifts humanity above its natural state and pours into it the life of love.”

It is in this sense that we teach that the Gospel is contained, more or less clearly, in Pagan religions, holding that all systems of religion, whether Christian

or Pagan, which rest the hope of human salvation on God's mercy for sinners, contain the vital and saving power of the gospel, however its brightness may be dimmed under a cloud of erroneous doctrines, or its power diminished under a mass of superstitious practices.

We believe and teach that all systems of religion that lead the soul to the mercy of a sin-pardoning God, are good, in the sense that they are efficient unto the salvation of all who are, by them, led to trust in divine mercy. Yet we do not hold nor teach that all are equally good. Among the good some are better than others, and one, Christianity, is best of all, because in it there is no shadow of darkness clouding the light of life.

THE AUTHOR.



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS.

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” — JESUS TO NICODEMUS.

CHAPTER I.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS.

GODSPELL, euphuized into our word gospel, means God's word; and God's word to man is good news because it tells him how he may be saved from sin and misery. The Gospel is God's message of mercy to sinners, and it is found in all creeds in which God speaks and reveals the divine way of human salvation. But the divine word in many creeds is beclouded by a mass of human error and superstition which men have woven around it. In this darkened condition Jesus found the Gospel when he came to earth. He rescued it from the traditions and doctrines of men and presented it to the world in its noonday brightness. Since his day, even in Christian

creeds, the light of the Gospel has oftentimes been darkened by clouds of human errors gathering over it. The Gospel in its purity is not the Gospel according to any given creed, but the Gospel according to Jesus — the Gospel as Jesus preached it. This is to be found, not in all that Jesus said while on earth, but in his answer to the question, “What must a man do in order to be saved?” Whatever creed, Christian or pagan, contains the vital substance of this answer, has in it, however mixed with error it may be, the Gospel of human salvation.

Do we now possess the Gospel according to Jesus in its original purity and simplicity? Can we now separate it from all human *addenda* and admixtures? The ready answer, with which most people are easily satisfied, is, We have the Gospel of Jesus in the New Testament, especially in the four gospels according to the evangelists. But in those writings do

we have the Gospel of Jesus just as he preached it, unmixed with any human additions and elements whatsoever? We have the Gospel according to Matthew, according to Mark, according to Luke, and according to John; but, after all, do we have the Gospel according to Jesus himself? We want to find just what Jesus, when he preached his Gospel to the world, laid down as the condition of human salvation. This, no doubt, is contained in the gospels of the New Testament, but they also contain much more than this—much which is not essential for men to know and believe in order to their salvation. A man may be saved without reading, or even knowing, all that is contained in the gospels according to the four evangelists. The Gospel according to Jesus is the simple truth which he proclaimed as the essential condition of salvation. Can we now find that simple truth, and separate it from everything else?

The Greek grammarians tell us that the preposition *κατα* — according to — carries in it the primary idea of down from a higher to a lower level. When the reference is to an author it means that his words are to be received according to his capacity to understand and his authority to speak. The Gospel according to Matthew is the Gospel of Jesus according to Matthew's capacity to comprehend it, and his authority to declare it. And so of the gospels according to the other evangelists. But were they not inspired to understand the Gospel just as Jesus understood it, and to present it to their readers just as he preached it to his hearers? But, granting their inspiration in the highest sense ever demanded, yet we do not have in their gospels the Gospel according to Jesus, pure and simple. Their gospels contain histories, narratives and conversations, all of which are important as unfolding and illustrating the Gospel as Jesus preached it, but are not essen-

tial to the Gospel itself. The Gospel of Jesus is contained in their gospels as a soul of divine thought breathed into a body of human words. Can we penetrate through the body of their words and seize upon the divine evangel as Jesus preached it, laying down the condition of human salvation? Can we extract the Gospel itself from the gospel narratives, and separate it from all admixtures?

In order to do this we must first separate the words of Jesus from the words of the narrators, and then we must make a division in the very words of Jesus themselves. In the very words of Jesus we must separate the words in which he declares the divine way of human salvation, from those in which he teaches the saved ones, after being saved, what they should believe and do. In the very words of Jesus we have much more than his Gospel; we have the doctrines on which the Gospel rests, the precepts which he taught his disciples as rules of conduct, and the

promises which he gave them to support and comfort them in the trials and temptations of life, and in the face of death itself. All these words belong to the Gospel, but they are not of its essence. We are apt to overlook this distinction. We must seek in the very words of Jesus for his Gospel pure and simple — just as he preached it to the world. We are to take only those very words of Jesus which answer the question, What must one do in order to be saved? and in them, when separated from all touch and tinge given to them by the circumstances of the narrative, we find the Gospel according to Jesus. In the declaration of the divine condition of human salvation Jesus is the contemporary of all ages, and his Gospel is equally applicable to all races, to all generations, and to all sorts and conditions of men.

In the gospels of the evangelists we do not have four gospels, but one Gospel as it pre-

sented itself to the minds of four different writers; and we must also bear in mind that the evangelists did not write their gospels until several years after the departure of Jesus from the earth; and, when written, they were composed for the information of the disciples of Jesus, rather than for the purpose of presenting the Gospel of Jesus to the world.

In the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke the Gospel according to Jesus is given only in parables; that is, their narratives are filled with histories and instructions addressed to believers, and do not, except in parables, lay down the condition of human salvation as preached by Jesus to the world. But John, who stood nearer to Jesus in personal love than any other, was moved by an inward impulse to give the Gospel according to Jesus Himself in the pure and simple words in which Jesus spoke it to Nicodemus. In that conversation Jesus laid down the divine condition of human salvation,

and in speaking to Nicodemus he speaks to every sinner of the race. He unfolds the Gospel in its divine motive and in its human condition: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This is the Gospel according to Jesus, condensed in a single sentence. This is the diamond text of the whole Bible, because, like the diamond, it contains the greatest possible amount of wealth in the smallest possible compass. The whole Gospel, the divine way of human salvation, is compressed and crystallized in these few words. This text is set in the heart of Jesus, and it shines through the darkness of the world like a diamond sparkling in the night. In its light we see the world lost in sin and at the point of perishing. We see God in infinite love yearning for the lost world, and giving his only begotten Son, that whoso-

ever of the lost race believeth in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life. This is all, but this is everything. It reveals the divine way of human salvation in a statement as simple as the words of a child, and as sublime as the thoughts of God. The provision is universal; it is for the whole world. The offer is universal; it is to every one in the world. Whosoever! There can be no wider word than this; it means all and each. Whosoever believeth in him, who comes forth out of the bosom of God's infinite love and preaches this Gospel to the world of sinners, shall be saved. This is the Gospel according to Jesus. There is no creed to be learned; only a great fact to be believed. God in his infinite love offers eternal life through Jesus to sinners perishing in sin; man hears this good news and believes it; his soul is saved. Luke gives the Gospel according to Jesus as he spoke it in parables. When all the publicans and sinners

drew near to hear him, he spake this parable unto them:—

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulder, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

“Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and neighbors

together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

“Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

We do not have here two parables, but one parable in two parts, showing how God in infinite love comes forth, in the person of his only begotten Son, the Good Shepherd, seeking lost sinners to save them, and how he and all heaven with him rejoice in the salvation of men. This is the Gospel according to Jesus — the good news that he brought into the world. It is misleading to name this passage the parable of the lost sheep and of the lost piece of money. It is the parable of the Good Shepherd seeking his lost sheep, and of the good woman seeking her lost piece of silver. In all other religions men are seeking for a lost God, but, in the Gospel of Jesus, God comes forth seeking for lost men. Perhaps our world is the only

fallen world in the universe. Who knows? It may be the one lost sheep from all the millions that fill the boundless fields of space around the eternal throne. God so loves this world — this one lost sheep — that he gave his only begotten Son for its redemption, and comes forth in his person, the great and glorious Shepherd whose millions of bright sheep fill the universe, leaving the other millions safely adjusted in their spheres, to seek this one which needs his care, and which without his care would utterly perish, his boundless love prompting him to go after it.

This parable presents the divine side of human redemption. It is immediately followed by another which presents the human side.

“And he said, A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger

son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land: and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

“And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father.

“But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran,

and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again: he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

This is the human side of the Gospel according to Jesus. Here we find man despairing of self and seeking God. He spontaneously repents and returns. As one has said, “Never man spake like this man; and nowhere else has even this man spoken more fully or more winsomely of man’s need and God’s mercy. Both the departure and the return — both the fall and the rising again, are depicted here. This parable sweeps the whole horizon of time from

the unfallen state at first to the glory that shall at last be revealed. The way is laid open with marvellous precision from the lowest state of sin and misery to a heavenly Father's heart and home." Here the gate of salvation is flung wide open, and no man can shut it.

There is here a voice at once human and divine, clear and ringing — a voice that repeats itself and resounds down all the ages, and which the din and roar of the world can never drown, proclaiming the gospel — the good news of God's love and mercy unto salvation — to the lowest, to the deepest fallen, to the farthest outcast, and to the latest generation. It tells us that God is our Father and that he loves his children even when most rebellious and most unworthy, and that heaven is our home and that our Father wants all his children to come home and live with him; and that he runs out to meet and to welcome to his heart and home the returning sinner with joy and gladness and

a feast of rejoicing. Whosoever will may come, and he that cometh shall in no wise be rejected. The father does not meet the son with a creed in his hand to which he must subscribe before he can be restored to a son's place; there is no word said about the need of an atonement to propitiate the father, nor of repentance to qualify the son anew for the father's love. The father saw his returning son "when he was yet a great way off, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and *kissed him*." In that kiss the past was blotted out, and the father and son were in each other's arms in parental and filial love, just as if the son had never wandered away from the father's home. This is, as Lange beautifully says, "a gospel within a gospel"; it is the Gospel according to Jesus—the good news of love and mercy, and of free forgiveness and joyful salvation for our lost world. We find this gospel of divine love seeking and saving sinful men like a chain of gold

running through the four gospels according to the evangelists and all their other writings, and through the epistles of Paul and Peter and James, and shining out, like a diamond dazzling in the dark, in a single verse in the epistle of Jude, where he exhorts those who come under its redeeming and saving power,—“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

In the gospels and epistles of the New Testament there is much of the nature of doctrines and precepts, of explanation and instruction, of promises and warnings, which, though important in itself and in its place, is not essential to the Gospel as declaring the saving power of God to every one who believes; all that portion of the volume of divine revelation belongs to the Gospel as setting forth the fundamental doctrines on which it rests and the holy duties which it enjoins upon those who are saved.

When we tear open the New Testament and penetrate to its heart we find the Gospel according to Jesus, and we find in it a shorter Gospel and a larger Saviour than we do in the theologies of the Church which fail to distinguish between the Gospel of Christ and the creeds of Christianity. Millions are saved without knowing all the contents of the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, because in those writings there is much that is not essential to salvation, though very important for the direction and comfort of the Christian life of the saved ones. First the gospel, and then the creed. Preach the gospel as the condition of salvation, and thus make disciples of all nations; organize the disciples in a holy society, the kingdom of God on earth, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; then teach the disciples, when thus gathered out of the world and organized into churches, what they are to

believe and do, even all things whatsoever Jesus has commanded in the gospels and epistles.

This puts the creed last of all. Christianity is one in the gospel, but the churches are many in their creeds. The gospel unifies; creeds diversify. In the creeds and theologies of the church the gospel is contained just as alcohol is contained in brandies and wines. In the best of wines and strongest of brandies there is only a certain percentage of the spirits of alcohol, the largest portion consisting of water and flavoring ingredients. The life-giving element and saving power in all theologies and creeds is the Gospel according to Jesus; but this vital and vitalizing principle is presented in formulated systems in which there is a large portion of doctrines and duties not essential to salvation, and, in too many, large admixtures of human *addenda* that tend to obscure its simplicity and to enfeeble its saving power. There is much even in the Bible which a man may

not know, or knowing may misinterpret or ignore, and yet receive the essential truth of the gospel unto the salvation of his soul. The Gospel according to Jesus is the soul of the Bible in a body of biblical histories, prophecies, doctrines and precepts, and when the soul of man takes hold of the soul of the Bible, his soul shall be saved, however ignorant or misinformed he may be about the bodily contents of the volume of divine revelation.

As we have the Gospel according to Jesus in the four New Testament gospels, each according to its own author, so we have the Gospel according to Jesus in the multitudinous gospels according to the creeds of the many branches of the church; we have the Gospel according to Catholicism, according to Protestantism, and according to each of the endless schools of Catholic interpretation and according to each of the multitudinous denominations and branches of Protestant Christianity. In all these varied

theologies, and more or less conflicting creeds, the Gospel according to Jesus is contained, but is hedged about by more or less of human admixtures which Jesus never taught, and which man is not required to believe in order to the salvation of his soul. In many of the creeds there is much that is neither important in itself, nor in any way helpful to those who are inquiring for the way of life. The Gospel is God's Word, but men, theologizing, have invented the creeds. The Gospel never changes, but creeds both change and multiply. The Gospel, the divine condition of human salvation, cannot be revised; but creeds, the various human interpretations of the underlying doctrines of the divine Gospel, may be revised; many of them ought to be revised—some of them ought to be abolished.

