

## Christianity, Cult-ism and Materialism

By Guy Cathcart Pelton.

For years I made a careful study of Christianity in all branches. In Vancouver for two years I attended church twice every Sunday without missing a Sunday. But I visited all the churches, Catholic and Protestant, Conformist, (high and low) and non-conformist in all its branches. I attended Christian Science lectures and weekly testimony meetings, New Thought and Advanced New Thought lectures, the John Ellwood Brown and the Gypsy Smith evangelistic meetings, the Apostolic Faith, Russelites and the numerous other sects.

If we pick up a Saturday night newspaper in Vancouver, we will find the religious service announcements divided into about fifteen classifications. All, we must admit, are preaching and teaching the one and same God, and all recognize Jesus Christ as the God-man or God incarnate in man. Practically all uphold Jesus Christ as the ideal example.

Now at the outset I want to say that I consider the man very narrow who will condemn any religion which professes the Unseen God. Further the old-time religion that was good enough for my father is not necessarily good enough for me, any more than the old stage coach which was good enough for my father is not necessarily good enough for me, any more than the old stage coach which was good enough for my fathers is preferable to the modern railway train. We must advance, even in religion.

Had Martin Luther decided that the old-time religion was good enough for him, we would not have had any Reformation. And though I am only 32 years old, I can remember a Nova Scotia town in which a series of sermons was being preached in the Methodist church on baptism by sprinkling and in the Baptist church on baptism by immersion, and the bitterness between the Baptists and Methodists was so strong, that the two peoples would not walk on the same side of the street after the service though their churches were on the same street and the same side of the street.

It wasn't so very long ago that the most narrow and bigoted quarrels were carried on in the pulpits over such things as forms of baptism, open and closed communion and numerous other ideas. That might have been good enough for our fathers but it certainly is not good enough for us.

We find a wonderful broadening of the Christian religious vision in the Forward Movement. We find Church of England, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist clergymen on the same platform, mutually discussing and planning future movements and work. Fifteen years ago this would not have been possible. Now let us watch for the day when the non-conformist minister will not be barred from the conformist pulpit, when it will be possible for a Baptist clergyman to exchange pulpits with a Church of England clergyman.

In looking at many of the so-called new religions, we must remember that entire Protestantism is practically new and that all the sects such as Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational, Methodist and Church of England have only existed about three centuries. What does three centuries amount to in the world's long history or even in the twenty centuries since the time of Christ? And forget not that the Theosophist, the Christian Scientist, the New Thought Disciples and the Russellite will assert that his religion is not new at all, but is simply getting back to what Christ taught. Right here, I want to express my appreciation of the Forward Movement now being carried on by all the Protestant churches. I believe it portends big things for the entire Protestant church. It is in every sense of the word a **Forward** movement. The recent uniting of the Protestant churches of West Vancouver into one congregation is a remarkable demonstration of the sincerity of the church people to unite their forces under the one great God.

I must here touch on Divine Healing. In a recent address before the Ministerial Board of Vancouver, Rev. Dr. Smith formerly of St. John's Presbyterian church and now principal of our leading Presbyterian College, gave a powerful address in which he stated his belief that Divine Healing must become a part of the work of the Church. I am hoping that Dr. Smith will some Sunday afternoon give a lecture on this subject in one of the large churches or in one of the theatres. Rev. Mr. Rowe, formerly vicar of the Church of England at Sardis, B. C. is doing a wonderful work in Vancouver in Divine Healing. He asserts that complete salvation in Jesus Christ means spiritual cleansing and physical healing and that Jesus Christ proved this in his own ministry over and over again. In the name of Christ, Mr. Rowe has healed cancer of the stomach and other so-called incurable diseases and out of 200 influenza cases which he treated in prayer last winter, only one died. Yet how strange it is that Mr. Rowe gets very little support from his own church and had his meetings in the halls of St. John's Presbyterian and the First Congregational churches before he got the use of St. Paul's church. Personally I consider Mr. Rowe one of the strongest men in the Canadian Church of England and I believe the future holds big things for him.

The Apostolic Faith Mission in Vancouver has had wonderful demonstrations of Divine Healing, so also has Christian Science, the New Thought and numerous others. To my mind however we must stick to the simple faith in Jesus Christ, who said "Those and greater works shall ye do in my name," and who also said "Ask and ye shall receive" and again "Whatsoever ye ask in my name ye shall receive." If Jesus meant what he said then it should be the common thing to go immediately to God for healing in times of sickness. We know that the Catholic church has had some wonderful healings at St. Anne de Beaupre in Quebec. Divine Healing must be included in the Forward Movement if the church really intends to follow the example of Jesus Christ.

And here is where materialism creeps in, as it seems to creep into all religion. Personally I believe there should be no set charge for a treatment in Divine Healing or for any other ministration done in the name of Christ. It should be left entirely to voluntary love-offering. Rev. Mr. Rowe makes no charge, neither does the Apostolic Faith Mission or the Unity New Thought Society. But we can go further—should there be any set charge for a funeral service or any other religious ministration?

Some comment was made on how much money Dr. F. L. Rawson, the well known London practitioner, took out of Vancouver, but I'll wager he didn't take as much as Evangelist Oliver and Evangelist John Brown. Gypsy Smith is fairly modest in his charges, but his guarantee about equals the monthly salary of a Provincial Premier. I understand that many of the evangelists put their entire earnings into orphanage homes, colleges, and other good works. Dr. Rawson puts his money into an institution where 200 practitioners are constantly ministering to the sick.

I believe in the law of giving and receiving. The Canadian Presbyterian church a year or two ago sent out one thousand letters of enquiry to members who were tithers and who gave regularly one-tenth of their entire income to the work of God. A very large percentage of these tithers stated that their incomes had steadily increased under tithing and not one reported a decreased income. This is a wonderful demonstration of the law of giving and receiving.

I believe also that the laborer is worthy of his hire, yet I feel that if the Christ is truly followed there must be no set charge for any ministration in his name, whether it be Divine Healing