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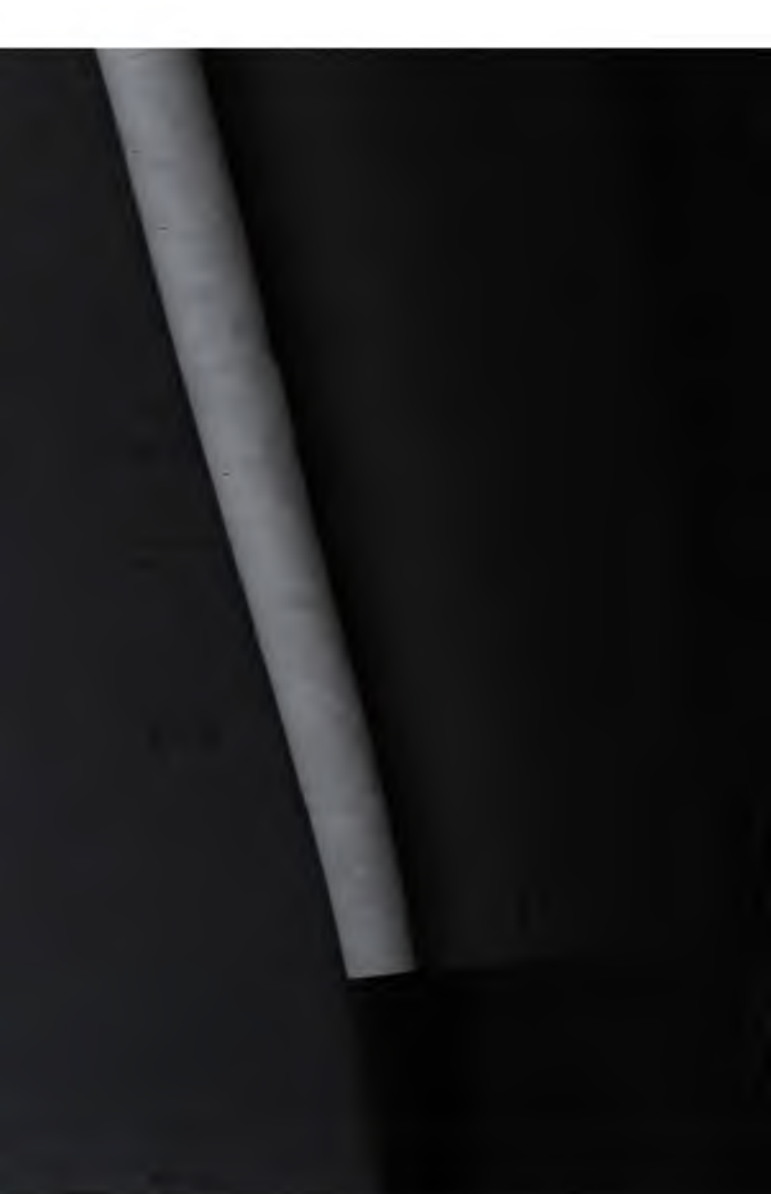
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The Social Implications of Universalism

The Social Implications of Universalism

BY
Russell
CLARENCE R. SKINNER
PROFESSOR OF APPLIED CHRISTIANITY, CRANE
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL, TUFTS
COLLEGE.

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Dedication
TO
THE LITTLE LADY WHO HAS
ENCOURAGED ME IN PREACHING AND
TEACHING THE GREATER FAITH

FOREWORD

How to transform this old earth into the Kingdom of Heaven—that's the primal question. For thousands of years sad-eyed men have looked upon this war-racked and greed-broken world, yearning to gather it into their great healing love. Many have gazed with amazement at the sorrow and misery of humanity and have wondered. Some have climbed into the high places, searching the heavens for an answer; others have gone down into the deep places for the secret. Prophets have caught a various vision, their eyes have been lighted by many and devious enthusiasms which have sent them into the world to labor and to serve.

For some the answer has been the individualistic revival of religion stressing the value of emotional excitement and confession. Interest in this method of bringing in the Kingdom of God spasmodically waxes and wanes. It invariably begets ac-

tion and likewise invariably begets a reaction which demonstrates its inadequacy. To others the scheme resolves itself into a program of reform which would solve all problems through the increase of income. This philosophy has been ascending in influence, and is destined to become a potent factor in social reconstruction. But it is a partial program and a reaction is imminent if not already actual. To increasing multitudes the final answer to this perplexity lies between the extremes, in a great religious awakening which is not merely emotional, but which combines spiritual inspiration with the vision of a constructive, working program.

May the humblest of these seekers after truth set forth the talismanic word which fires him with hope and urges him to whatever service he can render. It is Universalism—the universal faith and hope in the universal love. When men have tried all lesser faiths, when all fragmentary trusts have failed, may the world come to see this vast vision of a cosmic religion,

“As lofty as the love of God
As ample as the needs of man.”

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	vii
I THE CHALLENGE	1
II A FREE CHURCH	7
III GOD AND DEMOCRACY	17
IV THE NATURE OF MAN	26
V BROTHERHOOD	34
VI SOCIAL MOTIVE	42
VII THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS	51
VIII HELL AND SALVATION	61
IX THE NEW UNITY	68
X THE FINAL TRIUMPH	76
XI THE LARGER FAITH	84

THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF UNIVERSALISM

I

THE CHALLENGE

Let us meet the issues of our time with intellectual frankness and with moral courage. Let us recognize the challenging facts of our day, and answer them with truth and with reason.

The fact is that the traditional Protestant Church is dying, dying hard with colors flying, and battling heroically, but nevertheless dying. It ought to be so. The theology upon which it is built is dying; the individualism which called it into being is dying; the social order which it expressed is dying. Why should it not also die?

Our political systems decay, our educational systems perish, our sciences become fossilized in a decade. We are glad to see

them go. We shoot cannon, wave flags and indulge in oratory in celebration of their death.

When political systems decay it does not mean that man ceases to be a political animal; it merely means that man has discovered an instrument which more perfectly expresses his political needs and instincts. The death of an institution means more life, not less. An outworn creed means more truth, not less. Every death means a larger life.

The passing of the traditional Protestant Church does not mean that man has ceased to be religious, it means that he is more religious, and that he wants his religion in bigger and more vital terms. Has the old church been so perfect an instrument, and has it produced so perfect a civilization, that we can not joyously hail a change with expectations of a better performance?

The change may come violently, with dramatic cataclysm, wrenching the vitals of institutionalized religion, as political institutions were torn by the French Revolution. It may come as subtly as the pine adds her new leaves to the old. But certain we are that by evolution or by revolu-

tion, the Christian church is being daily transformed to more sensitively reflect the life of the age and to exercise a more commanding influence in shaping our spiritual destinies.

The fact that historical ecclesiasticism is crumbling should in no wise cause us to be hysterical or morbid. Organized Christianity has died and has been born again a multitude of times since Jesus of Nazareth preached in Palestine. The religion of Christ was conceived in stormy times; it has been the storm center of advanced civilization for nineteen hundred years; it is the vortex of a world urge and stress today. No sooner has it met the demands of one age, than a new age develops new demands. Christianity has grown in an environment of perplexity and of imminent danger. At its best, it has grappled and has grown great in the conflict. Its most notable eras have been eras of turbulence and adventure, when it has met challenge with challenge, and difficulty with resource.

The fiercest, most barbaric, most bewildering forces have been hurled at the church. It is constantly quivering under the impact. No sooner has it conquered one

force than it has been beset by another. No sooner has it formulated a creed than science has shaken it. When it attains imperial splendor, its glory wanes and it must seek new sources of influence. There has been scarcely a year in history when the church has been comfortable. It is providentially so, for to be comfortable is to be comatose. The history of the church is a history of eclecticism, of shifting emphasis and of adaptability.

Contradictory as it may seem to some of our platitudinous theories, religion is most dominant and gripping when it is most contemporaneous and most intensely local. The preacher may and ought to thunder his eternal verities, and the cathedral spire may point to the serene empyrean above all jarring discords of earth. But the mind of the common man hungers to have those eternal verities interpreted in terms of his own clime and time, adaptable to his own personal experience. Religion is a spiritual interpretation of the whole of life. That part of life which is the most confusing and bewildering is the immediate present; that part of life which influences

man most is that in which he is most intensely engaged—the present. Therefore the Christian Church must be of the moment. It must realize that the ephemeral is eternity on the wing, that the local is simply a comprehensible part of the universal, and that the material is but a visible edge of the spiritual.

It is unthinkable that this regal function of spiritual interpreter should ever become unnecessary to society. As long as man shall not live by bread alone, one of his deepest wants shall be an authoritative voice, speaking out of experience, of the way the truth and the life. People shall flow unto it as the tides of the ocean unto the moon.

There is no danger that religion should pass out of life. There is danger that the Church may cease to be the voice of religion. The challenge of our day to the Christian Church is evidence of society's need of religion, but of religion in terms of contemporary life, a religion which will be founded upon a twentieth century psychology and theology, a religion which is throbbing with the dynamic of democracy,

a spirituality which expresses itself in terms of humanism, rather than in terms of individualism.