But a creed is necessary to the existence of the Church as an organized community in the world; and until all men can see and think

alike there will be, there must be, a variety in the theologies and creeds of honest and conscientious men. Creeds are essential to healthy and vigorous Christian life. The articles of a man's creed are the elements of his character. A church must have a creed as the basis of united Christian life and of harmonious Christian activities. A church is contained in its creed just as a tree is contained in its bark, and the Gospel is contained in the church just as the moving sap of life is contained in the wood of the tree. Dead limbs ought to be cut off the live tree, and a dead tree ought to be cut down. The creed of a living church is only the bark on the tree of life. Creeds are indispensable, but they must not be promulgated as the condition of salvation; the Gospel alone is essential to salvation. It is the vital essence of spiritual life that circulates within the body of every living church. Creeds become hurtful, and even perilous to the life of the church,

when they are preached as if they were the Gospel — the divine condition of human salvation. Preach the Gospel to the world, and teach creeds to the disciples gathered out of the world. The order of Jesus is, First make disciples, and then teach them. In some branches of the Church this rule has been reversed. That, and that alone, is the reasonable ground of complaint against creeds.

This exaltation of the creed above the gospel is carried in some branches of the church to such an extent that it is doubtful whether Jesus, if he should appear again on earth, veiling his divinity under his humanity, could obtain license at their hands to preach his own gospel; but few churches would now allow him to preach it again in all its simplicity and purity as he preached it to the poor when on earth. In some branches of his own church Jesus would not be received into membership, and in others he would be excluded from the

holy sacraments unless he would receive them in the way prescribed by their creeds. The Gospel that is unto salvation is not the gospel according to men who make the creeds, but according to Jesus who has made the atonement.

THE GOSPEL CONDITION OF SALVATION.

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.

There is welcome for the sinner,
And more graces for the good;
There is mercy with the Saviour;
There is healing in His blood.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

But we make His love too narrow
By false limits of our own;
And we magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own.

F. W. FABER, D. D.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOSPEL CONDITION OF SALVATION.

THE Gospel according to Jesus opens for guilty men the golden door of divine mercy; and whosoever will may enter by faith into the kingdom of divine love, and find salvation and rest in the assurance of hope. Human faith in divine mercy is the Gospel condition of salvation. Jesus teaches this glorious fact in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican.

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed this with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess. And the publican,

standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me the sinner.”

Concerning these two worshippers Jesus said, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one who exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

In this parable we have the sum and substance of the gospel of Jesus as he himself preached it to the world and unfolded it to his disciples. A man conscious of his sin prays to God for mercy, and goes down to his house justified. That was all. There was no creed. There was simply an humble trust in the mercy of God, and the sinner was justified. “God be merciful to me the sinner.” This is the whole gospel exhibited in the very act of saving a sinner.

The Gospel in its essence is the divine provision for mercy to sinners. But what is

mercy? How can a just God be merciful to sinful men? These are lawful questions which men may discuss, provided, always, that they shall not attempt to enforce their exposition as creeds which men must accept before they can receive the mercy of God unto salvation. A creed every thinking man must have, but every man who really thinks for himself, will allow every other man to do the same for himself. We want men strong in the faith; but only strong creeds can produce strong characters. Strong believers leave the door of divine mercy wide open for the weak in mind, and the ignorant in theology, to enter. They would not shut out the blind who feel their way to the door of God's mercy, nor the lame who come on crutches.

But there is a doctrine that underlies and justifies the mercy of God towards sinful men, and for those who are strong enough to receive it, that doctrine should be developed. The

Gospel is for the world, that sinners might become Christians; and theology is for the church, that Christians might grow and become strong in the knowledge and grace of their salvation. We cannot demand too little of men for admission into the kingdom of God, and we cannot require too much of those who have been admitted as disciples in the school where Jesus teaches. He is truth itself, and his disciples should be taught the truth as it is in Jesus, and made to see how it justifies the mercy of God's love for sinners.

Then, what is mercy? Mercy, in the legal sense of the word, consists in providing good for the undeserving and in bestowing good upon the unworthy. Can God be merciful in this sense? Justice demands that wrong shall be punished. Mercy consists in withholding deserved punishment, and in bestowing unmerited good upon wrong-doers. Can God do this? How can God be merciful? Mercy at

the expense of justice would itself be a great injustice. The Judge of all the earth must do right. The guilt of sin not only renders the sinner liable to punishment, but also obligates the judge to enforce the penalty. Can God in justice be merciful to sinners, and remit the penalty which their sins deserve? This is the problem that theology must solve. The solution of this problem, when systematized, constitutes a creed. The solution which any man gives to the problem, is his personal creed. The solution which any church gives to this problem, is the creed of that church. A creed is a reasoned-out theory of religion. There are as many creeds as there are theories of religion among Christian reasoners.

The Gospel is not a human philosophy, but a divine revelation, a great fact which God has made known to men; that great fact is the Gospel which Jesus preached to the world, that God has provided a way in which he is merci-

ful to sinners. Whosoever believes this fact and rests upon it, shall be saved, whether or not he understands the doctrine that underlies it. Faith in God's mercy, and not soundness in theology, is the Gospel condition of salvation. The Gospel comes before the creed. The Gospel addresses itself to man's faith, the creed to his reason. The creed is the reason's interpretation of the doctrines of the divine revelation. The creed of the Gospel consists of the doctrines of the New Testament revelation formulated by the human reason into a system of theology. Therefore a creed is the production of Christian thinkers. It comes after the gospel. The New Testament materials for a creed were not given until several years after Jesus had left the earth; and when given, they were given to those who were already believers. The gospels were written for the disciples, and all the epistles were addressed either to organized churches or to recognized believers. The New

Testament revelation is based on the fact that the Gospel was already preached in the world, and believed by those to whom the revelation was addressed.

The Old Testament Scriptures were transferred to the New Testament believers as their inheritance from the old dispensation, but nowhere was a knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures required as a necessary condition of faith in the Gospel as Jesus preached it. Jesus on more occasions than one gave his testimony to the truth and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, but he nowhere required faith in them as a condition of salvation through the Gospel which he preached. He proved to the Jews that his Gospel was a fulfilment of the promises and prophecies of their accepted Scriptures, and therefore they should acknowledge him and receive his gospel; but he never said even to them, You must believe in the Scriptures before you can believe in me. He

said to church members, "Search the Scriptures, they are they which testify of me." The Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments were given to the Church as a rule and guide of the faith and practice of believers, but not to the World as a creed which men must learn and believe before they can be saved through the divine provision for mercy to sinners. Then the creed, which human reason formulates from the Scriptures, comes after the gospel, and is for believers, and is not to be presented to the world for acceptance as a condition of human salvation.

We proceed now to unfold the philosophy of divine grace, and to present our conception of the mercy of the gospel as the power of God, through his only begotten Son, unto salvation to every one who believes, to Jew and Gentile alike the world over, and throughout all generations. The whole gospel, as we have seen, is both infolded and unfolded in the publican's

prayer, "God be merciful to me the sinner." Throughout the Scriptures God is represented to us as a God of mercy: "The earth is full of his mercy." "His mercy is great, above the heavens." "God is merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness." "The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty." The Bible is full and overflowing with the declarations of God's mercy towards sinful men. But there are more than a half dozen different words in the original Greek and Hebrew which are translated in our English Bible by the word mercy and its derivations. They do not all mean precisely the same thing; and this shows that our word mercy, which translates them all, must have a very unsettled and uncertain meaning. The word is used as being synonymous with sympathy, compassion, commiseration, kindness and pity. There is a kindredship between all these words.

But mercy in the Gospel sense is to be found in the word which the publican used in his prayer — *ἰλάσθητί*. The fundamental idea in this word is that of propitiation. Propitiation implies that something has been done as a basis for the reconciliation of an offended person with the offender. Gospel mercy carries this idea in it. The word, then, is not derived from *miserecordia* — heart-misery with another — but from *merces*, meaning the wages or fine paid by a friend that a guilty one might go free from a merited penalty. In the case of a moral penalty can this be done? This was the enigma for which the angels could not find the word. It is the problem which the Gospel of Jesus solves. Jesus himself is the solution. He gave himself and assumed a human life that he might be amerced for the sin of man. In other words, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son in amercement for the sin of the world, and through the atonement thus made

God has been propitiated to sinners. This is the divine provision *for* mercy *to* sinners. It is not a provision *of* mercy *for* sinners, but *for* mercy *to* sinners. It is not a provision that arises out of the divine mercy, but a provision that renders it possible for a just God to be merciful to sinful men. This propitiation originated in the love of God for sinners, but in the love of a just and holy God who must demand satisfaction for justice before he can be propitiated and show mercy to sinners.

The law of justice has not been repealed nor for a moment suspended, but a provision for mercy has been made and added to the law of justice. By this provision mercy does not defeat the ends of justice, but becomes possible because love has fulfilled them in the person and work of Jesus, who appeared on earth as "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." In this Gospel provision for mercy to sinners, mercy and truth have met together,

and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. God is just while showing mercy to sinful man, and is righteous in receiving him in peace, and in granting him eternal life. The two pillars that support the triumphal arch of mercy are, on one side eternal justice, and on the other infinite love; and between these two pillars, and under the world-spanning arch of divine mercy, guilty men may walk by faith into the realm of eternal life. Jesus saves. Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. Here faith in divine mercy is laid down as the sole condition of salvation.

But Jesus laid down other and harder conditions as the terms of acknowledged discipleship with him. One day when vast multitudes were following him, he turned and said unto them: "If any man come unto me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life

also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." These words have a hard, metallic ring about them. They grate upon the ear like the clanking of the iron links of a chain which was to bind men's souls in bondage. They are not the words of the gospel of love which Jesus preached to the world, laying down the condition of salvation, but are the words of the Head of the Church laying down the terms of official discipleship with him in his work and sufferings. Jesus came into the world for the double purpose, first, of preaching the gospel of love to the world, that men might believe its good news and be saved; and, second, of organizing of the saved ones the kingdom of God on earth, that through them, thus organized, he might redeem the whole world and deliver it from the dominion of sin and misery. The terms of full discipleship in the kingdom of God on earth were higher and

harder than the condition of individual salvation. Hence in the primitive churches there were two classes of members, the *fideles* and the *catechumeni*; or, as we say in these modern days, the communicants and non-communicants. It was not held in ancient times that the non-communicants were in an unsaved state, but only that they were not prepared for full membership in the visible church. Men are saved on the simple condition of faith, and are afterwards admitted to full discipleship on proof of their fidelity. There are also multitudes who have more or less distinctly heard the voice, or the echo, of the gospel, and, believing the good news, are saved on their undeveloped faith without being received into the church even as catechumens. They belong to the church in spirit but not by acknowledged discipleship; and at the last day they will be found among the number of the saved, when it will be discovered that the invisible boundaries of Chris-

tianity extended far beyond the limits of visible church organizations.

There are secret disciples, and also a secret of discipleship. The secret of true discipleship, in or out of the church, is not easy to be defined, yet it is very real. It is independent of church membership, although indicated by the study of the lives of church members much more often than by that of the lives of others. It is even independent of the avowal of discipleship. That is to say, there are some who illustrate it but who do not consider themselves Christians as yet. It is independent of circumstances also. Social conditions, business fortunes or misfortunes, and differences of race, sex, language or age do not affect it. He who has discovered it rarely fails to reveal and receive credit for the discovery, even if he be but faintly conscious of his success. He who claims most loudly to have discovered it, almost invariably thereby

raises a doubt of his success. Perhaps the nearest approach to a definition of it is made in speaking of it as the subordination of self to the divine will. To be a true disciple of Christ involves confessing him, obeying him, loving him supremely and all men for his sake, and bearing loyally the hostility of the world, whatever its form. But the peculiarity which most promptly and signally separates a true disciple from others and attracts attention to him as such is selfsubordination, the waiting on God for orders. When we see one unostentatiously and genuinely treating himself as God's man, making no parade of his subordination, yet simply and habitually depending on his Heavenly Father for guidance, we rightly reckon him to have found and to be illustrating the secret of discipleship.

Every one who is saved should become such a disciple, but we are not to think that no one can be saved unless he comes up to this stan-

dard. Our present inquiry is not about the perfection and highest possible attainments of discipleship with Jesus, but about the Gospel condition of human salvation. What *must* a man do in order to be saved? The Gospel answers, "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life." But what is it to believe in Jesus? Is it to believe in a certain doctrine concerning him? Is it to believe in a certain system of theology which unfolds the plan of salvation as certain Christian thinkers have reasoned it out? Is it to believe in a certain creed which the church presents as its system of Gospel truth? It is none of these. It is simply to believe the Gospel which Jesus preached to the world—the good news that God has provided a way in which he is merciful to sinners, and to trust in that divine mercy for pardon and salvation. The publican smote upon his breast and prayed, "God be merciful to me the sinner." He went down to his house

justified. It is a faith that springs out of the personal consciousness of sin, and trusts in the unexplained mercy of God for pardon and salvation. The more childlike and simple the faith of this trust is, the more powerful and purifying will be its influence on the life of him who thus believes unto salvation. The little child, conscious of having offended its mother, and knowing she loves it, goes to her in faith for the forgiveness of her love, without trying to understand the principle which prompts and justifies the forgiving love which it knows it does not deserve. It is the simple act of unquestioning trust that accepts an unmerited forgiveness, because the love which forgives wipes out the sin that is forgiven. Such a faith, receiving the forgiveness of a loving mother, has a transforming influence in the life of the child, producing living and loving obedience. And such childlike faith of trust, springing out of the consciousness of

sin and of God's mercy to sinners, is the Gospel condition of human salvation.

