

The religion of St. Paul and the disciples of Christ is of course inseparably connected with at least one miracle. Christians are told that they are mistaken as to the real element of power in their religion. It is not the resurrection and the profound doctrines based thereupon, as St. Paul fondly imagined, which give life to Christianity, but the sermon on the Mount, which, *in spite of* the superstition about a resurrection, has placed the Christian faith at the head of religious systems. In answer to this Christians have simply to say that they know better. They know what it is that is the power in their own lives, and what it is which lifts up fallen lives around them, and has from the beginning been the vital element of regenerating power in Christianity. We all admire the Sermon on the Mount, but who is the man who has the power of approximating in his life most closely to the doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount? It may be rare to find a person who literally loves his enemies, does good to them which hate him, blesses them which persecute him, and prays for them who spitefully use him. But there have been such men in Christian history; and there are such men in the world to-day. And I will dare to say that such a man, wherever he is or has been found, holds, or in his day has held, with all his mind and heart to the faith that He who bade him live in this spirit was delivered for his offences and raised again for his justification.

The hypothesis that we are in the hands of goodness was held by Epictetus as distinctly as anyone holds it who does not believe that the fact has been revealed. But when Epictetus bids you not to be angry with the servant, it is not because you should love the servant, but because you should not allow a

servant to put *you* out of harmony with nature. The effort to attain high-character is often but a subtle form of self-love. Self-surrender is only possible to one who has a realizing sense of the presence of a Being to whom such self-surrender is possible and due as a debt of gratitude. What is wanted, amid all the pain and trial of life, to make the hypothesis that we are in the hands of goodness a conviction, and a motive to grateful self-surrender? Something more than we discover of God's love in nature; something more than the idea that we owe to Him our existence, a doubtful blessing in the opinion of many people now-a-days; something more than admiration for the character of Christ. Is it not the faith in some unmistakable token of divine love, something which brings home to the individual heart a consciousness of personal relationship with a Father in Heaven, of the Father's sympathy with the deepest spiritual needs of His children, of an affection on His part for the creatures of His hands proving itself by the only true test of affection—sacrifice? 'In *this* was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.'

The apostolic doctrine of the Cross—this has been the life of Christianity in the past, and must be its power in the future. In a word, this is Christianity. I believe that there is no other power than the doctrine of the Cross wherewith to meet the danger of a moral interregnum, and that the practical duty of regenerating humanity in the concrete and the unit, will always devolve upon those who in an honest and good heart receive it.

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