Universalism meets the demands of the new age, because it is the product of those forces which created the new age. It does not send its roots down into a mediæval civilization, interpreting past history. It does not come to the present weighted down with incrustations of traditionalism or of formalism, which inhibit spontaneous and contemporary action. Its theology expresses the modern conception of the nature of God and man. Its motive power arises out of the new humanism. Its axioms are the assumptions of the great social and psychological movements of the twentieth century. It is the real religion which the masses consciously or unconsciously are adopting. It is the philosophy and the power which under one name or another the multitudes are laying hold upon to swing this old earth nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the religion of the people, for the people, by the people. It is the faith of the new world life, sweeping upward toward spiritual expression.

Let us see if this be not so.

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II

A FREE CHURCH

A great historian has declared that organized religion has been the foe to intellectual, political and social progress. He has beheld, in the panorama of world events, the great institutionalized Church combatting the discoveries of science, tearing the prophet limb from limb and shackling the emancipator. But the historian fails to make the necessary distinction between the free and the traditional forces of religion.

(Churches have always been of two groups. The first contains those which have developed a vast and cumbersome organization which makes inertia almost inevitable. They have fulfilled the function of conservators of static racial, social and ethical ideals.) They have acted as the bulwarks of industrial and political systems. Their religion is a religion of authority;

their theology is a theology of a divine hierarchy; their organization stresses the value of ecclesiastic rites and ceremonies. The whole visible machinery and invisible atmosphere of such churches tends to create men whose thoughts are hedged about with law and custom, and whose spirits meekly recognize bounds. (The typical product of such a church is completely satisfied with the *status quo*, and desires to spread the sanctions of ecclesiasticism about existent organizations, thus making them seem to be of transcendent origin.)

Traditionalism in religion is linked with and contributes to traditionalism in all forms of life. It is a mental attitude or a spiritual discipline which makes for the acceptance of the forms of things as they are, whether of theology, family, tariff, labor, or astronomy. It has two shibboleths: "It always has been," or "It never has been." The vision of a traditionalist is that of a universe in cross section rather than in procession.

The natural and inevitable social implication of theological conservatism is conservation. There is no creative dynamic in traditionalism. The conservative

forces of religion have been the foe to the intellectual, political and social progress of humanity. The religions of authority are naturally contributory to social systems based on authority. An ecclesiastic régime which demands unthinking obedience from its devotees, trains men to become unthinking and servile members of society, who render stupid obedience to the established social order.

The other group of churches contains those fiercer, braver souls who passionately hunger after freedom of mind and soul, who are impatient of metes and bounds, and who are constantly endeavoring to push back the periphery of human experience closer to the universal and the divine. These are the freemen of religion, the pioneers of God. To them a creed is not a tombstone marking the resting place of truth, but is rather a milestone on the long arduous journey to the truth. The man who is spiritually and mentally emancipated never accepts tradition because it is tradition, is never unquestioningly obedient to the institutions and authorities of man, is never comfortably satisfied, but is ever on the alert for high adventurings.

In the words of Emerson, "He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness." A free religion is constantly endeavoring to surpass itself, to outgrow itself, to challenge the fundamentals of existence, to adapt itself to whatever new revelations may come with the dawn.

The social implications of a free religion are apparent. Freedom in religion contributes to freedom in social life. Those who are inspired and encouraged to question the accepted traditions and creeds perpetuated by ecclesiasticism, are the men who naturally and inevitably search for the true bases of the social good. If they are taught to be dissatisfied with the *status quo* in theology, their logic will inexorably drive them to the same dissatisfaction with the *status quo* of politics, or of industry. Light the fuse and the fire will reach the bomb. Emancipate a man's spirit and he will carry his freedom into all he says and does. From defying authority in ecclesiasticism he will progress to defying authority in politics. From fighting tyrannies in theology he will lead on to the

fight against the tyrannies of the commercial oligarchies.

The new interpretation of church history is bearing tardy witness to the fact that the men who fought the crucial battles of religious emancipation were foremost among the leaders of intellectual and social revolutions. The great religious leaders from Moses to this day have discovered that in order to impress spiritual ideals upon humanity, the unspiritual economic systems must be transformed. A true religious idealism, linked with a true freedom, will radiate into every conceivable relation of life, and will demand a radical reformation of society. A religion which is free will therefore become a social dynamic.

The genius of Universalism is liberty. Its fathers dared to challenge the olden tyrannies of ecclesiastical authority, and interpret life in larger, more triumphant terms. Its beginnings are linked with the stormy days of political and industrial revolution. Its prophets were stoned in the streets for their daring, they were ostracized by their contemporary complacent fellow religionists. But they fought the

battles of religious and civil freedom, and to-day one of the most splendid characteristics of the Universalist Church is the unchallenged right of every individual to interpret the fundamentals of religion according to his conscience. Absolute freedom of utterance and latitude for adventure is secured for preacher and layman in the articles of faith which declare that no form of words and no precise phraseology shall be required of any member of the church.

Such intellectual liberalism and such broad fellowship, after winning the battle for theological freedom, have put Universalists in the forefront among defenders of the new science. They have been among the pioneers who have helped to harmonize that science with religion. When it was heresy to believe in evolution, our fathers dared to proclaim it as a doctrine which would save religion, not destroy it, which would reveal God, not abolish Him.

But the fight for freedom is never won. Inherited liberty is not liberty but tradition. Each generation must win for itself the right to emancipate itself from its own tyrannies, which are ever unprecedented

and peculiar. Therefore those who have been reared in freedom, bear a tremendous responsibility to the world to win an ever larger and more important liberty.

Universalists are freemen. Therefore they should be in the front rank of the daring few who are fighting the battles of social emancipation. They have pledged themselves to break the tyrannies of the mind, and strike the shackles of tradition from the soul. If they are true to the spirit of their faith, they pledge themselves to free humanity from the economic degradation which fetters it, body, mind and soul, in this twentieth century. The logic is relentless, the implication clear. Universalism, by its very genius, is led into the great social maelstrom, because it is essentially a battle for the freedom of the common man. It is a struggle for complete emancipation.

It is easy to gain the right to palliate when charity is popular. It is easy to boast of the similitude of social freedom, to hide slavery behind the mask of relief. But it is hard to win the freedom to eradicate, to blaze the trail, to risk prestige, popularity, ease, in a fight against the

causes of misery. There is no issue in religious life to-day of more fundamental import than the freedom of the churches. The cause of vital religion will fall or rise as the cause of true freedom is lost or won.

The Universalist Church, though small in numbers, has ever been alive to the championing of social rights. In 1790 the Universalists put themselves on record against the holding of human beings as slaves. This is one of the first actions by a religious body in America. A slave was a charter member of the first Universalist Church in America.

One of the first and most effective champions of industrial freedom was Rev. Adin Ballou, author of "Christian Socialism" and founder of one of the first successful coöperative enterprises;—that at Hope-dale, Massachusetts.

The cause of woman's liberation has been splendidly upheld. The first journal devoted to working women in this country was organized by a Universalist minister in the city of Lowell. The first National body of women organized in the United States were Universalists, and this denomination was the first to actively promote a woman min-

istry. The second college in America to introduce coeducation was Lombard.

The cause of the prisoner has been especially upheld by the prophets of the larger faith before the science of penology was developed. The first great agitation against capital punishment, the first proposal of parole and the first prison paper were instituted by Universalists.

They have been among the first agitators for Universal Peace in the modern world. The services of Clara Barton are famed throughout the world.

One of the first, if not the first resolution for total abstinence for individual and State, passed by a religious convention, was proposed in a body of Universalists, and one of the first temperance papers was run by a Universalist.

One of the first movements for the care and education of neglected children eventuated in the first Sunday school in America formed by Benjamin Rush, a Universalist.

Such has been the prophetic vision of Universalism. Such deeds it has contributed to the freedom of the world. The record of Universalism is emblazoned with

mighty accomplishments. It has made bold the voices of clarion prophets; it has filled the eyes of humble men with imperishable visions; it has caused pulpits to thunder the larger good and the vaster hope; it has quickened the heart beat of the common life.

Such will be the untrammelled spirit of the new religion, and by such motive will the new church be inspired.

III

GOD AND DEMOCRACY

All great social problems involve theological conceptions. We may divorce church from state, but we cannot separate the idea of God from the political life of the people. So intimate is the connection between religious and social development, that the history of tribal and National evolution reveals the fact that a particular type of theology is an almost inevitable concomitant of a particular type of society. There is a constant interaction between ideals of economic and political life on the one hand, and ideals of God on the other. As man attains increasing democracy, he conceives God as being more universal, more just and more intimately associated with life; and as God is conceived to be more universal, just and intimate, the idea begets more democracy among men. Social action and theological reaction are equal, and in the same direction.

In the olden times God was conceived to be aristocratic, imperious, partial, because the people were so; and the commonly accepted notions of deity never rise higher than the common social experience. Our religious terminology and imagery smack of imperialism and aristocracy. Therefore we find the old sacred literatures full of such statements as this, which in the Bhagavadgita is attributed to the Creator: "The fourfold division of castes was created by me according to the apportionment of qualities and duties." God is here imagined as dividing his human creatures into four distinct classes, each with appropriate powers. This supposed fiat of a partial deity became the constitution for the caste system of social, political and economic life which has held sway so universally and so imperiously among the peoples of the Orient. A caste system created a caste God, and a caste God spread its sanction over a divisive and aristocratic society. Government used the church as a reinforcement for the execution of its tyrannies.