In the first part of this chapter we have given our theory of the doctrine that underlies the Gospel which offers salvation on the simple condition of faith, but it is not necessary that our theory, or any other, should be received as a basis for faith in the mercy of God unto salvation. Thousands travel daily on our railroads who do not understand the mechanism and laws of steam navigation. They simply go aboard and trust in a system of travel and transportation, which they do not comprehend, because they believe it to be sufficiently safe. Thus millions are saved and borne to heaven by simply trusting in the mercy of God without comprehending the theology that underlies the divine way of human salvation. This is not theology, but it is practical and saving religion. In all this we do not mean to teach that theology and creeds are not useful, and

very important in their proper places. Jesus taught theology to his disciples, especially to his twelve apostles. Perhaps Judas was as good a theologian as any one of them, but his theology did not save him. There is no saving power even in the soundest theology; but there is saving power in the feeblest faith, in the humble trust of faith even when the faith issues out of a very imperfect and erroneous creed.

Jesus preached the Gospel to the world that men might believe in the mercy of God and be saved; but when men believed, he gathered around him a school of disciples to whom he taught the theology of the divine provision which renders it possible for God to show mercy to sinners. Early in his ministry he went up into a mountain, and when he was set, according to the custom of teaching at his day, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught *them* the doctrines, laws and

precepts of the kingdom of God which he was then establishing on earth. The Sermon on the Mount is the body of theology which Jesus gave his disciples. It is at once simple and sublime, and profound and practical from beginning to end. That sermon was spoken to his disciples, but in the hearing of the multitudes. It was given to the church in its incipient organization, but it is not to be kept from the world. The people who heard him were astonished at his doctrine, not so much at what he taught as at the manner of his teaching. He taught, not as the scribes, but as one having authority.

In what are generally known as the beatitudes, he laid down in an official way, not the condition of salvation, but the terms of discipleship with him as members of his new society, showing that there is a progressive development in the religious life of believers. It begins in an humble and contrite spirit, just

entering the kingdom of heaven and taking a seat at the feet of Jesus to learn of him ; as the disciple sees the exceeding sinfulness of sin, he mourns over his own sin, but is comforted in the assurance of pardon through unmerited mercy ; as he realizes that his salvation is all of unmerited grace, he is made meek, and through the meekness of the disciples the church shall inherit the earth ; and the meek ones, conscious of personal impurity, hunger and thirst for righteousness ; and as they are filled with righteousness, obtaining mercy from God, they become merciful towards men ; and as their hearts are thus purified in growing sanctification they see God in his holy justice while showing mercy to sinful men, and they become peacemakers between God and men, and between men and men, and are known among men as the children of God ; and as the children of God they endure and rejoice in the opposition and persecutions of

this wicked world, knowing that they shall find their great reward in heaven, their final home. The Sermon on the Mount does not set forth a body of doctrines which men must believe in order to salvation, but lays down and expounds the terms and fundamental principles on which the saved ones are organized into the kingdom of God on earth, and teaches them what, as saved ones, they are to believe, and how they are to live as the redeemed children of God on earth.

And again, at the close of his earthly ministry, he gathered within doors the college of his disciples, those chosen to be his apostles, and with them he perfected the organization of the holy society, instituting the Holy Supper which is to be the perpetual bond of union between its members; and, when thus separated from the world, he taught them the deeper mysteries of human salvation through his crucifixion on the cross, and promised to send them

the Holy Spirit of truth to guide them into all truth, and to bring to their remembrance all things whatsoever he had taught them. Neither of these discourses was delivered to the world, setting forth doctrines which men must believe in order to their salvation; but both were delivered to his disciples as already acknowledged believers; and one of them was spoken in private, instructing them in doctrines and duties and giving them promises for their comfort in the toils and trials which would soon overtake them as they carried forward his work after his departure from the earth. In exact accordance with the view which we have just presented, is the last commandment which Jesus gave to his apostles on the moment of his ascension: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;

and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." They were first to preach the Gospel as he preached it, that is, to publish the good news of God's gracious provision for mercy to sinners on the simple condition of faith, and thus to make disciples; they were then to organize the disciples into churches by baptizing them in the name of the Holy Trinity; and then they were to teach the disciples, when thus organized for instruction, work and worship, all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded; and doing this to the end of the world, Jesus would always be with them. This shows again that the Gospel is for the world, and theology is for the church. It is all well enough for the church to formulate its theology into a creed, provided it does not present its creed to the world as the object of that faith which is the Gospel condition of salvation.

Faith unto salvation is not the assent of the mind to the truth of certain propositions, but

is trust in a living Person, the God of love and mercy. And then it is not the faith itself that saves, but God in whom the faith reposes. The faith itself may be very feeble, but it is all sufficient provided it touches the living Person who is almighty to save. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth. Faith touches his mercy through his only begotten Son, and sets in motion all his saving power. In Christ, in whom there is mercy for all sinners who believe, there is virtue enough to save the whole world; but that virtue goeth out only to the touch of faith. To all those who touch him with the finger of faith, even though they come behind and touch but the hem of his garment, he saith, "Go in peace; thy faith hath saved thee and made thee whole." The soul that sees its way in the light, or feels its way through the dark, shall be saved if it but touches with the tip of the finger of faith the

living God, "who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." After being saved they are to be taught the truth that "There is but one God, and one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." This is the doctrine which Paul imparted to Timothy, enjoining him to teach it in all the churches.

Misapprehension of important truths, and even misbelief in regard to them, do not always result in unbelief in the Gospel of the true God who alone can save. Even disbelief of much important truth may exist in the mind of one who trusts, in spite of his darkness and errors, in the living God who is the Saviour of all men. There may be much that is false or fanciful in the creed, and yet the heart may trust sincerely and savingly in the God of mercy who is back of the creed, and, perchance, obscured and almost concealed by it. A man

is not saved by his theology, but by the living Theos, who may be grossly misconceived in his theology. If in the web of his theology there is woven a single thread of divine truth that leads the soul into contact with the living God, that thread is sufficient to bring the soul into touch with the God of mercy and to secure its eternal salvation. This does not mean that truth in theology is not important, or that error is not hurtful. Truth is the pabulum of the soul, and only the soul that feeds on the truth can thrive in strong and vigorous health. The spiritual life of one who has faith unto salvation will be strong or feeble in proportion to the amount of truth or error in his creed.

THE GOSPEL IN PAGAN RELIGIONS.

“ Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe that in all ages
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God’s right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened,
Listen — ”

to arguments that prove that the Gospel, making known the divine way of human salvation, is found in pagan creeds, and that it opens the door of salvation for the heathen world through Jesus Christ before even his name has been heard, because he is, as our orthodox Christianity teaches, “the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

CHAPTER III.

THE GOSPEL IN PAGAN RELIGIONS.

WE have and hold the Bible as a divine revelation in which the Gospel, as the light of salvation, shines in the brightness of noon-day; but there are untold millions upon millions of our brother men who have not the light of our divine revelation, but are groping in heathen darkness. Have they no light of life glimmering in the darkness around them? Have we no hope for their salvation? Is there anything said in our divine revelation, or suggested to our enlightened reason, on which we can rest a hope that they are not all lost in hopeless perdition? What do our Scriptures teach concerning the fall and redemption of the human race, and as to the saving power of the Gospel in its rela-

tion to those who live and die beyond the pale of the Christian church? In their light we must now consider the case of the heathen.

The Bible teaches that man was created a holy being in the image of his Creator, and that he was placed on probation, with the alternative of life or death before him, conditioned on his obedience or disobedience; and that the first man in his probation stood on trial not for himself only, but also for all his posterity that should descend from him in the line of natural generation. Our Scriptures also teach that man, in the hour of his temptation, fell and involved his whole race in his sin and its penalty. The Gospel, as we find it in our Bible, is the declaration of the good news that God has provided a way of mercy for the salvation of our fallen race through his only begotten Son, who came into our world and died for its redemption. And we are also taught that faith in Jesus — in that which Jesus has

rendered possible, the divine provision for mercy to sinners — is the condition on which this salvation is offered to all men. “Whosoever believeth shall be saved.” Man is again put on probation, not this time as a race, but each man for himself. The future and eternal destiny of each is suspended upon the free volition of his own will, receiving or rejecting the salvation now and here offered to him. “Whosoever will, may take of the water of life freely.” All are invited, and all may come if they will; and no one that comes is ever rejected.

Now the question arises, Does the requirement of faith as the Gospel condition of salvation exclude infants who are incapable of exercising faith, and heathen who have never heard of the historical name of Jesus, from the salvation of mercy which God, in his wonderful love for our fallen world, has provided for sinful men? These two classes constitute by far the

overwhelming majority of the human race, and the question of their salvation or perdition involves both the justice and the mercy of God as the Creator of the universe, and as the moral Sovereign of all intelligent and responsible life.

As to the first class, those incapable of conscious faith or unbelief, we must believe, in the light of reason as illuminated by Scripture, that all dying in a state of infancy are saved through Jesus Christ our Lord. And by a state of infancy we mean that condition which incapacitates the mind for the conscious and free exercise of the volition of a responsible will. This incapacity may arise from the deficiency or defect of mental development, or from the invincible darkness of an external environment. Eternal justice demands that this exception should be imbedded in the provision of infinite mercy that offers Salvation to our race on the condition of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The redemption of Jesus, if he is

indeed the Saviour of our lost world, must be coëxtensive with the fall of man, and must put salvation within equal reach of every son and daughter of Adam's fallen race; and it must be also as far-reaching and as all-embracing as the sin of man. As all in a state of infancy are the involuntary and unconscious heirs of man's sin, so, while in a state of infancy, they must be, in the same way and to the same measure, the heirs of redemption. On this point nothing more nor better can be said than what is expressed in the quaint epitaph that was engraven on a tombstone over a grave in which three little children lie buried together: —

Say, are they lost or saved?
If death's by sin, they sinned, for they lie here:
If heaven's by works, in heaven they can't appear.
Oh, Reason, how depraved!
Revere the sacred page, the knot's untied:
They died, for Adam sinned; they live, for Jesus died.

But what is to become of the heathen who never hear of Christ? Is there no help nor

hope for them? Shall they all perish in the endless perdition of sin? The case of the heathen forces itself upon us, and clamors for solution. Let us first consider the answer given and defended by many able divines. They say, the revealed religion of Christianity is the only power of God for salvation, and that it can save only those who have it presented to them in a formal way, and who receive it by an act of conscious faith. This view of the case of the heathen, which calls itself the orthodox doctrine, consigns the whole pagan world, with the possible exception of the children, to hopeless and endless perdition. This is a horrible doctrine, and the human heart cannot tolerate the thought of it after the mind once realizes what it really means. It means that countless millions upon millions, hopelessly innumerable billions upon billions, of our brother men, are damned in endless and hopeless misery in a hell which

they were never taught to shun, all for not believing on the historical name of Jesus of Nazareth of which they had never heard, most of them, even so much as a rumor. Can you look upon the countless billions upon billions of the non-Christian nations, and see them as one mighty, stupendous, never ending and ever increasing stream of living humanity, rushing on through darkness and plunging over a precipice which they never saw into a hell of which they never heard; and seeing all this, and hearing the wail of their unutterable and eternal misery, can you look up from all this unimaginable waste and wretchedness of humanity and pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as in heaven"? No! no!! no!!! If there be no help nor salvation nor hope for all these his creatures, there can be no father's heart in the great God who made us, no love in his name,

no justice in his kingdom, and no mercy in his will. If men really believed this horrible dogma, realizing what it means, it would drive them to madness; and, maddened by the horrible thought, they would, were it possible, rush upon the throne of Jehovah and tear it to pieces, and cast the broken fragments out of the universe. It would be better to fight under the banner of an ambitious Devil, than to kneel down and worship before the throne of an unmerciful God. But such is not our God, and such is not the law of his kingdom. Our God is the God of truth and righteousness, and his throne is a throne of spotless and unquestionable justice; and the sceptre in his right hand is the sceptre of love, and there is in his justice a fulness like the fulness of the worlds that fill the infinitude of space, and in his mercy a wideness like the wideness of illimitable space in which there is room for all worlds that are, and for all worlds that may

yet be created. This God of justice has never made a creature with the design of damning it in a hell of misery; and the God of mercy can never doom his creature, however sinful and erring it may become, to a hell of hopeless wretchedness, *unless* he has first set before that creature a fair and honorable opportunity for pardon and salvation, and the creature has knowingly and wilfully rejected the divine overture of mercy. There must, therefore, be for the non-Christian nations a free offer of salvation, as well as for those to whom the Gospel is preached by the living voice that tells the story of Jesus and his love.

To meet the case of the heathen, several theories have been proposed, but only a few of them are worthy of our serious consideration.

