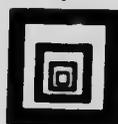


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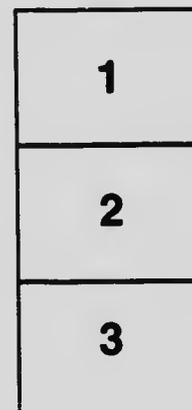
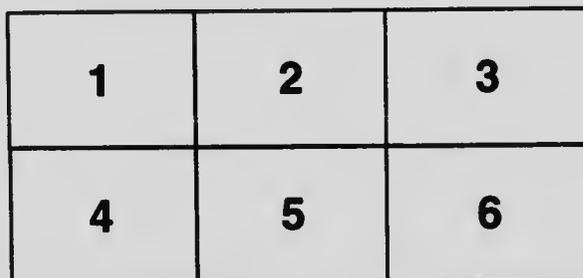
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THE LOVE OF GOD  
IN RELATION TO  
SOCIAL SERVICE

5



BY  
GEORGE PARDON BRYCE, B.A.  
TORONTO 1909

OTTAWA, CANADA  
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1909

**THE LOVE OF GOD IN RELATION  
TO SOCIAL SERVICE.**

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BY

**GEORGE PARDON BRYCE B A**  
TORONTO 1909

*Behind all the extraordinary achievements of modern civilization, its transformations of business methods, its miracles of scientific discovery, its mighty combinations of political forces, there lies at the heart of the present time a burdening sense of social mal-adjustment which creates what we call the social problem.*

F. G. PEABODY,  
"Jesus Christ and the Social Question."  
p. 9.

*The individualistic age, now closing, was one of self-assertion. . . . In the social age, upon which we are now entering. . . .the awakening of social conscience will perceive more and more social obligations. . . .The watchword of the old era was 'Rights,' that of the new will be 'Duties.'*

JOSIAH STRONG,  
"The Challenge of the City."  
p. 170-1.



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# THE LOVE OF GOD IN RELATION TO SOCIAL SERVICE.

The George Smith Bursary Prize Essay, Knox College, 1909.

BY GEORGE P. BRYCE B.A.

## I. THE PROBLEM STATEMENT.

To discuss Social Service is to presuppose a social need. Where does this Social need exist? It may be seen in a state of society in which one class of persons suffers because of the pressure of circumstances, and another class possesses the capacity to alleviate this suffering and extend a helping hand. It is this which constitutes the Social Problem. We may define it as a condition of society where inequality in advantages, in opportunity, in the supply of economic valuables, is so marked as to cause distress in one section of society and a disproportionate degree of luxury or power in another.

### NOT A THING OF RECENT GROWTH.

It is decidedly a mistake to think of this social problem as one of merely modern creation. Even from the earliest times, among those nations or societies of which we are able to catch the first clear glimpse, there existed this marked inequality of conditions. The very silence of the pyramids speaks eloquently of the Pharaohs who desired to hand down to succeeding ages a monument of their own greatness—and speaks also of downtrodden thousands who spent their last days in serfdom or slavery ministering to a despot's vanity. The earliest known attempt to set forth rules for governing a society, the Code of Hammurabi, exhibits conditions of inequality, of opportunities for oppression, for defrauding of rights, for benefiting oneself at the expense of the weaker, that remind us with somewhat startling vividness of the state of Western Civilization in the Twentieth Century. Some institutions indeed, to be expected in a culture lacking our ideals, rendered the problem even more acute in ancient times than it is to-day. The subject nations of Western Asia were ground under the heel of the conqueror; and in Egypt Israel was forced to make bricks without straw for the treasure-cities of Rameses II.

### AN ILLUSTRATION: JEWISH HISTORY.

If we look at this last instance more particularly and follow up the history of the Hebrew people, we can readily see the development of the social problem in a particular nation, and the attempts it made to find a solution. We are able to trace the advance from:

the conditions of nomadic life into settled agricultural habits, from the desert into tilled farms and vineyards and fenced cities, from the shepherding of flocks and herds to the cultivation of the soil and the development of trade through surplus products, the activity of Canaanitish middlemen and Phœnician ship-owners, the establishment of the monarchy, of the court, of relations with foreign powers. Here was evolution, which brought in its train the lowering of ideals through commercialism and irreligion, the regarding of the Babylonish garment and the slighting of Jehovah, the embracing of the "vulgar and immoral" cult of the Canaanites and the "cruel and immoral cult" of the Phœnicians. But the movement had other results. It meant, indeed, the dividing of the nations' devotion for Jehovah; but it meant also oppression, inequality, the destruction of brotherhood between man and man. Thus arose the condition that justified a Hosea when he called Israel "a Canaanite"—the heart of the nation being eaten out with commercialism; a condition in which an Amos could say that men were willing to sell their brothers "for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes"; a state of affairs requiring Micah's clear-cut message of the value of a practical religion, not of an elaborate ceremonial worship.