The Old Testament record of the dramatic struggle between the worshipers of

Yaweh and Baal is illustrative of the clash between a democratic people with a democratic idea of God and an aristocratic people with an exploiting God. Prof. Lewis Wallis, author of "The Sociological Aspects of the Bible," has ingeniously but clearly shown the deep economic and political significance of this struggle. The Israelites were born to the rugged freedom of the hill country, inheritors of a rich social idealism, worshipers of a God, Yaweh, who stood for justice. The Amorites were a commercial people, with traditions of a slave class, worshipers, therefore, of Baal, who became the shekel raised to the *nth* power, a God who condoned greed and injustice. Professor Wallis therefore rightly calls the victory of Yaweh worship by the Israelites over Baal worship by the Amorites the first great victory of the common people, for it meant the establishment of the religious sanctions to democracy, brotherhood and freedom.

So the struggle has gone on through the course of history, a democratic people projecting into their idea of the deity those social and spiritual qualities which were most highly developed in themselves.

Each nobler and more just conception of God, therefore, becomes evidence of a new level of political life, and is in turn a *magna carta* of liberties yet to be won.

In the light of this undoubted law, the problem of theology in the twentieth century becomes twofold. First, the problem of imagining attributes of deity which are at least as democratic as the attributes of the most highly socialized man; and second, creating an idea of God which shall bring man up to a newer and finer level of social experience.

The old ideas of a God who created a spiritual aristocracy, who maintained partiality, whose sympathies were not as wide as the whole of humanity, are patently inadequate to meet the new needs. There is no mistaking the democratic instinct in the new man. He passions after freedom and brotherhood. He lays bare his heart and mind to the great human currents and exults in the tides of feeling which pour upon him, enriching and enlarging him. There is no mistaking the widening of sympathies, the greater sense of inclusiveness, the new solidarity of humanity. Such a humanity will no longer brook the impe-

rious and fastidious God who has scorned the fellowship of most of his creatures in the past. A democratic people demand a democratic God, a robust deity who likes his universe, who hungers for fellowship, who is in and of and for the whole of life, whose sympathies are as broad as the "rounded catalog, divine, complete,"

"The devilish and the dark, the dying and diseased,
The countless (nineteen-twentieths) low and evil,
crude and savage,
The crazed, prisoners in jail, the horrible, rank,
malignant,
(What is the part the wicked and the loathsome bear
within earth's orbic scheme?)
Newts, crawling things in slime and mud, poisons,
The barren soil, the evil men, the slag and hideous
rot."

The Universalist idea of God is that of a universal, impartial, immanent spirit whose nature is love. It is the largest thought the world has ever known; it is the most revolutionary doctrine ever proclaimed; it is the most expansive hope ever dreamed. This is the God of the modern man, and the God who is in modern man. This is no tribal deity of ancient divisive civilization, this is no God of the nation or of a chosen people, but the democratic creator of the

solid, indivisible world of rich and poor, black and white, good and bad, strong and weak, Jew and Gentile, bond and free. Such a faith is as much a victory for the common people as was the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. It carries with it a guarantee of spiritual liberties which are precedent to outward forms of governmental action.

From the summit of our muezzin towers we have seen this "glory that transfigures you and me," we have caught the larger vision, the mightier urge. The world hungers for this larger God. Nothing less will satisfy its longing. Nor height, nor depth, nor peril, nor nakedness, nor sword, nor any other creation shall separate us from the love of this, our God and Father. The swelling democracy of our age, like a roaring torrent, sweeps away the petty household idols, the national deities, the Calvinistic God, the small, defeated, limitarian Creator of the ages past, and bears our high imaginings on to the utmost periphery of all time, all space, and there trumpets the mighty, the triumphant God.

And not only is the Universalist conception of the Universal Fatherhood of God a

response to the hunger for a larger, more democratic Creator, but it in turn begets a higher level of social life. A universal faith demands a universal application. This vast idea cannot be confined in one human mind, or in one favored class, but escapes beyond the narrow limitations of individualism into every conceivable relation of life. It cannot be calmly accepted by one and denied to the many. The Universal God means universal life, universal opportunity. It means the destruction of the olden tyrannies and the emancipation of the common man, Christ-like, free. It means the wreck of exploitation, the ruin of aristocracy; it means the exaltation of the meanest and weakest of God's creatures to the height of fulfilment. It means democracy.

Some timid folk shudder at the thought of their own innate greatness. From such the shackles of slavish thought would be struck, and into their blood would tingle and flow fresh streams of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Others shiver at the vision lest it mean equality, and their accustomed prestige be broken. Many of them may well shiver if their prestige and

power are won at the cost of exploitation or greed. Their hour has struck. They are doomed by democracy. But those whose power is that of justice, those who have gained their influence through superior capabilities of love and service, need fear nothing. The new age will crown them, and hail them as the true princes, potentates and kings.

The Universal Fatherhood of God, which clearly implies democracy, does not imply equality, for equality does not appear in nature. The infinite variety of the forms of life is occasion for perennial astonishment. Human beings exhibit the widest conceivable variety of physical and temperamental differences, which are not merely accidents of clime, but which are innate, and, so far as we can perceive, a part of the design of creation. Just as there are no two grains of sand alike and no two leaves alike, so there are no two men alike, and where there is no similarity there can be no equality. Democracy does not mean equality. It means the very opposite; its primary aim, in the definition of Dr. Fleischer, is "the organization of society with respect to the individual." Democ-

racy is an attempt to preserve whatever differences are innate and divine in human personality, and to secure to all absolute freedom to become their own best selves.

The Universal Fatherhood of God recognizes the difference between the black and the white, but it declares that the fact of the difference is no ground for exploitation, but is rather an occasion for mutual respect and mutual self-fulfilment. The whole pith of the matter is this: that the differences which are innate in humanity are just, and must be clearly differentiated from the artificial distinctions which are superimposed upon humanity unjustly by men.

The idea of the Universal Fatherhood of God pulls society up to the higher levels of mutual respect, justice, brotherhood. It cannot be used as religious sanction for greed, injustice, slavery, caste, privilege. It is the common man's *magna carta* for political, social and economic opportunity to develop all the divine power with which God has endowed his regal soul.

IV

THE NATURE OF MAN

There are two avenues of approach to the process of social melioration. One is through the philosophy of economic determinism which is being reënforced and re-emphasized to-day with apostolic zeal by Socialism and allied movements. The economic interpretation of history has been so neglected in the past that its discovery and popularization to-day tend toward an overconfidence in it. It is undoubtedly a true philosophy. History marshals overwhelming evidence that economic motive lies at the root of many great world movements. The moral reorganization of economic forces may therefore transform the world and bring about the melioration of those social conditions which have enslaved and degraded humanity for centuries.

But economic determinism is not a complete philosophy of life. It is an ally

rather than a substitute for religion, which is the philosophy of spiritual determinism. Religion approaches the problem of social reorganization through inward motives, which, when aroused, mold outward forces. In the final analysis all economic schemes such as Socialism depend upon the conscious human control of industry and evolution. It is the task of religion to furnish those life values and liberate those spiritual impulses which will energize man and incite him to social control.

Universalism contributes to this social incentive, the dynamic and urgent idea of the universal spirituality of man. The pivotal point of the Universalist theology is the Universal Fatherhood of God. Grant the existence of a universal spirit whose nature and purposes are beneficent, who reveals Himself through universal laws, then the whole cosmic philosophy of Universalism follows with flawless logic, and the social implications become inexorable.

The Universal Fatherhood of God means the innate spirituality and worth of man. If God is literally the Universal Father, then man must be the inheritor of a God-like nature.

In the words of Channing: "What is it to be a Father? It is to communicate one's own nature, to give life to kindred beings. God is our Father not merely because He created us. This bond is a spiritual one. This name belongs to God, because He frames spirits like Himself, and delights to give them what is most glorious and blessed in His own nature."

Man, being the child of God, must be potentially God-like. "In His image created He him," means that man carries the mighty life of God in his soul. Sometimes it slumbers or is crusted over. But ever the indomitable spirit of God lingers in the life of man, ready to blaze forth in starlike illuminations, and to declare itself in majesty and heroism.

This thought exalts human nature, enriches it, makes it of infinite worth, and deepens its significance. Whatever most elevates our conception of man is the supreme social service, be it a theological concept, a social custom or a legislative decree. Man will never rise to a higher estate than that which he feels to be his rightful heritage. Once implant in his soul the imperishable consciousness that he is the

son of God, and that Godlikeness is his natural destiny, and he will arrive at Godlikeness as the drop of water on the summit of the Alps will finally mingle with the ocean. No injustices will long endure when man has been liberated by the knowledge of this high truth. It is the emancipation proclamation of all history. It is at the basis of every social reform. Man will not grovel in slavery when he knows that he carries God in his soul. Man, the mighty of spirit, will not bend the neck to the yoke nor passively submit to tyranny. He will rise in the consciousness of his divineness and with every drop of his blood fight the wrong and build the right.

It was on this appeal that Moses roused his countrymen to renounce the slavery of Egyptians, and to enter into the Promised Land worthy the inheritance of the sons of God.