One theory is grounded in the doctrine that man has no natural and inherent immortality, but that he becomes immortal only by and through faith in Jesus Christ, who redeems

those who believe in him from death ; and consequently, all non-believers, in Christian and pagan lands alike, are annihilated in death. This theory does not relieve the question of infant and heathen damnation of any of its real difficulties. They are all eternally and hopelessly lost. It only defines the condition of the lost to be a state of annihilation, of eternal unconsciousness. It is a remedy that does not cure and save the sufferer, but only kills the patient to put him out of his misery. To say the best of it, it is only the act of impotent mercy. It is only the *coup de grace* of an executioner, breaking the legs of crucified humanity that the unconsciousness of death might end the agony of existence.

The theory of the future full and universal restoration of all lost souls, through the redeeming process of remedial and purgatorial sufferings, does not throw any real light upon the dark question. A temporary hell is a real

hell, and it does not relieve the injustice of God in affording some in this life the opportunity of escape through a preached gospel while denying it to others.

And last, there is the theory that has been advanced, and is now advocated by many pious and able men, that the non-Christian nations will have their probation in the life to come, when they shall have the gospel preached to them for their acceptance or rejection. This gives rise to another problem, harder to solve than the first. It would give the non-Christian nations a boundless advantage over those who have their probation in the present life. It leaves them free to enjoy on earth all the pleasures of sin, and then gives them in the future life a better and surer opportunity to obtain the joys of eternal salvation than the most favored on earth could possibly have. On this theory it would be a cruelty to send our creed to pagan nations. To meet this phase of the

case some have advanced the suggestion that all unbelievers, those of Christian lands as well as those of pagan nations, will have a second probation under equally favorable circumstances. But the condition of the two classes cannot be equalized. Those who have the Gospel in this life would necessarily enjoy a double opportunity to be saved, and would have, in their second opportunity, a double motive for accepting it, arising out of their own then miserable condition in comparison with the happiness of those who had received it when first offered to them. This theory, whichever way we turn it, involves a great injustice to one part or other of the human family.

The Scriptures teach that the next thing in order after death is the judgment; and as man can die but once, so he can be judged but once, and in the judgment he receives the recompense of the things done in the body. The Greek words, *τα δια του σώματος* — the things

done in the body — can only mean the doings of this mortal life. It is mere quibbling to try to force any other meaning into them. Death closes this bodily life and terminates the things done in the body; and in the judgment, which is next in order after death, man is adjudged to his eternal destiny. This leaves no room for a future probation. The offer of salvation, as the whole trend of the Scriptures teaches, is limited to this life. What man does here determines what he shall be hereafter forever. “He that believeth shall be saved.” “He that believeth not shall be damned.” This is the short and terrible alternative which the Bible sets before every man of the race. Between the believers and the unbelieving in the future life there is fixed an impassable gulf. The soul goes out from this mortal life to meet its endless and changeless destiny. It is just as reasonable to expect physical life on a post-mortem medication as to hope for spiritual life on a post-

mortem probation. The future destiny depends upon the faith that forms the character in this present life.

We are thus driven back from all other theories, and cornered in the conclusion that the God of all mercies must present to the heathen in this present life an opportunity of being saved in some just and equitable way. That opportunity must be in some way through Jesus, his only begotten Son, in whom alone is the divine provision for mercy to sinners. Jesus is the embodiment of the mercy of God, and whosoever trusts in the mercy of God does, in that very trust, consciously or unconsciously, believe in Jesus; and whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.

We have seen that the faith that is the Gospel condition of salvation is not the mind's belief in the theology of the Gospel, but the soul's trust in the living Theos that is back of the

Gospel. The creed is a body of which the Gospel is the soul; the body is of time and varies in thought and expression, but the soul is immortal and immutable. Man has made many systems of theology, but God has given only one Gospel—the divine provision for mercy to sinners. Hence, saith the apostle, “If any man sin, we [the human race] have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” If Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, then it must be possible for any sinner in the world to be saved through that propitiation. It is not necessary that the historical name of Jesus should be known as the invariable condition on which a soul can trust in the all-embracing mercy of God through his only begotten son, who has given himself a ransom for all, and as a propitiation of the sins of the whole world.

A soul can be saved without knowing how his salvation has been made possible in the divine reconciliation of the grace of mercy with the law of justice. How few among Christians understand intellectually the deep mysteries of the divine plan of human salvation! Multitudes in Christian lands trust in the mercy of God and are saved without knowing, or being able to know, how mercy reaches them in consistency with the demands of justice. And likewise, multitudes in non-Christian lands may trust in the mercy of God and be saved through the propitiation of Jesus—a Saviour unknown to them by name.

Amid the endless deities of pagan worship there is always an altar to the Unknown God; or, the true God is worshipped under a name unknown among Christians. Paul found such an altar at Athens. He declared the Unknown God, whom the Athenians ignorantly worshipped, to be the true God, who made the

heavens and the earth and all things therein. Their worship was the real worship of the true God, though they were ignorant of his name. He declared unto them that the One God, of whom they had caught the idea, has made of one blood all nations dwelling upon the face of the earth, and has thus constituted of the entire race one brotherhood, of which he, the Unknown God, is the universal Father. Of this grand truth some of their own poets had caught a glimpse; for one of them had said, "We are his offspring." In seizing upon the idea of the Fatherhood of God, the Greeks had found a God of paternal mercy, and so had touched the soul of the Gospel. The living God, unknown by name in the Greek pantheon, had ordained that all nations should seek him, feeling after him through the dark, if haply they might touch him whom they could not see. He is not far from any man, for in him we all, pagans and Christians alike, live and move

and have our being. Men exist in God spiritually as they do physically in the all-enveloping atmosphere, and their souls are conscious of the presence of the spiritual element, in which they live, just as their bodies are sensible of the material element in which they exist. The body does not see, but always feels, the presence of the air, and it would die if all air should be removed from it; so the soul does not see, but always feels, the presence of God with it, and it would die if God should wholly withdraw his spirit from man.

Paul tells us that men seek God by feeling for him in the darkness around them, and that, by feeling after God, they may touch him. God dwells not in temples made by the hands of men, and yet in temples he may be worshipped, as he was worshipped in the great temple at Jerusalem; the Godhead is "not like unto gold, or silver or stone, graven by art and device of man," and yet in the "times of igno-

rance " God does not reject the worship that is offered to him through these instrumentalities as mediums of approach to his throne. No thinking pagan regards the idol before which he bows as the real God of his worship. Even in the most brutish and barbarous of the African tribes there is the idea of one Supreme Being, and even the most ignorant and degraded do not regard the fetich of their worship as their God, but only, as the converted African prince, Momolu Masaquoi, informed the people at Chicago, as the visible mediator between him and his unseen God, too holy and exalted for sinful man to approach except through the mediation of an intervening object or person. This is the explanation of nature worship, and of all forms of idolatry. Man, conscious of his sin, dares not approach the immaculate throne of the God of consuming holiness directly and in his own person, and so he seeks to draw nigh through the objects of nature, as the sun,

the moon or stars, or fruit-bearing trees, towering mountains or flowing rivers, or through the images of gold, iron, wood or stone, graven by his art and man's device. Thus, in idolatry itself, there is a dim shadow of a great Christian truth, the need of a Mediator between God and man—of one who shall propitiate God and open the way for mercy to sinners. Thus at bottom, pagan men, in all the multitudes of their pagan gods, and in all the varied forms of idolatrous worship, are seeking, groping in darkness, for the Unknown God, who is before all, above all and beyond all, and whose footprints can be traced backwards and forwards through the mythologies of both the ancient and modern non-Christian lands.

This Unknown God can be found, and has been found by those who feel after him through whatever darkness envelops their lives; and when found as a God of mercy, however dim and grotesque the image of his mercy may be,

he forgives and saves all who trust in his mercy for salvation. This salvation is not apart from the propitiation of Jesus, but is through that propitiation, dimly and distortedly apprehended by the feelings of the heart rather than by the conceptions of the mind. The Gospel, in whatever creed of true or false theology it may be embodied, is the good news that God has found a way in which he can justly be merciful to sinners and save them out of the midst of their sins ; and whoever hears the sound, or faintest echo of this good news, however it may be communicated, and accepts the mercy it offers, shall not perish, but shall have eternal life ; and this good news of mercy unto salvation has gone out, in the mysterious impressions of God's spirit on the spirits of men, in advance, and far beyond, and far wider than the most distant range of the preached Gospel of formulated Christianity, bringing salvation to myriads who have never

heard the historical name of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus the grace of God bringing salvation, hath appeared, in some form, to all men. Whosoever believeth, shall be saved.

Sin has broken man's communion with God; faith restores that communion; that restoration is called salvation. In the fall, sin broke a link in the chain that held man in fellowship with his God; the propitiation of Jesus replaces that broken link; the chain again reaches unto man; whosoever takes hold of this new link of mercy, thus believing, he is again enchained in reconciled fellowship with his God; he is saved. To change the figure: in the fall man slipped beyond the reach of God's right hand of justice; and yet God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. God holds Jesus in his right hand of justice, and Jesus steps out between him and fallen man, and holds out his

hand of love and mercy to the sinner, and whosoever, seeing this hand in the light, lays hold of it, or feeling for it in the dark, touches it, shall be saved. Faith unto salvation is the act of the human soul coming into touch with Jesus, or even with the hem of his outer garment ; and in response to this touch there goes from Jesus virtue to save, even to those who do not know their Saviour by his historical name.

In all this it is not implied that there are two ways of salvation, but that the one way of salvation is made known in different nations, and in different generations, in varying degrees of light ; and faith and action are required in proportion to the light that has been given. Where much has been given, much will be required ; and where little is given, less is demanded, and a very little will be sufficient. Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, by whatever name he may be addressed when the soul crieth unto him.

The Gospel according to Jesus is in all creeds, whether pagan or Christian, that present, even in a dim and shadowy way, the element of divine mercy as the ground of human salvation. Whoever, conscious of his guilt, catches a glimpse of God's mercy, and prays, on whatever hill he may stand, or in whatever temple he may bow down, even if kneeling before a grotesque idol, "God be merciful to me a sinner," shall go down to his house justified.

While this does not mean that there are two ways of salvation, it does mean that God makes known the way of life to multitudes who have never yet heard the voice of a living missionary, and that the range of salvation, always through the propitiation of Jesus Christ, is much broader than the pale of organized Christianity, and that the voice of the Gospel has been proclaimed, in mysterious whispers to the souls of men, much farther than the theologies and creeds of the visible church have been

promulgated, and that, thus, millions of our brother men who have never heard of the articles of our historical Christianity, are saved, and shall meet us amid angelic rejoicings in the paradise above, the Good Shepherd bearing them home to the flock of the redeemed, as lost sheep found in the wilderness of paganism, and rescued from the death of sin by his arm, almighty to save to the uttermost and from the uttermost. Thus millions who have never known the story of Eden and the fall, nor of Calvary and the redemption, feeling themselves to be sinners and that God must be merciful, have fallen into the arms of a merciful Saviour whose Gospel is preached, though darkfully and dolefully, in the creeds that never knew his name.

The Spirit of Jesus was abroad in the world before the days of his incarnation, and it is to-day, as in all the generations past, far more widely spread than the missionaries have

ever yet travelled. Since the day when the promise was spoken by the voice of God that was heard walking on the sin-smitten earth, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," the spirit of Jesus has never left our world, but has been brooding over all nations as a saving influence, whispering of mercy and keeping alive a spark of hope in the deepest degradation and darkness of sin. Not all in the lands of churches shall be saved, nor shall all in the non-Christian nations be lost. Surely this was what our Saviour meant when he said, concerning the faith of the Roman centurion: "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

He forgets the infinitude of God's mercy who assumes that the plenitude of the creed of the Gospel implies the Gospel-emptiness of all other creeds. It is not a new Gospel that we preach; but we do preach that the old Gospel of God's mercy for sinners is so full and overflowing that its plenitude cannot be contained within the limits of any creed, but is found, as a life-giving element, in all creeds that hold out the hope of divine mercy to sinful men. We do not deny that the church is the visible kingdom of salvation on the earth, but we contend that there are divine and saving elements outside the church, even in the great pagan religions of the past and of the present day.

A SAVIOUR THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS.

“Christ is the light of the world, not of the Jew only, but of the Gentile also, of men in general. He is the source of all good thoughts among the heathen outside the pale of revelation. All good in man, all his holy thoughts and purposes and aims proceed from Christ, the light of the world—all these are rays, broken and fragmentary, of the Sun of Righteousness. The virtues of the heathen, their high moral attainments, are the effects of Christ’s Spirit. So also the glimpses of truth embodied in their religions, and still more in the lofty theologies of the ancient world, are due to a partial illumination by the same Spirit. Socrates’ divine monitor was the Spirit of Christ speaking to his soul. Many men were Christians before the days of Christ; they were inspired by the Word—the Logos—before he became incarnate in Christ Jesus.

THE BIBLICAL WORLD.

CHAPTER IV.

A SAVIOUR THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS.

THE Lord said through the mouth of Haggai, the prophet, "I will shake the nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come." Many suppose that this passage, notwithstanding the verbal difficulties of the interpretation, was at once a prophecy of the coming of Jesus, and a divine declaration that his coming was not only expected by the Jews, but was also desired by all nations. The difficulty is grammatical—in the Hebrew the subject is plural and the verb is singular. The translation of the revised version is, "The desirable things of all nations shall come." It seems to me that the meaning is, "He shall come—the Desired of all nations,"—the plural subject being used with the verb in the singular, because, while a

saviour was desired of all nations, he was desired in different nations under different names, and the coming of Jesus was the fulfilment of all these apparently different desires.

But did all the nations, indeed, desire a saviour, and was the coming of Jesus not only the fulfilment of a Jewish prophecy, but also a divine response to a deep-felt need that was spread throughout all nations—a universal desire in the great heart of humanity? The answer to this question is to be gathered from the careful study of the ancient pagan religions; and that study has led the ablest and most learned investigators in that wide field of research to the conclusion, that there was in all forms of pre-Christian religions, expressed or implied, a consciousness of human guilt and helplessness, producing a desire and an expectation that, sooner or later, a divine helper would come to men from the skies. The universal consciousness of guilt, and consequent need of a saviour, may not have been developed

in all cases into the expectation of a personal saviour; but it never failed to give rise to a hope of salvation springing out of some divine provision for mercy to sinners.

In many pagan nations this desire was fully expressed as a well defined hope of a personal saviour who would come from the skies to teach men the true way of life. About the time of the birth of Jesus there was a widespread expectation not only among the Jewish people, but also in all the leading pagan nations, of the near approach and speedy appearance of a divine teacher and deliverer coming from God to men, to save them from the darkness of ignorance and the doom of guilt. This hope was clearly expressed by some of the great philosophers and poets of Greece and Rome, preëminently by Plato among the Greeks, and at a later day by Virgil among the Latins. The desire, gradually growing into a full-developed hope, has been traced back through all religions to the

most ancient. History shows that the tree of religion strikes its roots in the ground away back in Asia, hard by the cradle of the human race; and travelling towards us, they have been watered by the sacred streams of the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Nile and the Jordan; and going in the other direction, they have branched out into the various religions of India, China, Japan and the isles of the sea. Thus all religions have grown from the same root. The monuments and documents now show that Egypt received the seed of her religion from Babylonia, Greece from Egypt, and Rome from Greece. Jesus with his Gospel came down from heaven, and is the fulfillment and consummation of the religious aspirations of all lands, and of all hearts. His Gospel is not an evolution from all religions that antedate it, but a revelation, fulfilling the otherwise unattainable Desire of all nations. Groping in the dark nearly three thousand years before the advent of Jesus, the

inhabitants of the valley of Mesopotamia felt the touch of an unseen hand, and the soul cried out: —

O Lord, do not abandon thy servant;
In the waters of the great storm, seize his hand!
The sins which he hath committed, turn thou to
 righteousness.
My transgressions are before me; may thy judgments
 give me life.

This was the cry of penitential faith, and it doubtless reached the heart of the then unborn Jesus; and he seized hold of the hand and saved the soul. In this hymn, and there are many more of the same nature and tenor, there is confession of sin with prayer for mercy, showing both desire for and hope in a divine saviour.

We come to Egypt and find Osiris, dearest to the hearts of all Egyptians. In their religious conception he was appointed to reign over the gods in the presence of the Supreme Lord on the day of the constitution of the world. He is Truth itself; he is Love. His heart is in all

the wounds of his people. He is Lord of Life, Lord of Eternity, yet he was born of a human mother who called him by a beautiful name. "Osiris is thy name in the bosom of the Spirit; Goodness thy name in the bower of heaven; Lord of Life thy name among the living; but thy true name is God." He was in heaven, and yet on earth; had come, and was yet to come; was found, and was yet to be sought. Surely in their Osiris the ancient Egyptians had a bright conception and a glorious anticipation of Jesus, who, in the fulness of time, appeared on the earth as the Messiah of the Jews and the Saviour of the world. This desire with its hope was fully developed among the Egyptians long centuries before Abraham sojourned among them, long before the children of Jacob went down to Egypt to dwell.

Beginning in the far East and going farther east, and on eastward still, we find in all the great religions the idea and hope of a divine in-

carnation, or rather of incarnations many, involving the desire of a saviour to come, or of a saviour that had come and was to come again. And as we trace in all the oriental religions the conception and desire of a saviour to come from heaven, we will fail to find any such connection, in a religious point of view, between the Jewish people and the pagan nations where this hope existed, as to lead to the inference, that the pagan expectation of a divine deliverer was suggested by the Jewish hope of a promised Messiah. The two ideas and expectations seem to have existed independently of each other. This universal hope of mankind may be rooted back in a Protevangelion which the race knew before its dispersion into different tribes and nations. Its presence in all creeds, pagan as well as Christian, indicates that there was a Protevangelion which is the root from which all religions have grown.

The learned Augustus Neander, in his "Life

of Jesus," says: "The Jews could not have caught their idea of the incarnation from the ancient myths of other religions, because the spirit of pagan mythology had not penetrated among them, and therefore cannot be assigned to explain the similarity between the Christian and pagan views. We must seek that explanation rather in the relations that subsist between mythical natural religion and historical revealed religion; between the idea, forming from the enslaved consciousness which it sways, an untrue actualization, and the idea, grounded in truth, and developing itself therefrom into clear and free consciousness.

"The truth which the religious sense can recognize at the bottom of these myths — myths of incarnation evidencing a widespread desire and expectation of a divine Saviour taking upon himself a human form — is the earnest desire, inseparable from man's spirit, for communion with God, for participation in the divine

nature as its true life; its anxious longing to pass the gulf which separates the God-derived soul from its original; its wish, even though unconscious, to secure that union with God which alone can renew human nature, and which Christianity shows us as a living reality. Nor can we be astonished at finding the facts of Christianity thus anticipated in poetic forms in the mythical elements of the old religions, when we remember that human nature itself, and all the forms of its development, as well as the whole course of human history, were intended by God to find their full accomplishment in Christ.

“Not only dwellers about Bethlehem, but also men from a far-distant land, imbued with the longing desire of which we have spoken, were led to the place where Jesus was born by a sign suited to their peculiar mode of life, a fact which foreshadowed that the hopes of heathen as well as of Jews, unconscious as well

as conscious longings for a Saviour, were about to be gratified.

“The natural development of the heathen mind worked in the same direction as the movements of revealed religion among the Jews, to prepare the way for Christ’s appearance — which was the aim and end of all previous human history. There is something analogous to the law and prophets in the sporadic and detached revelations which, here and there among the heathen, arose from the divine consciousness implanted in humanity. As, under the Law, man’s sense of its insufficiency to work out his justification was accompanied by the promise of One who should accomplish what the Law could never do, so, in the progress of the pagan mind under the law of nature, there arose a sense of the necessity of a new revelation from heaven, and a longing desire for a higher order of things. The notion of a Messiah, carried about by the Jews in their intercourse with dif-

ferent nations, everywhere found a point of contact with the religious sense of men; and thus natural and revealed religion worked into each other, as well as separately, in preparing the way for the appearance of Jesus.

“Thus it happened that a few sages in Arabia, or in some part of the Parthian kingdom, who inquired for the course of human events in that of the stars, became convinced that a certain constellation or star which they beheld was a token of the birth of the great King who was expected to arise in the east. It is not necessary to suppose that an actual miracle was wrought in this case; the course of natural events under divine guidance was made to lead to Jesus, just as the general moral culture of the heathen, though under natural forms, was made to lead to the knowledge of a Saviour.”

We accept all this, and add to it two accessory thoughts, not incompatible with it, but seeming to us to be necessary to account for the

knowledge and hope of a Saviour which are found in the great pagan religions. The pagan hope of a Saviour from heaven was not in the ancient times, nor is it in these modern times, solely a product of natural religion, reasoned out from the deep, heartfelt need of humanity for such a Saviour. It was, and is, *in part*, the remembrance of a primeval revelation — the Protevangelion which was preached to all men up to the time of the dispersion of families. But we are very far from saying that the Gospel in pagan religions is wholly the residue of this inspired tradition. We go farther and say, that there is in the soul of every man a seed of religion, and the human soul naturally turns to God as a plant turns to the sun. We go still farther and say, the inspiration of God's Spirit is not limited to those who live in the light of revealed religion, but is responsive to the seed of religion that is in every human soul, and distils upon it its gentle dews and sheds upon it

its benign rays, enabling it to germinate and fructify where it is not smothered to death in the lusts of a will turned to sensuality. Who will say that there were no inspired souls among the heathen?

We add the three things together, and conclude that reason along the lines of natural religion, the undying tradition of the Protevangelion given to the race at the beginning, and a divine inspiration responsive to the seed of religion in the human soul, have kept alive in all the great religions of humanity a knowledge of salvation and a hope for a living Saviour to come from the skies; and hence we find in all religions a yearning, though it may be but vague, for all that is noblest in Christianity. The pagan world has never been left to itself. The merciful Father of all causes the rain of salvation to fall upon the pagan deserts of humanity as well as upon the more favored fields of Christian lands. Many fragrant flow-

ers, though stunted in growth, bloom in the desert wastes of pagan nations as well as in the fertile fields of Christian lands through which streams of the water of life abundantly flow. All the virtues of paganism are not *splendida vitia*, and all their sublime institutions of moral and religious truth are not the mirage of the desert. There is the hope of a Saviour, and there is real spiritual life among them. Let us send them a clearer, even an unclouded Gospel, that they may have life more abundantly.

And let us remember that the Gospel of Jesus is not primarily a teaching or a doctrine, though it embraces this. It is primarily the declaration of a great fact, offering salvation through a Person who stands alone in the history of the world. That person is the Saviour who is dreamed of, and longed for, as the Desire of all nations. His ear of love is sensitive and can hear the feeblest cry in the most distant land; his eye of compassion is keen and can

penetrate to the remotest corner of the darkest nation; his arm of salvation is long, as well as strong, and can reach the most distant and most degraded soul on earth that cries for mercy; and he stoops down and lifts up every soul that cries for mercy, even out of the deepest sin into the highest holiness, even unto the spotless holiness of heaven where the forever sinless angels dwell.

There is a point in which all religions meet, and from which, it seems, they all diverged. We find the analogy of what we now refer to in the unity and diversity of human language. Language is the expression of thought, and in thought all languages find their unity; and however diverse the languages may be, the thoughts expressed in one language can be translated into the words of all others. And, furthermore, all languages overlap and link into one another in certain vital root words. Just as man is a talking animal, so he is a re-

ligious creature. Wherever we find man we find him with a language, if it be only a language of signs; so, wherever we find man we find him with a religion, if it be only a religion of idols. The first manifestation of religion is the act of worship. Worship is the language of religion, and however diverse the forms of worship may be, yet the forms of any worship may be translated into the expressions of all others. And also, all systems and forms overlap and interlink at their most vital points. We are happy in having the high authority of Prof. Max Müller to sustain us in this view. He says : —

“More surprising than the continuity in the growth of language is the continuity in the growth of religion. Of religion, as of language, it may be said that in it everything new is old, and everything old is new, and that there has been no entirely new religion since the beginning of the world. The elements and

roots of religion were there, as far back as we can trace the history of man; the history of religion, like the history of language, shows us throughout a succession of new combinations of the same radical elements. An intuition of God, a sense of human weakness and dependence, a belief in a divine government of the world, a distinction between good and evil, and a hope of a better life,—these are some of the radical elements of all religions. Though sometimes hidden, they rise again and again to the surface. Though frequently distorted, they tend again and again to recover their perfect form. Unless they had formed a part of the original dowry of the human soul, religion itself would have remained an impossibility, and the tongues of angels would have been to human ears but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. If we once understand this clearly, the words of Saint Augustine, which have seemed startling to many of his admirers, be-

come perfectly clear and intelligible, when he says, ‘What is now called the Christian religion has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race to the time when Christ came in the flesh, from which time the true religion, *which already existed*, began to be called Christianity.’ ”

This explains how and why we find in all ancient religions not merely a premonition, but a desire and an expectation of a divine Saviour from the skies. It was the Protevangelion continued intuitively and traditionally in all the creeds of humanity, keeping alive in the diverging families a knowledge of God and his promise of a Saviour to redeem the world. In this we do not refer to the promise made to Abraham of a seed in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. The Protevangelion—the Gospel that is found in all religions—ante-

dates Abraham, and goes back to the primal pair from whom all the race has sprung.