This thought was undoubtedly one of the supreme contributions of Jesus to the world. His sympathies reached out beyond narrow ethnic boundaries and included all humanity in his vision of a unified world under God. The apostles caught the fire of this great vision, and spread the

glad tidings of man's sonship to God to barbarian and Jew, bond and free. Such a doctrine held within it "the faith and hope of all the years," and as the ages roll by we can see it lifting the condition of man, undermining tyrannies, conquering ancient wrongs. Men grew bold to declare for themselves the "glorious liberty of the sons of God."

This was the lever whereby the world raised itself out of the slough of despair and slavery which had settled down upon it under the Roman dominance. This was the impulse which freshened human life with a renewed faith and rehabilitated it with new self-respect.

It is this thought of the preciousness and innate nobility of human nature which forms the distinctive characteristic of the great humanitarian movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Examine whatsoever social emancipations we may, we shall find at the source, the thought of the spirituality of man and the Universal Fatherhood of God.

No social problem can ever be completely solved until it is spiritually solved, for every social problem involves a spiritual

content. No matter how gross a fact may seem, it yet impinges upon the human, and it must be interpreted in terms of its effect upon the inner life of humanity.

We may approach child labor from the economic aspect. We ought to recognize that it does not pay in terms of dollars and cents, and we ought to drive home the argument with all the oratorical sledge hammers we can command. Yet this in itself is insufficient and incomplete. We may prepare tables of the waste in wealth caused by war, alcohol and disease, yet men remain curiously callous to this appeal to the pocket-book nerve. What would be the residuum in the public mind if we appealed for social reconstruction wholly on the ground of economic determinism? Would it not produce the belief that man can be actuated only by motives of self aggrandizement?

Let us trumpet abroad the transforming faith in man's innate worth and rouse society to its noblest endeavors by appeal to the divine nature. This is the ultimate incentive to the salvation of the world, and to the building of the new social order.

The outstanding fact in this new social

order would be the universal recognition of God as the Father, and of all men as essentially spiritual beings. This theology of the divine indwelling, if sincerely and consistently believed, would be no mere shadowy, impalpable presence,—it would stand out boldly. It would transform prison systems and shops. It would work its revolution in mine and mill. It would seize upon wars, despotisms, slaveries, and abolish them. It would beget itself in flesh and blood. It would be the most actual, astonishing and manifest fact in the world.

Just as the early apostles were forced by an untoward economic environment to construct a communism to give social expression to their religious views, so we to-day must feel the divine command to build anew in harmony with our belief. If we really believe that all mankind is spiritual, we must reorganize our social institutions so that they shall express and not repress the spirituality of man. The machine must be made to declare a dividend of noble human souls as well as of marketable cloth. The hours and conditions of labor must be

made fitting for the sons of God, not meet for dreamless cattle.

Gradually there is dawning upon the mind and in the heart of man the thought that every great religious concept is a challenge to social reorganization. If God is the Universal Father, then the world is all God's—soul and body, science and theology, machine and tool, system and condition; that therefore no human invention or custom should exist which does not embody God with all the implications and ramifications of His presence, and we are thrown back upon the central thought of Jesus—the Kingdom of God—which should be such a transformation both from within and from without that the recognition of God in every condition would be assured, and the higher life of men as spiritual beings would be conserved.

V

BROTHERHOOD

Faith in the transforming power of Brotherhood is growing great. It is swiftly girdling the earth. It is infusing old and decadent civilizations with fresh impulses, and is waking sleeping millions to mighty visions. This marvelous spirit seizes the world, enflames it, commands it; folk-hunger throbs and pulses through our veins. We forsake our petty dilettantism, our corroding materialism. Brotherhood has become our passion, our bread and meat, our shining faith. We follow its gleam through the sorrow and misery of this life to the radiant sun-lit hills of hope.

The new religion must reflect this growing fraternalism in a new form. Instinctively we of the twentieth century reject the old aristocratic ideas of God which meant a divisive caste system for men, ruled over by an imperious partial power. The new theology must have its roots in real broth-

erhood. Again we instinctively turn from the old religion which depicted men divided into the saved and the lost. We believe in the solidarity of the race. We are all of one blood. Our fortunes and our destinies are so interlocked that we all move on together whether we will or no. The new theology must sense this new solidarity of humanity.

Universalism in fact clearly implies these conceptions which are the very stuff of brotherhood.

The Universal Fatherhood of God means the universal brotherhood of man. A common origin means a common relationship. If two children are the offspring of the same parents they are brothers or sisters. We may deny the fact, as many have denied it. We may exalt one brother to kingship and reduce the other to beggary. But the fact of the brotherly relation persists through all denial and partiality. The ideal of brotherhood implies common interests and mutual helpfulness.

If God is our Father and we are all children of God, then we are all brothers. No denial will alter this indisputable fact. No inequalities, human or divine, will explain

away or eradicate our common origin and our essential oneness. When we say the words, "Our Father," we imply the words "Our brothers." The moment we arrive at the theological concept of the Universal God as Creator, that moment we are driven to the social concept of a universal humanity. This fact has been established by the physical and chemical sciences. It is the witness of anthropology. It is the creed of all universal religion. It is the burden of sociology. The unbreakable fraternity of all men, black or white, red or yellow, rich or poor, strong or weak, has become established as a necessary postulate of all clear thinking.

Brotherhood in the modern sense is a great spiritual fact. Behind the folk revolutions of to-day there is the same high idealism and fine impulse which in other ages discharged themselves in individualism and non-social pietism. The new Humanism has a spiritual content just as Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God was religious. It is not essentially economic or scientific, but is rather the new spirituality finding its expression in terms of wider fellowship and deeper sympathy, as is evi-

denced by the Social Settlement movement and the almost numberless organizations for private charity and philanthropy. The new profession of the social worker is but a specialized form of ministry. The new labor movement, child helping societies, peace propaganda, prevention of disease are but varying manifestations of one vast and solemn faith in the innate spirituality of all men, and a recognition of their infinite worth as sons and daughters of the living God.

Whoso interprets this movement as being not spiritual enough to be religious, is himself not religious enough to see the spiritual forces of the common life. The comprehension of man's psychic relationship with man is simply one step in the ascending scale of the enlarging spiritual relationships which radiate outward toward the infinite. It is not merely humanistic, but is human-mystic. As Dr. Dodge has sung in the great Universalist poem "Christus Victor":—

"What man soe'er I chance to see—
Amazing thought—is kin to me;
And if a man my brother.
What though his hand be hard with toil

And labor his worn garment soil;
 He is a man, my brother.

“What though ashamed, with drooping head
 He beg a morsel of my bread;
 He is a man, my brother.
 What though he grovel at my feet,
 Spurned by the rabble of the street;
 He is a man, my brother.

“What though his hand with crime be red,
 His heart a stone, his conscience dead;
 He is a man, my brother.
 The soul which this frail clay enfolds
 The image of its Maker holds,—
 That makes this man my brother.”

The idea of the Universal Brotherhood is the great social dynamic of the twentieth century. Sometimes it is dynamite. It fires our hopes, builds our dreams, unfolds before us the Messianic vision of an imminent kingdom of heaven on earth. Society to-day is in a state of expectancy where it now believes in the possible solution of its hardest problems by the infusion of the spirit of brotherhood that shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

And Universalism inspires this faith not only because it teaches the divine origin of all men, but likewise because of its belief in the common destiny of humanity in all

times and in all stations of life. Universalism triumphantly holds to the universal salvation of all mankind. It believes that all human souls are children of God with a spark of the divine in their nature, and that eventually, after the varied experiences of this world and the next, those souls will reach a perfect harmony with God.

Never was there such a bold proclamation of brotherhood as this; never such implicit faith in the solidarity of the human race. It is the largest, most astonishing evidence of the new social consciousness.

The old theological systems could not consistently teach brotherhood in the light of their beliefs in separate destinies. A future and eternal hell for one great group of the lost and an eternal heaven for the other group of the elect inspired the thought of the wide disparity between men. The heathen and the Christian, the saved and the lost, the criminal and the saint could have no spiritual fellowship. There might be condescension under such a system. There was much patronizing and earnest activity to bring the lost into the fold. But as for real folk—passion—spir-

itual free trade between man and man,—it could not exist.

Modern criminologists realize that crime is the result of either misdirected or undeveloped human nature, and that there is no special "original sin" in the nature of the criminal. He cannot be readily marked from the rest of humanity, ticketed and shipped off to his separate doom. The introduction of a public park cut the amount of crime of a certain neighborhood in New York City in half. If anything was needed to give the old Calvinistic theology another death blow, criminal psychology is sufficient to the task. One of the most expert penologists in this country recently said that every individual at some time in his life had either committed crime or had come very near to it, but that the majority of people had been fortunate in the control of their parents or in their environmental influences during the period of youthful "Sturm und Drang." The new warden of Sing Sing who has donned prison garb and has worked shoulder to shoulder with the inmates finds that the men after all are "just folks"—not vitally different from the rest of the world.

The new enthusiasm for humanity readily pictures a time when through eugenics, education, friendship, play, worship and work, the criminal will be no more, because the misdirection or the undevelopment of human nature will cease. All this reënforces the spiritual insight of the early Universalists who first struck fire from the hope of universal salvation. A common destiny, because a common humanity; and because a common humanity,—a brotherhood that shall be earth-girdling, deific.