A careful reading of the Hebrew Scriptures shows that there was not a radical divergence in the religions prevalent in the East in the time of the patriarchs, but rather the reverse. Abram, when he sojourned in Egypt with his wife, found the fear of the Lord in the reigning Pharaoh; and Abram recognized Melchizedek, king of Salem, as the "priest of the most high God," and united with him in worship, and received a blessing at his hands. Abraham, when at a later date he sojourned in Gerar, found the "fear of God" in Abimelech on the throne, to whom the God of heaven spoke in a dream. When, two hundred years later, Joseph was sold into Egypt, his creed was no obstacle in the way of his promotion, but rather a recommendation, as Pharaoh recognized him as "a man in whom the Spirit of God was"; nor did he find anything incompatible with his creed in

the prevailing religion of Egypt, else he would not have taken "to wife Asenath, daughter of Potipherah, priest of On." And Jacob found no difficulty in blessing Pharoah, nor Pharoah in receiving the blessing of Jacob's God. And four hundred years later there seemed to be but slight difference between the religion of Moses and that of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. They worshipped together, and Aaron, and all the elders of Israel, joined with Moses in holy communion with his father-in-law, eating bread with him "before God." And at a still later date we find that all fear of the God of Moses had not departed from the Moabites and Midianites, and that Balaam, the high priest of the people, was a priest of Jehovah, officially as true as steel, but personally as false as sin itself. And even as late as the day of David, we find that Hiram was as orthodox as David himself. And later still, did not Jonah find the fear of God on the throne of Nineveh,

and did not all the people, from, the king on his throne to the beggar on his dunghill, keep a fast unto the Lord of heaven? Idolatry prevailed in those nations, but it was a ritualistic idolatry in worship of the true God.

Mr. C. Loring Brace has made a thorough study of the ancient pagan religions, not merely to search for their defects, or to show their inferiority to the highest religions, but to find what good there was in them; and to see how the men of other races and times regarded the problems of the universe and that great darkness that lies beyond the present life, and to discover what thoughts they had conceived of another world and of the beings there. In his great book, "*The Unknown God*," he sums up the result of his wide, scholarly and conscientious researches as follows: —

"As we follow down in our thoughts the remarkable facts detailed in the preceding chapters we see a continuous revelation of great

truths granted to various races and peoples, and transmitted by them to their descendants. In all religions we trace the idea of the Unknown God, as the original uncreated power of the universe, the source of all life, and the centre of all moral forces as well as material. His everlasting power and divinity are seen through the things that are made. He is not always 'Father,' but he is always beneficent and just; and the hope of union with him and likeness to him is the inspiration of the soul. . . .

“ And there comes forth also among various races a hope and belief of a *human* manifestation of the *divine*, of one who has, though of the gods, taken on himself the form of man, borne the sins and sorrows, and sought everywhere to remove the evils of humanity. Sometimes it is a tradition of one who had come in the past, sometimes the hope of one who was to come. If he has been in the world, his life has been full of blessings to mankind. He has,

perhaps, been removed by a violent death, and now in the unseen life watches over his followers, and becomes their Judge and Eternal Friend. Or, if he is to come, he will remove the fear of death, and will do away with human sin and suffering. Whether these beliefs are premonitions of certain great facts to appear in the world's history, or whether they represent the necessary mode in which the mind of man embodies its hopes and moral beliefs, it is difficult to decide. They form at least an important part of the religious beliefs of the human race."

We could quote much more from Mr. Brace's book with our entire approbation, but we do not agree with him in his theory as to how pagan nations came by their knowledge of one Supreme God. He says, "This — the conception of one Supreme God — was not, of course, the primeval faith, but a growth from a conception of heaven as God, and then of the

Heaven-God.” But why may not the evolution have been downwards instead of upwards ; the original conception being of Heaven as the abode of God, and then of Heaven as God ; of the sun as the image of God, and then of the sun as God ; of the various agencies of nature as the ministers of God, and then of them as inferior gods ? Both theories have their advocates. We adopt the latter ; and in our opinion the Unknown God is not the Unfound God, but the Forgotten God. Of course God revealed himself to primeval man in his creation. His creation was itself a revelation of the Creator. How could it have been otherwise ? The primeval faith of the race was based upon a divine revelation of God to man. As families multiplied and dispersed, each carried with it a tradition of God as he had at the beginning revealed himself ; and false systems of religions are the products of degraded and confused ideas of a primeval revelation.

However, we believe, as already stated, that God has planted a seed of religion in the human soul, and that this seed has, even in pagan lands, been quickened and developed from time to time, into higher conceptions of God and divine truth by special and personal inspiration of some who have arisen as teachers and reformers. There have been frequent fluctuations in religious thought and life both in pagan and Christian lands, sometimes rising to higher truths and sometimes falling away into false and fantastic conceptions of divine things. This fact is too well established in the history of both doctrine and practice in the Christian church to admit of doubt or cavil. There have been periods of decadence followed by periods of revival, and these again by periods of corruption followed by periods of reformation. Similar fluctuations are traceable in the history of pagan religions.

Sometimes, and among some, their hope for a

coming Saviour, or their faith in a Saviour that had come, was bright; at other times, or among others, it was beclouded by prevalent sin or superstition, and was almost lost. But it was not, as M. Renan surmises; speaking of the sorrows and aspirations of men, he says, "It is with their tears that they make for themselves a saviour"; but rather, as M. De Presensé says, "With their tears all the nations are calling for a Deliverer." We add, despairing of help and blinded by their tears, some fall away into the abyss of atheism; and others, despairing of human help, see the face of a merciful Father shining upon the cloud of their sorrows, and forming upon the falling rain of their tears a bow of promise in which they recognize the shining wheels of the chariot of a coming Saviour. The heathen world, desiring and seeking a Saviour, did not find him in any one of their Gods or priests, but they found out that they could not find him on earth. Were

they all lost because they were baffled in their search? This does not follow by any means; the Saviour found them. He still finds and saves all souls who, in the midst of heathen darkness, are feeling for the touch of his unseen hand, and are trusting in the mercy of the Unknown God for salvation through their lost and yet unfound Saviour.

Jesus, the Saviour of our lost world, whom all the nations in all generations have been desiring and seeking for without knowing his true name, did not come, when he appeared in our world, as the Son of man, born of man's sorrows and tears; but as the Son of God he came down from heaven, where he was born of the love and mercy of the Father in the power of the Divine Spirit, before he was born into our humanity as the Son of man, the Brother of all men, while remaining forever the Son of God. And, holding God by the hand of his divinity, he lays hold of man by the hand of

his humanity, and thus brings God and men together in divine reconciliation and human salvation. Thus the Desire of all nations, prophesied, consciously or unconsciously, in all sacrifices, however horrible in themselves, that were ever burnt on pagan altars, has come, bringing to mankind the salvation which men in all ages had been blindly seeking and striving to find in their own vain inventions; the Saviour of the world, prophesied as the Messiah of the Jews in "all the blood of bulls and goats on Jewish altars slain," has come, bringing life and immortality to light for Jew and Gentile alike. "Salvation is *of* the Jews," but it is *for* all the world; and whosoever calleth upon the name of God, by whatever name they may name him, shall be saved.

And now, in conclusion, we must briefly consider the question, Do the modern forms of paganism so far as they have been examined, so far as they put themselves on exhibition in the

Parliament of Religions, indicate a desire for a Saviour, either as belief in a Saviour who has already come, or hope for a divine Deliverer who is yet to come? There is here almost no field of inquiry at all, because there are no modern forms of paganism. In point of date all great pagan religions stand related to Christianity as Judaism does, and the coming of Jesus has influenced them very much as it has influenced Judaism. Many Jews accepted Jesus as their expected Messiah, but, in proportion, far more pagans in the first century accepted him as the Saviour of the world. In the late centuries Jesus is far more acceptable to Jews than he was in the first Christian centuries. The liberal Jews of the present day regard him as a great and good man, and many of them are now beginning to look upon him as the greatest of the prophets. And, likewise, where his name is known, while yet his religion is not accepted, modern pagan teachers look

with more and more favor upon Jesus of Nazareth.

Where any changes can be traced in the modern forms of ancient heathen religions, there seems to be an increasing belief that the desired Saviour has come and has departed again; and with this belief there is the hope that he will return again and dwell among men, if not physically, at least as an ever abiding spiritual presence. Of all existing forms of ancient pagan religions Buddhism is at present, by far, the most widespread and the most vital; and the world is now in possession of a complete form of a modern Buddhistic liturgy, composed in 1412 A.D. by a pious Chinese emperor. The great object of worship in this liturgy is Kwan-Yin, who is described as the Word of God and the Redeemer of the world, and one of its prayers is, "May Kwan-Yin, the omniscient and omnipotent Redeemer, now come among us and remove from us all impurities of thought, speech

and action." So remarkable, in many points, is the resemblance of this modern Buddhistic liturgy to Christian forms of prayer and praise that many think that modern Buddhism was materially influenced in China by Nestorian Christianity in the sixth and seventh centuries.

Of all the forms of religion represented in the Parliament of the religions of the World, only two have sprung into existence since the death of Jesus; of these, one is Mohammedanism which is really a spurious form of Christianity that arose in the seventh century, and in it Jesus of Nazareth is recognized as the Saviour, and as a prophet second only to Mohammed himself; and the other is the Brahmo Somaj, founded about the beginning of the present century by Raja Ram Moham Rai, which is a conglomeration of Hinduism, Mohammedanism and Christianity, and which may be, upon the whole, regarded as a step from paganism towards Christianity. Of this recent movement

the best known leader was the late Kesub Chunder Sen who said in an address in England; "I have not come to England as one who has yet to find Christ. When the Roman Catholics, the Protestants, Unitarians, Trinitarians, Broad Church, Low Church and High Church, all come around me and offer their respective Christs, I desire to say to one and all, Thank you; I have my Christ within me; though an Indian, I can humbly say, Thank God that I have my Christ."

All modern changes in the current pagan religions indicate a nearer approach to the great central truths of Christianity, and evidence a deeper consciousness of the need of a Redeemer, and a growing, instead of a diminishing, desire for a Saviour. From this it appears that now, as never before, a Saviour is the desire of all nations. The religion which promised a Saviour and which kept alive in the heart of all nations the desire for a Saviour, though latest born, was

the first given of all religions. The Gospel of Jesus — the divine provision for mercy to sinners through the propitiation of a Saviour from the skies — has been known in the world from the fall of Adam. All nations, as families multiplied and dispersed, carried this hope with them as a spark of saving power in all their false systems of worship. In many the spark of this hope was so bedimmed amid a cloud of false doctrines and superstitious ceremonies, that its presence can scarcely be traced; but in no nation was it ever utterly extinguished. Where it ceased to exist as a faith, it still lingered as a hope that kept alive in all nations the desire for a Saviour.

In the fulness of time the Saviour, for whom all the nations were longing, came, and was born into the life of humanity as a Babe in Bethlehem of Judea; concerning whose birth into our world the angel of God said to the shepherds who were watching their flocks in

the field by night, and through them to all men :
“Fear not; for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” This Saviour desired of all nations, is “the hope of the gospel — the good news which ye have heard, and which,” as St. Paul informs us, “*was preached* to every creature which is under heaven.” And now, in the eloquent and glowing words of M. De Pressensé.

“The Deliverer is at length come ! He, for whom the old Chaldean was yearning, when, with terror-stricken conscience, he used the incantation of his seven demons, and, weeping for his sins, called upon a God whom he knew not. The Deliverer is come ! whom Egypt dimly foresaw when she spoke in words which she understood not, of a God who was wounded in all the wounds of his people. The Deliverer is come ! for whom the Magi strained their eyes,

looking for a Saviour greater than Zoroaster. The Deliverer is come! for whom the India of the Vedas panted when she was lifted for a moment above her pantheism by the intuition of a Holy God — One who could satisfy the burning thirst for pardon, which none of the springs of her own religion would avail to quench. The Deliverer is come! the true Son of God, who alone can lead mankind to battle with full assurance of victory; the God whose image dimly discerned, had floated in fantastic incarnations through the waking dreams of the Brahmin. The Deliverer is come! he who can have compassion on the sufferer and on all who are desolate and oppressed, without plunging himself and the whole world into the Buddhist sea of Nirvana. The Deliverer is come! he whom Greece had prefigured at Delphi and at Eleusis — the God who saves because He also has suffered. The Deliverer is come! he who was

foretold and foreshadowed by the holy religion of Judea, which was designed to free from every impure element the universal aspiration of mankind."

This Deliverer is Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour of the world whom all the nations desire. Jesus, the Desire of all nations, has come, and he has been lifted up from the earth, and he is drawing all men unto himself. He forces none, but he draws all; and only those who resist and draw back, can ever be lost. Those who cannot find him he will find, however thick the darkness that blinds their eyes. Only those who hide in the light shall at the last be cast into the outer darkness where no ray of hope can ever shine. A man may go out of this life a pagan and find himself in Heaven a Christian, because Jesus was the real desire of his heart and the Saviour whom he was seeking in the pale light of his pagan worship, without

knowing his historical name. To misspell, to mispronounce, or to misknow the true name of Jesus, does not destroy his power to save to the uttermost every soul who trusts in the mercy of God for pardon and salvation.

THE CAUSE OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

“Thou art Goodness itself in the abstract, in its first spring, in its supreme and universal form and spirit. We must believe Thee to be infinitely good; to be good without any measure or bound; to be good beyond all expression and conception of all creatures, or we must give over thinking of Thee at all. All the goodness which is anywhere to be found scattered among the creatures is sent forth from Thee, the fountain, the ‘sea of all goodness.’”

Jer. White, chaplain to Oliver Cromwell.

“Go ye therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and, lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER V.

THE CAUSE OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

IN view of the conclusion reached in the foregoing chapters the questions arise: What becomes of the cause of Christian missions to the heathen? What work is there for our Christian missionaries to do in the non-Christian nations? These questions link together the motive and the end of Christian missions, and in our answer we will not separate them, but consider conjointly, and in the same paragraphs, the reasons which justify the cause of Christian missions in pagan lands, and the end which the work of Christian missionaries should aim to accomplish.