VI

SOCIAL MOTIVE

Religion is the product of human nature and of the reaction of human nature to its environment. In order to discover religious motives, therefore, it becomes necessary to study human nature in its relation to historic backgrounds and environments.

The fact that the traditional churches of the modern era have been so feeble in social dynamic, is due to inertia inherited from the mediæval ages when humanity lacked social dynamic. The creeds, rituals, and sacraments of conservatism in the twentieth century were valid and contemporaneous expressions of life a thousand years ago. The fossilized forms and stereotyped activities have long ago lost all ability to express the tremendous revolutions that have been wrought in our thinking and feeling and in our mastery of physical forces. Orthodoxy and conservatism are individualistic because the mediæval church of

which they are survivals was individualistic. If we examine the traditional theology of Christianity as it has ruled for the past few centuries, we shall find that it has its roots in a mediæval psychology and economics.

In the first place the old theology is grounded in and springs out of a sense of the hopelessness and worthlessness of life. It defines earthly existence as being a deplorable failure and an absolute disaster. The world and the flesh are linked together with the devil as being a trinity of relentless destructive influences from which no man could escape by his own resources. To live a natural life, joying in the primary instincts, glorying in the beauties and riches of the earth, was to drift straight to hell.

This gloomy interpretation of life had ample reason for being, as it was but a reaction from economic and psychological conditions which obtained through long periods of Roman decadence and of the Dark Ages. Civilization was based on a deficit of natural resources which eventuated in hopeless poverty, despotism and slavery. Few men attained, or hoped to attain, free-

dom. Castes were severe and self-perpetuating. Homes were squalid. Famine and plagues were frequent. Unremitting toil and suffering was the lot of the common people. Small wonder that life was despised and held cheap, and that theology was constrained to interpret the world in terms of tragic disaster.

Prof. Patten in his "Social Basis of Religion" makes this clear. He says:—"Historic religion does not spring from conditions of surplus but from a deficit. The nations that were to shape religion lived in regions where resources were failing and disease on the increase. To these evils were added race hatreds and instability of government that brought on wars, with resulting pillage and destruction. Religion was forced to reflect these changes. In the regions where these evils were greatest, a body of doctrine and practice grew up that has since then been expressed in religious institutions. Drought, disease, war and other evils of a state of deficit being dominant in Western Asia while our religion was forming, we must turn to these regions to discover the forces that compelled religious thought to develop as it did."

People with such a gloomy outlook upon nature seized with avidity upon current beliefs in the imminent destruction of the world and the apocalyptic advent of Christ and his kingdom. The dominant motive which sprang out of such an attitude to life was naturally the motive of escape. Religion following the pressure of contemporary wants and ideals, held forth alluring promises of salvation out of the wreck of the world. The idea of heaven became that of an asylum for the oppressed, a sanitarium for the recuperation of exhausted spirits, a place where the hard fortunes of the present could be and would be reversed.

The business of the church therefore became twofold: first, to insure men a blessed place in the life after death; and second, to produce in the individual while living, such ecstatic emotions and mystic visions that he would be lifted above earthly care and would be immune to sorrow and suffering. The whole motive and mechanism of the traditional church, therefore, became individualistic, and through inertia has remained individualistic.

But human nature, and the physical environment to which it reacts, have changed

fundamentally since the rise of the mediæval theology. Nature is no longer niggardly in its treatment of man, but produces an ever increasing store of wealth. Steam and electric power make it possible for us to put this wealth into the hands of the common man. Few to-day would have the hardihood to say that modern knowledge and modern industry applied to natural resources can not produce an abundant satisfaction for all physical wants. Modern science is reducing the amount of disease in the world, and rapidly discovering methods of prevention. Therefore poverty and disease are no longer looked upon as inherent in earthly existence, but their abolition becomes a matter of the social will directed toward better adjustment.

The modern man also has a universal education for dispelling ignorance, and the larger views opening upon the horizon are furnishing him with new motives for growth and self-fulfillment. Political power is swiftly becoming democratized, and the average man, instead of being born a hopeless underling, has hope of controlling his own destiny. He no longer cringes before tyrants, but rises before them as-

sertive of his own innate imperial worth.

A new valuation is being placed upon life. It is no longer tragic, but full of hope. We accept the world for the joyous place it was meant to be. We like it, despite the fact that belated theologians look upon it with inherited suspicion. It is no longer "the world, the flesh and the devil," but "the world, the flesh and God." The dominant motive, therefore, is no longer to escape from earthly existence, but to make earthly existence as abundant and happy as it can be made. Modern religion being an expression of modern humanity and modern environment, must partake of the same motive. It must glorify, spiritualize, sanctify the world. It must speed those readjustments which will make life here and now justify our hopes. It must no longer invite men to go to the kingdom, but, in the words of Jesus, we must invite the kingdom to come to us. It must sensitize men's visions so that they may see God face to face in His earth, for surely God loves men as much here now as after they have died. Surely we are as immortal now as we ever shall be. Surely God is as much here as anywhere. Therefore let us with

mailed fist smash the injustices, the tyrannies, the sins, which imprison us in the dark, and let the radiance of the divine light break over the world with the effulgence of glorious dawn.

Universalism was born out of the new humanity; it is the gospel of the new heaven and the new earth. It throbs with hope. It was part of the great world movement to reinterpret life in terms of a regenerated, buoyant, self assertive human nature. Universalism believes in the world and in its potential goodness. It repudiates the gloomy and disastrous outlook of the old anti-social theology. It is not frantically searching for an escape from life. It believes that God is the Creator and that He is love; therefore in giving us life He gives us love, power and joy. This is the only interpretation of life which furnishes a real and indigenous social motive. Only those theologies which frankly and persistently align themselves with the world, and openly champion its potential goodness, can logically enter the great reformation of the twentieth century. They alone believe that salvation comes in, by and through a saved world. This is social

salvation. All others believe that salvation comes by escaping from a world which is inherently unsavable. That is the individualistic, anti-social, mediæval faith. Goethe once said that the ideal is not an escape from reality but a completion of it. The Universalist conception of religion is not that of an escape from reality, but that of the harmonious and spiritual development of all the elements of real life.

The true social objective is the perfecting of human character by the progressive improvement of those conditions and environments which are within the social control, and which largely determine character. It is obvious, therefore, that social work, in its larger and more radical meaning, arises out of two axiomatic assumptions, as working hypotheses; namely, that human character can be perfected, and that environmental conditions can be so spiritualized that they may be proper instruments for perfecting character.

It is evident that the philosophy of Universalism implies social motive, since from its beginning it has interpreted all life as being essentially good, and the world as being capable of salvation. This belief is the

true dynamic of social endeavor. Those who have faith in the world are the ones upon whom rests the tremendous responsibility of redeeming the world. Skepticism as to human nature cuts the nerve of social effort, and causes paralysis of accomplishment. Abundant faith in humanity lights the flame of our vision and steels our nerve to mighty efforts.

“God so loved the world” that He gave Christ to it. Then religion should so love the world as to give its best and holiest to it.

VII

THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS

After the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, theology became so concerned with the person of Jesus that it almost completely forgot his program. A cursory reading of the Patristic or Scholastic literature reveals a voluminous attempt to define the most undefinable fact in the world, the personality of Jesus.

When the Master spoke to the contemporaries of his own country about the burning issues of his time he was understood. What he said was enriched and reënforced by a commonly accepted background of history. He was one of the long line of prophets which began with Moses and reached through Isaiah and Jeremiah to John the Baptist; preachers whose passionate words were vivid flames of hope lighting the darkness of despair; dreamers who saw Apocalyptic visions of a regenerated,

perfected society, where there should be no more poverty, sin and disease.

Men hungered after the good news of liberation, and women prayed that they might bring forth a man child who should lead his people Israel into the new order of life and liberty. It was to such people, whose hearts were big with expectancy, that Jesus preached. He swept the high-strung imaginations and emotions of his people, and they quivered in response. His was a soul-stirring message of mighty social import.

But when this fresh, invigorating, life-giving stream of Christianity poured out over the Greeks, it was diverted. To the philosophically minded, the all absorbing question became the relation of Jesus' personality to the triune God-head. It is for this reason that three hundred and fifteen years after the prophet of Nazareth was born, the Christian Church was wrangling over Athanasianism and Arminianism. For sixteen hundred years the theologians have continued to wage battle over the person of Christ, and the world has consequently been blinded to his program.

Likewise when the wild-fire of this

strange new religion swept over crumbling Rome, Constantine seized upon it as a last resource. He saw in the vast numbers of converts and their tremendous loyalties, a last hope of holding together a tottering political system. So he declared Christianity to be the official religion of the most colossal, snaky despotism ever conceived, and naturally enough the gospel was robbed of its robust democracy and was ingrafted upon what was most alien to its native genius; imperialism, militarism and legalism.

Thus Christ was separated from his principles. The Greeks and Romans did not understand his vision. Christ the person became exalted above and away from Christianity, the program, and the world thus lost the power which, if generally accepted, might have saved it from the long list of miseries and woes which have cursed it.

This separation of Jesus from the truths which he taught has made Christianity so easy as to be socially ineffective. It has emasculated the pristine vigor and hard discipline which the early Christians imposed upon themselves in the name and

spirit of their master. In the early days to be a Christian meant not merely to confess a Saviour, but it meant confessing and living a new mode of life. To be a Christian entailed a new view of family relations, of military service, of poverty, of slavery, of amusement, of government. It meant embracing a set of revolutionary doctrines and suffering for them.

To grasp the full meaning of the change which has come over civilization and the tragic misunderstanding of Christ which it entails, we have but to behold the appalling spectacle of Christian priests blessing armies accoutered to the teeth and dragging their hell machines behind them. The same travesty exists in commercial ethics, which for centuries condoned exploitation. It exists in the artificial distinctions by which we separate men into caste and class strata. Such travesty exists because men have been taught the saving power of Christ's personality dissociated from his principles. Christ has been held forth as a Saviour to be received rather than a leader and teacher to be followed.

Theology has elaborated the death of Jesus, and out of it has erected the scheme

of vicarious salvation. But theology has almost completely overlooked the fact which had made the death of Jesus of tremendous moment to society, namely, that he died in defense of certain revolutionary principles. It has exalted Christ's person without realizing that the real value of Christ's life to humanity lies in the fact that he demonstrated in flesh and blood the workability and saving power of his truth.

To quote again from Prof. Patten: "It is difficult to associate Christ with a purely social religion because his teachings have been overshadowed by the striking events of his death. For this reason we do not see the fundamental opposition between what he taught and what his death has been made to teach. If Christ's doctrines had been handed down to us by a Plato instead of a Paul, or by one who knew only of his life and not of his death, Christ to us would be a social leader, preaching salvation only in terms of love, coöperation and service."

It is evident that the old gospel of the vicarious atonement has no social dynamic in it. It is patent that the passive acceptance of a ready made salvation could never bring about a transformation of the social

order. The world is to-day discovering the mighty truth that to believe in Christ means to believe in Christ's program, and in order to be a Christian we must not only accept sacrifice but make sacrifice, not only believe in a person but in the bold proclamation of that person; not only in Christ but in Christianity; not only receive salvation but achieve salvation.

The liberal movement in religion was partly motived by the reaction from the inadequacy of the old conceptions of Christ, and the lack of social dynamic issuing from the traditional emphasis upon the theological non-essentials which had been built up about him. People may believe whatsoever they will *about* Christ and apparently the mere belief in itself does not create character. If Phillips Brooks and Edward Everett Hale had exchanged their views of the nature of Jesus in relation to the Godhead, does any one imagine their characters would have been thereby transformed, or that the social dynamic of their message would have altered? The truth of the matter is that there are both Trinitarians and Unitarians in prisons, and there are both Trinitarians and Unitarians in the thick of

the fight for the common good. No dogmatic theologies about Jesus ever saved any one in society or out of society. Therefore the liberal faith stresses the achievement of salvation through the employment of the active and socially effective virtues of love, coöperation and brotherhood taught by Jesus and emphasized by Him as the true redemptive forces.

The great social passion of to-day is not concerned with beliefs *about* Jesus, but it is mightily concerned with belief *in* Jesus. It is not interested in perpetuating an ecclesiastic *régime* or hierarchy built upon a dead Roman imperialism, but is interested in perpetuating a living power which can flood the earth with brotherhood and provide an authoritative program for social reconstruction. The great social movement looks to Christ as to one who has discovered an emancipating truth, which has the power to set men free from the burdens of misery, greed and exploitation which have enslaved the nations since the beginning of history. The social movement is going to look to Christ as the inspirer of those great sympathies and

humanitarian impulses which are the high springs from which all streams of healing flow.

The modern interest in Christ is pragmatic rather than dogmatic. It looks for results, and is willing to judge the divinity of the cause by the divineness of the effect. It believes "for the very work's sake."

The psychologic characteristics of this age are not similar to those of the philosophizing Greeks, the imperializing Romans, or the mysticizing peoples of the mediæval ages. Its outstanding characteristic is the social consciousness. This consciousness will inevitably develop those characteristics in Jesus which have not received sympathetic understanding in the past. This is the day and generation which is providentially appointed to revive the program of Jesus, and restore to Christianity its pristine impulses. The seed has waited dormant in the soil, expectant of the fructifying influences of the new civilization.

The attitude of Universalism toward Jesus is precisely that which the modern world is assuming in increasing geometric ratio; it is that which the social movement

assumes. It is the attitude which develops the social motive, for the Universalist faith does not dogmatize about or define the person of Christ. Its shibboleth is the splendid statement in the articles of faith: "We believe in the spiritual authority and leadership of Jesus," a simple statement which is yet basic and comprehensive. It encourages each individual to interpret the nature of Jesus in accordance with reason and scholarship. It recognizes the tremendous power and importance of personality as a world force, but it looks upon the personality of the Master as a life to be followed rather than to be passively accepted. It stresses belief in Jesus rather than belief about him, and makes conformity to his ideal the only accepted test of the genuine Christian.

The salvation which Christ offers to the world according to this view can not inhere in ecclesiastic rites or sacraments, or in any passive, receptive mood, but becomes an active achievement. Christianity thus becomes a challenge which elicits all the latent powers of man. Christianity becomes life lived in the open

in the midst of the push and pull of social forces, and thus implies and demands a social content.

Universalism is an endeavor to restore the Christ of the first two centuries to the world, and to put into Christianity its pristine vigor of principle and discipline. Any sincere attempt to discover the real Jesus, the visionary, the emancipator, the great teacher, will inevitably lead to a re-discovery of the social gospel. And the re-discovery of the social gospel with its general acceptance will liberate for the world's redemption the great power which is the power unto salvation.

VIII

HELL AND SALVATION

The old ideas regarding hell and salvation, which swayed the imaginations of men for centuries, have deeply affected the attitude of the churches toward the problem of social amelioration. The traditional conceptions of retribution, although recognized to-day to be crude and erroneous, have yet molded a theory of function and a machinery of action which persist long after the cause has ceased to be vital. It has not only been true in the past, but it is true to-day, that those who believe in an avenging God and a substitutional atoning Christ are individualistic, and consistently oppose the new social emphasis in religion. The old theology of Heaven and Hell has been among the strongest deterrents to social service, and the reorganization of religious forces for modernized activity.

The very corner-stones of the old structure of theology were caprice and injus-

tice. A human being might be condemned to hell by a wrathful God, for punishment of an act which was not in itself immoral, and hope for that individual's salvation might be eternally lost. On the other hand, a person might commit a most heinous crime, involving the worst possible sin against the moral nature, yet escape from hell and punishment by accepting the vicarious atonement of Christ. Hell never was pictured in the old theology as an inevitable consequence of breaking the innate laws of being. There were always trapdoors out of which the one who was wise could climb at the last moment. Punishment and reward were not in the exact and inescapable relation of cause and effect. Hell and salvation were both arbitrary and non-human in origin.

The lot of men here, and their destiny hereafter, was supposed to be determined without reference to social causes. The only springs of action and the only responsibilities taken cognizance of by theology were individual motives and individual accountability. Therefore all punishment was conceived to be meted out in accordance with purely personal action.

The social causes of crime and sin such as heredity, congenital weakness, economic deficit, environment, were ignored. Many a poor soul has been damned to everlasting torment in the past by myopic ego-centric Pharasees, when society more than the individual needed the damning.

There are few men whose opinions really count in the modern world, who have the temerity to preach the old idea of a wrathful God and a brimstone hell. The Liberal theology has successfully driven these nightmares from the minds of enlightened men.

But Universalism has not tried to abolish the scheme of suffering and punishment from life. It has not done away with moral accountability. The idea of hell and heaven is just as potent in the modern theology as in the old. They are essential elements in religion. Universalism has not abolished the idea of hell.

It has humanized and socialized it. It has established human misery as the direct effect or consequence of human action. The existence of such a hell can be demonstrated, the sting of its lash can be felt, the horror of it can be seen. The broken

nerves of the *roue*, the rotting flesh of the prostitute, the moral degeneracy of the sensualist, the blood-red conscience of the murderer, are hell. There is no caprice in its operation, there is no trap door for escape. It is the most real, the most inevitable fact conceivable. To believe that every individual will suffer the just consequences of sin is the hardest, most disciplinary faith known.

And everywhere men are seen not merely suffering the consequences of their own actions, but writhing in the meshes of sin woven about them by others. The horrors of war are suffered as much by the innocent men, women and children as by those who murder and are murdered on the field of battle. The most dreaded feature of intemperance is its deadly power to destroy the homes and blast the hopes of those who remain temperate. Insane asylums, hospitals and clinics tell the awful tale of the havoc wrought by congenital syphilis. Youths are wrecked by institutionalized vice pandering to passion. Vampires still live and grow fat on the blood of human beings, throwing the anemic, skeleton

forms into the teeming city to crawl out a wretched death-in-life.

All this is hell—*social hell*—men suffering from instituted customs and practices for which society is responsible, which can be eradicated out of the world.

And Universalism has not only humanized and socialized hell, but it has humanized and socialized salvation. If a man must suffer the consequences of his own sin, he must likewise make his own reparation. The only way out is by an absolutely reformed character, either in this world or in the next. He can not receive salvation, but must achieve it. He must work his way to perfection. God in His infinite mercy is ready to assist, Christ reveals the way, but the man must go that way and avail himself of that mercy. There is no royal road to salvation. Salvation is as much subject to the natural law of cause and effect as is punishment. It can not be arbitrary or capricious. This faith, again, is the most rigorous and disciplinary the world has ever known.