If the heathen have the Gospel of human salvation embodied in their various systems of religion, making it possible for them to be

saved without knowing the historical name of Jesus of Nazareth, why should the Church send missionaries to teach them the doctrines of the Christian religion? In answer to this we say — as we teach all through this work — there is but one way of salvation — the way opened by the propitiation of Jesus for the sins of the whole world in which is grounded and justified the divine provision for mercy to sinners; and this, the only true way of life, is more truly and clearly made known in Christianity than in any other form of religion. We may go so far as to say that Christianity is the only true system of religion. All other forms, considered as *systems*, are false religions. In the true system there are false doctrines, and in the false systems there is the true doctrine of salvation through divine mercy, more or less clearly expressed or implied.

The Gospel as contained in Pagan creeds is undeveloped and very much darkened by a

cloud of false doctrines and superstitious ceremonies, but it is the Gospel, and has power to save the soul that lays hold of it. Gold is gold even when alloyed with base and worthless metals; and the gold is still gold even when in quantity it is a very minute portion of the alloys with which it is mixed.

The system of Christianity exists in various forms. In the Church there are antagonistic denominations, and in each denomination there are schools of conflicting interpretations. Not many would be rash enough to claim that their form of Christianity is free from all errors. No one at this day can dare to limit the way of salvation to his own denomination or school of interpretation. Such narrow bigotry has had its day, and it kindled the fires of martyrdom, but the day for its tolerance has long ago passed away; Christianity now-a-days tolerates everything except intolerance. It tolerates heathenism itself, and rejoices to see the light

of salvation dimly burning in all the false systems of Pagan religions. But in the midst of this universal toleration of all forms of faith and unbelief, it is the duty of any one who believes that he has a higher and surer conception of truth than others, to promulgate and propagate his views. Truth can never be held as private property. It comes from God, and belongs to all men. It is the duty of every man to expose error where he sees it, especially hurtful error. All error is damaging. Error in religion diminishes the usefulness and happiness of men, and some errors destroy both soul and body.

And now, if Christianity is indeed a higher and purer system of religion, and more beneficent in its influence on humanity, than the best systems of paganism, then it is the duty of Christians to send it into all non-Christian nations, and show its superior light and power, and to offer its larger salvation to every tribe,

family and individual of the race. But it must be offered as the better and surer way of life, and not as the sole way of salvation. It should not deny any truth it finds in the Pagan systems, but should add to it its brighter light and thus not extinguish but increase the light that shines in darkness. Jesus came into our world not only that men might have life, but that they might have it more abundantly. Men may be saved through the mercy of God without knowing the historical name of their Saviour, but more men will be saved where the light of his Gospel clearly shines; and those saved will enjoy a larger salvation both in this life and in the life to come.

Herein consists the real worth which justifies the cause of Christian missions; and the work of Christian missionaries in Pagan lands should be shaped and directed by the frank admission of the fact, that the creed of Christianity is not the only, but the best, way of salvation. This

is reason enough not only to justify Christian missions, but also to obligate the Church to send its missionaries into all heathen lands. Accordingly, Jesus commanded his apostles to "go and make disciples of all nations," and then to teach the disciples to "observe all things whatsoever he has commanded." They were not sent out to preach a creed of doctrines and precepts to the heathen, and demand faith in it as the condition of salvation. They were first to win the hearts of the people by preaching to them the gospel of divine love and mercy, and thus to gather disciples of Jesus in all nations; and then, to teach the disciples the doctrines and precepts of Christianity. Against this view, the concluding verses of the Gospel according to Mark may be quoted; but all the world now knows that those verses, with their damnatory conditions, are not found in the ancient Greek manuscripts, but were added at a later date by some unauthorized hand.

Under the great commission given the Church, as recorded by Matthew, the Gospel of Jesus as the only *true system* of religion, immensely superior and more beneficent than any other form of religion, is to be preached in all nations, that all men may have a better and surer chance of being saved; but it is not to be preached as a creed that must be accepted as the only possible way of salvation. The doctrines and precepts of the Gospel-creed are not to be thrust upon the world as the sole condition of salvation, but are to be taught to the disciples of Jesus as the basis of Christian belief, and as the principles and rules of Christian life.

Why do we continue to preach the Gospel in Christian lands to those who have already heard its glad news? They have a chance of being saved without ever hearing another sermon. But it is our duty to increase their chance of salvation, and so we continue to preach to them after they have heard; and after

they accept the Gospel we continue to preach and to teach, in order that they may become better Christians, growing continually in the knowledge and grace of Jesus our Saviour.

Even though the heathen groping in darkness may touch the hand of their unseen and unknown Saviour, and be saved without knowing his historical name and without receiving the Gospel-creed, yet, every reason and every argument that justify and impel the Church to continue its work of home missions, also justify and compel it to go forward with the work of Christian missions in non-Christian nations, with an ever-growing zeal and an ever-increasing activity.

In the plenitude of the Gospel we have a larger Saviour and a larger salvation than the creeds of the Church usually present to the world. In the redemption of Jesus there is a salvation for this life as well as for the life to come. Godliness is profitable unto all things,

having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. We trust in the living God who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. In the very face of these plain declarations of the great missionary of the first century, the Church has limited its conception of salvation too much to the soul and to the future life. When we properly comprehend the length and breadth of the salvation taught by Jesus and illustrated by his works on earth, we will find that it is a salvation for the body as well as for the soul, for time as well as for eternity, and for nations as well as for individuals. While preaching his Gospel to the poor he healed the sick, fed the hungry, and relieved, in a general way, the temporal and physical maladies of men.

The only serious rebuke that Christianity received at the hands of Paganism in the World's Parliament of Religions was for seeming to care more for the souls of the heathen

than for their bodies. A few years ago a learned Chinaman passed through our country and stood up in our great cities at the centres of intelligence, and claimed a superiority for the religion of Confucius over that of Jesus, "because," said he, "while Jesus taught men how to die, Confucius taught men how to live, holding that it is much more important that men should live right than that they should die well, and that right living is the only true road to well-being after death." Of course this is a gross misconception of the teaching of Jesus, but the Church is responsible for this misconception of the true aim of Christianity—a misconception which is widely spread at home and intensely felt in Pagan lands where Christian missions have their stations. The Christian missionary is very urgent to persuade the heathen to give up his idolatry and to accept Christianity in order that his soul might be saved in the life to come, but he fails to show

him that the prevalence of Christianity makes bread more plentiful, health more certain, and the homes on earth more happy.

It is held that the earthly benefits of Christianity should not be urged as motives for accepting it, because they are inferior to its heavenly rewards, and because they appeal to the selfish nature of men. But Jesus did not so teach; on the contrary, he appealed to the earthly benefits of his works as proof that he came from God. When John in prison sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ascertain whether or not he was the true Saviour of the world Jesus said to them, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Here the physical benefits of Christianity are put first, and its spiritual benefits last. We are not to expect the mission-

aries of Jesus to relieve the physical sufferings of men by miracles as he did, but we are to expect them to show in some practical way that Christianity has resources for the relief of the poverty and sufferings of this present life.

The missionary station that has its physician and hospital, and its relief fund for pinching hunger, will make converts ten times more surely and swiftly than the station that has only eloquent preachers and pious teachers. The Gospel is to be preached in all the world not only to persuade men to live so that they will go to heaven when they die, but also to persuade and enable them to make the earth as much like heaven as possible while they are living on it. The end of the Gospel can be nothing less than the conversion of the whole world, and the Christianization of all nations. Jesus died not only to save souls, but also to redeem the earth from the dominion of sin.

No Christian mission should be satisfied with

making a few converts from year to year ; its aim should be to revolutionize society and to Christianize the nation. It should show that the salvation of the Gospel is for this life, as well as for the life to come, by applying all the resources and methods of modern science, as they have been developed in Christian lands, for the relief of the moral, social, sanitary and governmental degradations of non-Christian nations. To do this the missionaries should seize upon whatsoever threads of truth and of right principles they find in the religious, social and national life of the people, and tie its new and higher truths upon those threads, and of the new and old threads weave a new web of a religious, social and national life. In this way the missionaries can make "disciples of all nations," and the nations will be saved on earth and the men in heaven. God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

Jesus came not to destroy, but to fulfil. The missionary should not destroy, nor even deny, the elements of truth and the dim lights of hope he finds in pagan religions, but should fill them up and complete them by adding and infusing into them the new life and light of Gospel truth. He goes forth as the apostle of Jesus, not to condemn, but to save the world by bearing witness of that Light which was the true Light, that is, the light of Truth, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The world, here spoken of, is not this material globe, but the world of men living on the earth — the world which God so loved that he gave his only begotten Son to live and die on earth for its redemption. Jesus was in this world before his incarnation, but the world did not know him. In him *was* life — life for the dead world before he was born into our life; and that life was the light of men. And that Light shineth in darkness — among men who

do not know his name — and the darkness comprehended it not; and yet, men's failure to comprehend it, did not destroy its power to save. And yet it is forever true that "salvation is of the Jews." The Gospel of Jesus is the only power of God to save men, and Jesus was a Jew. But that power is not limited within the confines of formulated and recognized historical Christianity. The power of God through Jesus unto salvation is felt, and is efficient, in far distant regions where his historical name is not yet known, and, even in regions where his name is known, by some who have not yet received the creed of Christianity as excluding all other creeds.

Certain friends of Christian missions are needlessly alarmed at this wider and better hope for the heathen world which in late years is reviving and spreading through Gospel lands, and taking possession of the minds and hearts of earnest Christian souls. They call it a "new

theology," and say that it is paralyzing the energies of the foreign missionary work. In the first place the doctrine is not new, and in the second place it does not paralyze the cause of foreign missions; but quickens and invigorates zeal and activity in sending Gospel missionaries throughout the world. It demolishes the doctrine of a second probation, after death, and destroys the hope of a final restoration of the wicked after being purified in the fires of a purgatorial punishment. It lays upon the Church and all Christian people the awful responsibility of hastening to send the Gospel throughout the world in order that all nations and tribes may have the largest opportunity of salvation, for both time and eternity, while mercy spares them in this fleeting life of their only probation.

It is not a new Gospel nor a new doctrine that we preach. It was openly avowed by some of the earliest Christian fathers, and is implied

in the writings of others. Justin Martyr tells us that Jesus was known in part to Socrates, he being enlightened by the Word (Apol. ii. 10). Augustine tells us that he was roused from sensuality and ambition by "the incredible ardor" which was kindled in his mind by a passage in Cicero's Hortensius, which made him burn "to remount from earthly things to God" (Confess. iii. 7). He also affirmed that Christianity in its essence is as old as creation. Saint Paul, the great missionary of the first century, recognized beneath the superstition of heathenism a true seeking for God, and quoted with approval from heathen poets. He declares that a law had been given to the heathen as well as to the Jews, and that, when the Gentiles "do by nature the things contained in the law, they, having not the law, are a law unto themselves" (Rom. ii. 14). And Saint Peter, when he discovered in the vision which he saw on the housetop in Joppa, that in God's sight no man is common or unclean be-

cause he is a heathen, was compelled by divine conviction to utter the great truth, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but, in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him" (Acts x. 34, 35).

This carries the wider and better hope for the Pagan nations back to the door of the primitive apostles themselves. The Church did not begin its missionary work until, by miracle and persecution, it was brought to recognize this great truth of divine love and human charity. It was the prevalent belief of the Church during the first great period of its widespread missionary labors and glorious successes. With the revival in the present century of this wider and better hope for the Pagan nations, the energy and zeal of the Church in foreign missionary work have revived and advanced with gigantic strides, and missionary work in non-Christian lands has been crowned with a suc-

cess never known before in the history of the progress of Christianity. Where, then, is the paralyzing effect of this doctrine of broader charity and brighter hope upon the work of evangelizing the heathen nations of the earth?

On the contrary, the absence of this doctrine and hope is paralyzing on all efforts to send the Gospel to the non-Christian nations. During the long night of neglect and non-activity of the work of Christian missions, it was the prevalent doctrine of the Church that the Pagan religions were utterly powerless to save, or to shed one ray of hope on the teeming masses of non-Christian humanity; and that the heathen nations were shut up in hopeless darkness, doomed to endless perdition, and that neither God nor man cared for the salvation of their souls. This was the prevalent doctrine in 1789, when young William Carey proposed as a topic for Christian consideration, "The duty of Christians to attempt the spread of the Gos-

pel among heathen nations." It is well known that the venerable Rev. Mr. Ryland denounced this proposition with a frown, and thundered out, "Young man, sit down; *when God pleases to convert the heathen* he will do it without your aid or mine." And we are told, that "the aged and more influential ministers generally" endeavored to dissuade Mr. Carey from what they deemed "so visionary a scheme." In the position of those "aged and more influential ministers" there was a grim consistency. They held that it was not the pleasure of God to convert the heathen, but to leave them to live and die in heathen darkness, and then to damn them in hell forever for not believing in the name of Jesus of which they never heard, no, not even so much as a rumor.

So long as it was thought that God cared not for the heathen, it was not to be expected that men should feel any obligation resting upon them to send the Gospel to the non-Chris-

tian nations. So long as it was held that it was not *the pleasure of God* to save heathen, a proposition to establish a foreign mission would, of course, be treated, as it was once treated by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, "not only as an unnatural, but a revolutionary design." When men began to care for the salvation of heathen they soon discovered that God had been caring for their salvation all the time, and that he had never left them in their deepest darkness without a witness of his presence among them.

If there were no knowledge of the way of salvation among the heathen who have not heard the name of Jesus of Nazareth, if all who do not receive in formal faith the creed of Christianity are doomed to endless perdition, I do verily believe that the God of all mercies would have sent a knowledge of Jesus and his salvation into all lands long ages ago by miracle if it could not have been conveyed to them

otherwise. If there were no way for men to be saved except by knowing the name and work of Jesus Christ, and if, for the want of this knowledge, men in Pagan lands have been perishing in hopeless darkness for thousands of years, I do verily believe that the God of love and righteousness would have, from the very beginning, sent out all the holy angels from heaven unto the earth to make known the way of salvation in all lands and in all languages. If God Almighty could sit upon his omnipotent throne in heaven and see his children on earth perishing by millions upon millions because no one had made known to them the only way of life, without exerting his almighty power to the utmost, even to the full extent of its miraculous force, to send to them a saving knowledge of the name of Jesus, how could we expect to see weak and imperfect men toiling and sacrificing to send Christianity to those who are their brother men only because

.

they are the children of the same God who made us all, and who is Father over all in heaven?

I know the answer to all this which, even to this day, some make, but with which none are satisfied. It is, that God is under no obligation to save any soul of Adam's fallen race; that he would be absolutely just and holy if he should leave all to perish in sin. Just he might be, but merciful he could not be; holy he might be, but his holiness would be as cold and lifeless as the eternal snow around the poles of the earth that is never soiled because there is no living vegetable or animal there, to tread upon it in life or to fall upon it in death. But God has sent into the world his only begotten Son, who is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, showing that he has found a way in which he can be merciful to sinners. And if God is merciful at all, he must be as merciful as it is possible for mercy to be. If in mercy

he can save any soul, he must in justice place the salvation of his mercy within the reach of all souls. This we believe the God of love and truth has always done, and is always doing. No soul can ever be lost forever, unless there was a time when it might have been saved. And accordingly, the great missionary apostle said that "the heathen who have not the law, are a law unto themselves." We are to send the Gospel to the heathen on the same principle that we would furnish glasses to the near-sighted — not that they are blind altogether, but that they might see better and farther.

And besides, the great principle on which the cause of Christian missions should rest, the great motive that should prompt the Church to send its missionaries unto all Pagan lands, is not so much to save individual souls in heaven as to save human society on earth. If God loves the human race so much that he has made a provision of mercy for the salvation of men's

souls in heaven, should we not love our brother men enough to move us to send them our Christianity that they might enjoy all its physical and temporal blessings on earth? The chief end of Christian missions is to Christianize human society on earth.

To this end God has made commerce his great missionary in this nineteenth century. Christianity civilizes men and nations as nothing else does or can; and increasing civilization creates new wants in the lives of men, and then sends out its commerce in ships and on its ever-extending iron roads — thus commerce is ever advancing, clearing new roads and opening new doors for the entrance and spread of Christianity. Commerce is the great unbaptized missionary of this nineteenth century, and it is doing more for the Christianization of the Pagan nations than the great unbaptized emperor, Constantine the Great, ever did in that early century when Christianity converted the Roman

Empire that claimed to be the whole civilized world.

The cause and work of foreign missions are precisely the same as the cause and work of home missions. We do not send out evangelists and establish churches and schools in the destitute regions of our own country simply that men's souls may be saved, but that human society may be elevated and purified by the infusion of the principles of Christianity in all families and in all communities throughout the entire nation. The aim of foreign missions is to do for the whole world just what home missions are aiming to do for our own country — to Christianize society and government from bottom to top and from centre to circumference.

The earth is the *Lord's*, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. The world is the field; and the final result of preaching the Gospel is to be the conversion of the entire world unto Christianity. The end of

foreign missions is the Christianization of the nations of the earth, and the end of home missions is the evangelization of society in all human institutions, whether domestic, social, commercial or political. And hence, the church, while preaching the Gospel unto all the world, is taught to pray, “Thy kingdom come : thy will be done on earth, as in heaven, ” and the answer to this prayer is to be worked out by the faithful preaching of the Gospel in all lands and languages. While the Gospel, as God’s word unto individual salvation, is whispered in all Pagan religions; yet the Gospel, as the power of God unto the Christianization of the nations, is preached in all its fulness only by the living ministry of the church. And therefore, as embracing both these truths, we conclude this discussion in the words of Charles Wesley’s hymn, praying for more ministers to preach the Gospel of Christ unto the ends of the world : —

O Lord, send forth more men
 To preach thy word abroad:
And let them speak thy word of power
 As workers with their God.
Give the pure Gospel-word,
 The word of general grace;
Then let them preach the common Lord,
 The Saviour of our race.
Oh, let them spread thy name:
 Their mission fully prove;
Thy universal grace proclaim,
 Thy all-redeeming love.
On all mankind, forgiven,
 Empower them still to call,
And tell each creature under heaven,
 That Thou hast died for all.

A New Book of Social Thought.

JUST PUBLISHED.

Price, paper, 25 cents ; cloth, \$1.00.

B.O. Flower

**The New Time : A Plea for the Union of
the Moral Forces for Practical Progress.**

The Social
Factors at Work
in the Ascent of
Man

This new work, by the author of "Civilization's Inferno," deals with practical methods for the reform of specific social evils. The writer does not bind together a mere bundle of social speculations, that would seem to many to have only a remote and abstract relevance to everyday life. He deals with facts within every one's knowledge. "The New Time" brings its matter directly home to every man's bosom and business — following Bacon's prescription.

It is published especially to meet the wants of those who wish to apply themselves to and interest their friends in the various branches of educational and social effort comprised in the platform of the National Union for Practical Progress ; but, from its wide sweep of all the factors in the social problem, it will also serve to introduce many readers to a general consideration of the newer social thinking.

Price, paper, 50 cents ; cloth, \$1.00.

**Rev.
Minot J.
Savage**

**The Irrepressible Conflict between
Two World-Theories.**

A New World, a
New God, a New
Humanity

Five lectures dealing with Christianity and evolutionary thought, to which is added "The Inevitable Surrender of Orthodoxy." By the famous Unitarian divine, advanced thinker and author of "Psychics: Facts and Theories." Mr. Savage stands in the van of the progress of moral, humane and rational ideas of human society and religion, which must be inextricably commingled in the new thinking, and a stronger word for moral and intellectual freedom has never been written than "The Irrepressible Conflict." We are now going through the greatest revolution of thought the world has ever seen. It means nothing less than a new universe, a new God, a new man, a new destiny.

The New Religious
Thinking
deals only with
Verities

*For sale by all newsdealers or sent postpaid by
Arena Publishing Co., Boston, Mass.*

Published only in cloth ; price, \$1.50.

**Marion D.
Shutter,
D. D.**

Wit and Humor of the Bible.

Wit and Humor
are sometimes
confused with
Buffoonery.
They, however,
are to be found in
the highest works
only, and they
are subtly
present in the
highest

A literary study. Many writers have written instructive commentaries upon the pathos and sublimity of the Bible, but the literary elements comprised in the title of this interesting and revealing work have rarely been mentioned. Dr. Shutter has here entered into a field which before was untraversed. This side of sacred literature has been long neglected, probably because in so many minds wit and humor are somehow associated with mere ribaldry and irreverence. This is a grave mistake. Wit and humor are too fine, and have their origin in emotions too human and ennobling, to serve the purposes of coarse and mean, degraded natures. In human nature, the sources of laughter and tears lie close together; we need not, therefore, be surprised to find wit and humor in the Bible, in which every human passion is mirrored, in which the whole philosophy of life is to be found, with some consolation and sympathy for every mood of humanity. This book of Dr. Shutter's is the work of one who loves and knows the Great Book thoroughly and reverently.

Cloth. Price, post-paid, \$1.25.

**Thomas
Alexander
Hyde**

Christ the Orator : or, Never Man Spake Like This Man.

This brilliant work, the only one of its kind which has been given to the world, is a monograph upon the third side of Christ's nature—the expressional. The Rev. Thomas Alexander Hyde, the author, is a vivid and vigorous thinker, and before the publication of this book, which has made his name as familiar in the religious world as that of any contemporary religious teacher, he had made a reputation as the author of "The Natural System of Elocution and Oratory." "Christ the Orator" has already awakened widespread interest, and received high endorsement from leading editors, preachers, scholars and thoughtful laymen everywhere, representing every phase of Christian thought. Its earnest spirit, sympathetic and finished style and lofty purpose, render it a welcome guest in every family.

Mr. Hyde is a vivid writer and a vigorous thinker. His mind evidently does not run in the old theological grooves, though we conclude that he is sufficiently conservative. His attempt to prove Christ an orator is at least unique. His book is suggestive, full of bright and beautiful sayings, and is quite worth a careful reading. — *New York Herald.*

*For sale by all newsdealers, or sent postpaid by
Arena Publishing Co., Boston, Mass.*



Price, paper, 50 cents ; cloth, \$1.50.

The World's Congress of Religions.

To meet the general demand, the Arena Publishing Company has, with the consent of the Parliament Publishing Company, issued this popular work, which gives the proceedings of the opening and closing sessions of the council *verbatim*, thus giving the reader a perfect picture of one of the most unique spectacles man has ever witnessed—a picture in which the representatives of earth's great religions united in welcome greeting and loving farewell. These two great gatherings are given *verbatim*, while in twenty-nine interesting chapters are given absolutely *verbatim* reports of the greatest and most representative papers or addresses which were delivered—the papers which most clearly set forth the views, aims and mission of the great faiths, and which are immensely valuable as contributions to the present literature of the world. It is important to remember that these addresses are in full and exactly as given. An impressive introduction has been written for this volume by Rev. Minot J. Savage.

Price, paper, 50 cents ; cloth, \$1.25.

**Rev.
S. Weil**

The Religion of the Future.

This is a work of great value, written by one of the keenest, most powerful and most truly religious minds of the day. It is particularly a work which should be put into the hands of those who have freed themselves from the dogmas of orthodoxy and from the dogmas of materialistic science. It is a profoundly religious book. It demonstrates most indisputably to the unbiased mind the existence of a moral as well as a material cosmos. The book is addressed principally to sceptics who are seeking after truth. "The Religion of the Future" deals with that something lying behind the sympathy and interaction of mind and body at which natural science stops. It brings forward *data* to prove that this arbitrary invalidating of modern science is itself invalid.

This book starts with the axiom that the mental world is the realm of cause, of which the material world is the evanescent effect—that there is a "Power not ourselves which makes for righteousness." The chapters reveal a new method in psychic and spiritual research.

*For sale by all newsdealers or sent postpaid by
Arena Publishing Co., Boston, Mass.*

A Remarkable
Volume showing
the Identity of
all Religions in
the Creeds

Comfort and
Hope from
beyond the
Bourne

A Book for
Sincere and
Earnest Sceptics

The Higher Life
Here and Now

From the press of the Arena Publishing Company.

The Latest Social Vision.

Price, paper, 50 cents ; cloth, \$1.25.

**Byron A.
Brooks**

EARTH REVISITED.

The New Utopia, "Earth Revisited," is the latest social vision, and in many respects the most charming work of this character which has ever appeared. In it we see the people, the state and the church under true civilization, and the new psychology is introduced in such a manner as to interest students of psychical research.

Here are a few press opinions : —

Richmond, Va.
Star

"As a story, it is very interesting."

Chicago Times

"Worthy of consideration for its study of the social and other questions involved."

Review of
Reviews

"The story is written in an autobiographical form and pictures the social, industrial, religious and educational America of 1992. As a work of fiction the volume embodies in a fanciful way a view expressed in the closing words: 'To live is to love and to labor. There is no death.' The style is clear and direct."

Lyman Abbott's
Paper, The
Outlook

"Mr. Brooks is an earnest man. He has written a religio-philosophical novel of life in the coming century. The hero of this story has lived the life of the average man and at length, when he finds himself dying, he wishes that he might have a chance to live his life over. The wish is granted and he is born again on the earth a century later. Social and scientific and religious evolution have in a hundred years contrived to make an almost irre recognizable world of it. Human nature is changed; altruism is fully realized; worship has become service of man; the struggle for wealth and social rank has ended. Mr. Brooks' book is worth reading by all sincere people, and in particular by those interested in Christian socialism and applied Christianity."

Nashville, Tenn.
Banner

"If you should happen to pick up Byron A. Brooks' 'Earth Revisited' and read the first chapter, the chances are that you would follow the story on to the end, even if you had other things on hand spoiling for your attention. Summed up, 'Earth Revisited' is a wild though delightful story, short enough to be filled from end to end with throbbing interest and long enough to fully round off the things that are introduced."

*For sale by all newsdealers, or sent postpaid by
Arena Publishing Co., Boston, Mass.*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 021 024 470 0