And a man must not only work out his own salvation; he must work out the sal-

vation of the world. He is enmeshed in a world of humanity from which he can by no means wholly disentangle himself. He is a part of the marvelous solidarity of life. He is shot through with psychic forces which he can not escape. He is caught up in the mystic sway of standards and impulsions which grip him as the ocean grips the grain of sand. He cannot be saved except as he spiritualizes and Christianizes all the influences which are consciously or unconsciously molding character.

Such a view of the theological problem of punishment and reformation is fundamental to the new social religion; in fact, the social emphasis grows out of this view. The old ideas of hell and salvation were anti-social, and must perforce be discarded before the new religion can gain the allegiance of the people. Let a single illustration suffice.

A prominent Boston clergyman recently told with evident pride his professional experience with a sinning woman. He was called into a brothel to attend the death-bed confession of a woman of the streets who was in fear and terror of the final

reckoning and judgment. The minister told her the story of Jesus' atoning sacrifice, which was able to obtain for her forgiveness and salvation. Her sins were wiped away by her acceptance of the Savior, and the minister a few days later had the satisfaction of folding her hands and closing her eyes in peace. The terrors of hell which got hold upon her, were assuaged by the blessed assurance of an immediate heaven.

It does not require a great amount of penetration to see that this system of salvation undermines the whole social process, and discourages the social motive. It takes away human and social responsibility, it vitiates the law of cause and effect, and establishes an easy escape from hell. It leaves untouched the great industrial problems, the civic influences, the economic conditions, which are potent factors in modern sin. This scheme furnishes no mighty, all compelling incentive for the organization of the social forces of a community for a radical attack on the social conditions which breed vice and crime.

IX

THE NEW UNITY

The unity of religions is no mere academic question, but is fraught with tremendous social consequences. Nothing is of deeper and more immediate import than that the social conscience should have some recognized mode and commonly accepted instrumentality for self-expression. There is urgent need for some universal, democratic faith which will be a true spiritual interpretation of contemporary life, and which will effectively organize and mobilize the forces of community idealism.

The sectarian divisiveness of to-day is more than theologically deplorable; it is a social sin. The churches of the Protestant nations have become so torn and scattered by internecine strife, that they no longer express the common ideals of contemporary humanity, and are no longer able to effectively mobilize against the social

evils. The vast and impressive mechanism of the churches, representing an enormous outlay of capital and an unimagined power for good, is rendered socially ineffective by a lack of unity and practical coöperation for common ends. There are a hundred widespread institutionalized evils, undermining the integrity of the national life, poisoning the springs of character, which could not exist a single month if the latent powers of righteousness were hurled as a unit against them. But so secure are these evils in the ineffectiveness of organized religion, that they not only exist, but they openly bribe legislation, ruin men before our eyes, and flaunt their crimes before the worshipers of the thundering Nazarene. The lack of unity in the churches has produced a wide-spread locomotor ataxia.

This disruption of the unity of Christendom was probably an inevitable phase of religious development. License became necessary in order to secure religious liberty, just as the chaotic individualism of the French Revolution seemed an unavoidable phase of the development of political democracy. The old characterless co-

hesions and loyalties must be utterly broken, the old life of blind obedience to aristocratic authority, whether economic, political or religious, had to be disintegrated. A new unity, more effective because more spontaneous and more democratic, must germinate through the long years of individualism.

But it is coming. This unity has the inevitableness of destiny, for it is the unforced and unpreventable expression in terms of religion, of that larger unity which is sweeping through the world. Despite the high degree of diversity and specialization visible on the surface of life to-day, there is a more essential and patent unity underlying the modern world than has ever been known. If we have classes, there is more solidarity among their members; if we have wars, there is less personal hatred among the warriors and a sharper reaction to horror and peace throughout the world. Education, science, commerce, labor, humanism, are all forging the dissociated fragments of society into a more stable whole. In the words of Dr. Newman Smyth, "Life may join to-

gether what philosophy hath rent asunder.”

Religion feels and voices the new social solidarity. It is straining at the leash of the old chaotic individualism, and is trying to so reconstruct its machinery and rephrase its message that it may be in increasing measure the certain trumpet of the larger life. The growing sense of social integrity will create its spiritual interpreter. As the idealized common life becomes the recognized goal of religious endeavor, and as religion is recognized as being the highest reach of the common life, the community will learn to function spiritually as a unit.

This unity will be neither the enforced uniformity nor the thoughtless indifference of the mediæval church. It will be that finer and more effective unity which recognizes and preserves individual temperament and values, but which is inspired by loyalty to a common ideal in which all lesser differences are synthesized and fulfilled.

Before such a consummation of the Protestant sects is achieved two processes must

be fulfilled. First, a growing out of the petty sectarian views of the past; and second, the normal growth of a larger, more inclusive faith.

It is inconceivable that the new democratic church should be built on the sacraments and symbols which have had so important a part in disrupting Christendom. One can not imagine this unity coming through creeds or dogmas about baptism, transubstantiation, apostolic succession, definitions of a personality, views of a book, or forms of prayers. The spirit which dogmatizes and persecutes and insists upon narrow interpretation must die. It must and shall perish out of the souls of men, because the narrow views of life of which it is a part shall be outgrown. The partial sectarian views of theological problems and the crude insistence upon them are evidence of an intellectually and socially undeveloped people, a people spiritually dwarfed and circumscribed.

This does not mean that men must forsake their views, but it does mean that they must forsake their unsocial insistence upon them. They must no longer forge the caste-molds of thought and appoint the

metes or bounds of imagination. They must outgrow the narrow and partial conceptions and the inelastic systems which have been the bases of denominational dogmatism. In fact, denominationalism in the old seclusive and divisive sense is a dying issue.

Man's mind shall become more inclusive, his spirit more democratic, his intuitions more cosmic. Larger views of life shall make the prison-house of ancient creeds become abhorrent. Freer fellowship with God and with man shall break down the old bars and open glimpses into the infinite. There will be a free trade of truth, an untrammelled comradeship of soul.

Universalism is the expression in terms of religion of the larger life that is dawning upon man. It is the largest statement of faith ever made, it exhibits the most democratic inclusive spirit, it is the new humanity trumpeting its belief in the universals. Its faith is in the universal Fatherhood of God—a God as wide as the universe, who is impartial, unlimited, yet intensely in and of humanity. Nothing bigger or finer can be conceived than this idea of God. Universalism declares for

the universal brotherhood of man. Its faith can not harbor the old systems of spiritual aristocracies, of divisive castes, but includes the whole of society, Christian or heathen, good or bad, rich or poor, in its unshaken faith in brotherhood. Universalism believes in the universal revelation of truth. It can not be shut up in one mind, one book, or one personality, but streams from the stars, springs from the earth, grows great in the heart of the whole of humanity. Its faith is in democratized truth. Universalism believes in Christ, believes that the truth which he revealed and the power which he generated are for world service. Universalism believes in salvation, not in narrow bounds, but as universal, ultimately compelling. Universalism sees the life of the world as an indivisible unit moving on to one common destiny. It is faith in terms of the universal.

Therefore Universalism has more to contribute to the new unity of religious forces than any system of belief yet given to the world. Men can not unite on the old dogmatic fragmentary views of religion of the past. They have outgrown them. The

newer, larger life is dawning. The cosmic surge is rallying through the world. The new eyes see the new heaven and the new earth. The religion of the universals—Universalism—is the religion of that new life, is the revelation of that new vision. In it the whole of humanity can be gathered as a unit, each individual with his custom, creed and personality guaranteed freedom and democratic respect, but each individual enlarged and expanded so as to meet all other individuals on the common ground of mutual needs and universal interests.

The new faith of the new unity of man will be the new Universalism.

X

THE FINAL TRIUMPH

The most distinctive contribution which Universalism has made to the development of theology and religion is the idea of the universal salvation of all souls and its concomitant of the final triumph of good over evil. The early fathers of our Zion who lit the conflagration of this resurgent hope were sensitive to the change in the temperament of the new humanity. They discerned an unprecedented buoyancy, an infectious optimism gradually draining the miasmatic mediæval notions of defeat and misery out of the dank theological swamps and flooding the earth with prophylactic hope.

The old theology, which conceived evil as being the normal and essential nature of life and good as being supernatural and abnormal, gave way to the Universalist belief that good is the natural and inevitable essence of life; evil being the abnormal

and temporary. This newer faith is the faith of humanity in the twentieth century. Pessimism can no longer be successfully superimposed upon the modern mind. The increasing acceptance of the Universalist belief in the ultimate salvation of all souls, and the final triumph of good over evil are indications of the optimism which is galvanizing all the interests and activities of man.

This triumphant hope in the ultimate salvation of humanity does not arise out of blindness to the hard facts of reality. It does not find its motive in the ostrich method of hiding the head in the sand. It comes as the result of seeing the sin and misery of life in their proper relationships. It sees through facts to the great beyond—facts. It interprets the present in the light of potentialities.

The vision of the Universalist is founded upon the marvelous discoveries and inventions which have taken place during the past century in the field of medicine, education, economics, industry and above all in social work. Gathering all the evidence from these sources, weighing it, and considering it in its relation to the future of

humanity, we learn that the hope which was instinctive and impulsive in the new religion rests upon the "reasoned optimism" of factual revelation.

Medicine lights the future of our race with a vision of preventable and prevented disease. Criminology brings incontrovertible evidence that delinquency finds its roots in congenital defect and preventable neglect, and eugenics holds forth an alluring picture of a perfected race produced through social control of birth. Alcoholism, ignorance, bad housing are preventable and can be eradicated when the conscience of men becomes sufficiently sensitized, socialized and energized. Poverty is no longer considered the inexorable lot of the many, but is conceded to be the result of maladjustments of temporary character. Wars no longer have their roots in the old condition of primitive tribes or nations which battled for wealth-producing territory, but rather in a more easily adjusted misunderstanding and injustice as to the exchange of surplus products.

The facts of the new life, seen in their radical significance make this century pre-

eminently the age of social idealism. Never before have we had such basis for our hope that this old earth may be transformed into a veritable Kingdom of God where there shall be no more misery or sin. The faith of Universalism in the great salvation of all souls is but an extension into the infinite of the "reasoned optimism" of our present social life. From the opening gates of the morning we catch this vision of the dawn-swept mountains of God.

But such a radiant hope and calm trust in "the far off divine event" is frequently misinterpreted as to its moral and social content. Those who do not perceive the true spirit of Universalism are prone to associate its optimism with the laissez faire doctrine and with a divine determination which vitiates ethical endeavor and removes from the individual the sense of moral responsibility. If such a stricture were true it would be deadly, for the true end of all optimism must be meliorism. The justification of a triumphant faith lies neither in personal satisfaction nor in passive comfort, although these are legitimate by-products and have their valuable func-

tion in the religious life. But the true end and aim of all belief must be regulative and transforming action.

The often repeated criticism that Universalism fails to arouse the spiritual endeavors is, however, not true. It is no easy going faith; but, as has already been indicated in the article on "Hell and Salvation," it insists that individuals and societies must suffer the inevitable consequences of wrong doing until they are sufficiently disciplined to live in harmony with the innate moral and social law. It likewise insists with equal earnestness that men will enjoy the inevitable consequences of all right action and noble endeavor; and that finally, through long periods of suffering and disciplinary experience they will learn to choose the right because of the better effect upon self and society.

Furthermore, this mighty hope begets an incentive which is invaluable in all struggle for righteousness. Psychologists have pointed out the value of the "attitude of expectant attention" in securing a desired end. It rallies the latent powers of the soul. It incites to action. Confidence in

the successful outcome of a cause energizes the will, and creates a contagion of faith. Belief that one will recover from illness does not enervate the patient, but puts renewed effort into him. A widespread confidence in the victory of a political party begets new adherents. A complete trust in the commander's powers does not weaken the force of the soldiers, but steels their nerve and makes their thundering charge irresistible.

Is it reasonable to expect that faith in the final triumph of good over evil will operate otherwise? This most splendid of all hopes, radiant, joyful, pulls men into the battle line against evil, and puts into their souls that unshakable trust which makes their onrush like that of a thousand storms. It is said that in the days of anti-slavery discussion, the senate was once crowded to hear a famous abolitionist deliver an oration. He became pessimistic and expressed doubt in the final outcome of his cause, when Sojourner Truth, a negro woman, arose in the assembly and challenged the speaker by crying out: "Is God dead?" That is all she said. But

an electrical thrill ran through the crowd, and turned the tide from doubt to victorious faith.

So the belief that God is tremendously in every social movement for the liberation of humanity, strengthens the arm of right. To know that one is battling for justice is to know that the everlasting stars are battling at his side; it is to know that the tides of the universe are flowing at his command. The knowledge of the ultimate triumph of good makes one serve the good with the passion and the calm of æons of time.

Jacob Riis, tireless champion of the social good, once sat in the study of a Universalist minister. The preacher, anxious to discover the secret spring of this giant's never failing energies, asked Mr. Riis:—"What is it that actuates you in your work and keeps you from discouragement?" And he looked with amazement at the questioner as if there could be but one answer and replied:—"Why, don't you know, it is because God is back of it all, and He must ultimately conquer."

There shall never be one lost good! What was shall
live as before;
The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;

What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much
good more;

On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a per-
fect round.

All we have willed, or hoped or dreamed of good
shall exist;

Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good,
nor power

Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the
melodist

When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

XI

THE LARGER FAITH

Every great development of religion consists of two complementary processes; namely, a denial of limitations, and an assertion of a larger spiritual content.

All fresh and creative movements are partly negative. They deny that which in the old system was fragmentary or outworn. The point of departure for the new seems to be dissatisfaction with the old. If this were not true, the new would doubtless never arise. As long as we remain satisfied with our partial conceptions and crude systems, we should feel no compulsion to adventure into the dangerous unknown. If it were not for denial we should have had no Christ, Luther, John Murray, Lincoln. A recognition of the inadequacy of the present is always essential to progress in the future.

Critics of the Liberal faith have often

scored Universalism as being a negative religion, receiving its initial impulse from denial. The criticism is true in so far as all great religious movements are motivated by reaction from contemporaneous limitation. But such critics fail to see that the only denial made by Universalism is against some form of partialism which is in itself a denial of the unity, integrity or universality of religion. Universalism negatives only the negative, and thus produces a positive faith.

Universalism was one of the early manifestations of that great movement which swept away the barriers of narrow vision which belonged to the olden days, opening vistas into the larger faith. It was the Ptolmaic system, egocentric, circumscribed, broadening out into the infinitudes of Copernican vastness. The love of God had been confined to a class of the elect. The revelation of truth had been bound within a single volume. Divinity had been sealed in one unique personality. Salvation was restricted to a handful of the chosen.

It was against such a pitifully small religion that Whittier cried out in his "Eternal Goodness":—

“I dare not fix with mete and bound
The love and power of God.”

The Liberal movement, led by Universalists, Unitarians, and Friends made a distinctive contribution to the larger life of humanity by contributing to it a larger faith. It gave a larger outlook to men's intellectual conceptions of the universe; it meant the deepening and enriching of spiritual experience by liberating ideas and emotions of infinite love; it bound men together in a new unity of divine origins; it dignified common humanity with the potentialities of the Christ life. The larger faith gave sweep, vision, cosmic consciousness to the individual by pouring into his nascent soul the infinitudes of a universal religion. It came “that men might have life and have it more abundantly.”

The great social passion of this age is essentially a movement toward the larger life. It is the organization of the resources of our modern civilization to the end that all men shall be enriched and enlarged. Science is being requisitioned to contribute its discoveries to the creation of a more abundant supply of wealth, to the pallia-

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tion and eradication of disease, to eugenic control of the race. Education is being rapidly democratized so that it illumines the multitudes with a culture which in the past was deemed the exclusive property of the intellectual aristocrats; and is further making practical contributions to the economic equipment of the industrial and domestic workers, giving them opportunity to rise in the scale of labor. The rapid increase of the members who live in urban centers is creating a varied and stimulating civilization which touches the individual at numerous new points of contact, and enriches him with a wider range of social experience than was possible under the old civilization. Railroad and steamship lines, telephone and telegraph, the spread of commerce, all expand the interests of humanity and push back the narrow, restricting boundaries of individualism. The organization of men into class groups, while apparently divisive and hostile to the larger good, is as a matter of fact one of the ever widening concentric circles of expanding life.

Never was a civilization so rich in the materials and resources of the larger life

than is the civilization of the Twentieth Century. Never before was there so determined an effort to bring to all lives this abundance of wealth, health and fellowship. The democratization of science, industry, politics, education, religion, means their availability to the common life. This connotes the gradual unfolding of all the potentialities of the human personality until each has attained his utmost of expansion.

Universalism and the social movement are thus of the same genius, as their ends are identical. The one contributes to the enlarging life by an expansive hope and a cosmic faith, the other by making available the resources of science, education and industry. As a matter of fact, religion and the social movement are inseparable, for they are inter-active and complementary. Man cannot be conveniently divided into the material, the social and the religious, for all the apparently diversified interests are but varying functions of a psychic unity. The mental, physical and social are so closely locked, that the stimulus of one wakens a train of stimulated activities in every other sphere of personality. Just as

coal is convertible into steam, steam into power, and power into light, so the physical is convertible into the emotional, the emotional into the ideational, the ideational into activity, and back again in an unbroken circle.

Those who have deepest insight into the nature of the social movement and who are directing it to its noblest ends have clear vision of this truth. The social and religious progress must be mutually contributory and reactive. Each must be convertible into terms of the other and both must make for the progressive expansion of the life of the individual. We must have better conditions that we may have better men; we must have better men that we may have better conditions.

The new passion for humanity therefore comes not to destroy, but to fulfill; it promises not less religion, but a religion more complete. It is not a problem of subtraction, but of addition or multiplication. It is the expansion of the ideal values of religion into all social values. It seizes upon the vast mechanism of civilization's resources and spiritualizes them into terms of larger hope for men, deeper faith in

men and more transforming love by men.

With such enlargement of the function of religion and with such enrichment of the personal life, Universalism is generically allied; for its whole passion is to bring the human soul into the realization of all its potentialities until it attains the stature of the perfect man. To that divinely human end, it unfolds before our vision the unities, the eternities and the universals, and bids us live in conscious communion with them.

THE END

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