#### GREECE AND ROME.

Turning to the Græco-Roman world we find the situation worse rather than better. There was no Mosaic Code to mitigate the evils of slavery. There was no connection between morality and religion. Greek society shows the early need of a Solon and a Lycurgus to regulate its inequalities. The periodic revolt of the Helots in Sparta, and the philosophy of a Plato or an Aristotle alike throw lurid gleams on a time which considered one whole section of a mankind as born for servitude and bondage; and we must not forget that the leisure which gave Socrates his questioners in the market-place and Sophocles his intellectual spectators and Paul his idle audience in the Areopagus—all this was dependent on a caste system which relegated manual labor to a throng of bond-slaves or barbarian artisans. With the dawn of Roman history we witness the revolt of the plebs; and down through the centuries we have a melancholy series of slave-wars, agrarian disturbances and conspiracies of Catilines, till we pass through civil strife to despotic absolutism with its correlative of popular subserviency; Rome living the while on the wretched provincials, and the nobles, on one hand, trembling in their magnificent homes for the gloomy treachery of a Tiberius, and the multitude, down below, calling miserably for 'Bread and Blood'.

#### FEUDALISM.

The day of ancient conditions passed, giving place to that period of transition which was marked by the influx of a new race with healthy blood and democratic instincts. From this chaos of elements there emerges a new form of social organization which we know as Feudalism. Feudalism marks a certain advance.

There is no longer slavery; but there is still to be found its substitute, the system of serfdom where many men existed on starvation wages with no rights except to live and labor for their lord.<sup>1</sup>

#### MODERN ERA: FORMATION OF THE MIDDLE CLASS.

The strength of Feudalism spent itself in the darkness of the Middle Ages. A new era dawned. The invention of gunpowder meant the demolition of the castle walls of the nobles, and a great increase in the strength of the monarchy. This again brought the unification of society, and the advent of general security. With the beginning of this modern age another phenomenon emerges. There appear the guilds of workmen, fully established in society; they are ranked with tradesmen, with small land-owners and with professional men, and together they form a new social grade, the "middle class." So the process goes on, the masses of society in general making great advances, by means of the spread and increase of learning and the development of the power of reason, through geographical discovery and commercial enterprise, through increased political liberty and freedom of speech, till we come to the great change introduced by the invention of machinery in the eighteenth century. That change inaugurated the era of Industrialism.

#### ERA OF INDUSTRIALISM.

Machinery implies first of all a saving of labor. Under normal conditions of industry and energy, this leads immediately to increased production, and to correspondingly increased wealth. But it means more than that. Machinery leads to centralization of labor; few can afford to pay for the heavy and elaborate machines which displace hand-power, and so factories are built. This results in two things: an organization in which one man or a small body of men exercise control over a large number of men; and secondly, a settlement of workingmen in the neighborhood of the factory.

This is the beginning of a state of society in which a division is instituted on the basis of a difference of wealth—what Rauschenbusch calls the social wedge—the beginning of a "horizontal cleavage." It is further the beginning of the growth of the modern city. The latter constitutes a most important social fact. It is stimulated by the building and grouping of factories; and the limits formerly set to the indefinite enlargement of cities have now been removed by speedy transportation of foodstuffs and municipal water-supply.

These two facts—the tremendously increased power of accumulation of wealth on the part of the "Over-man," and the enormous growth of the modern city—form perhaps the basis and essence of the social problem. In these days of countless books and magazine articles on the subject, one needs but to refer to phases

<sup>1</sup>Cf. an exposition of Marx's Economic Development of History, in Le Rossignol, *Orthodox Socialism*, 1907, Chap. vii.

of the problem. Details are obtainable *ad infinitum*—one had almost said *ad nauseam*.

#### THE PROBLEM RE-STATED.

When we look out upon the society about us we can see what has been happening and what is in progress. We can realize on the one hand that the nineteenth century has brought us an unprecedented material and commercial development; we can see the marvellous results of inventions and discoveries in every field of human ingenuity and endeavor; we can see on this continent vast areas filling with pioneers, and the field and the forest and the mine giving out their wealth, stimulating industrial enterprise and creating a new phenomenon—a whole class of men amassing limitless wealth in a life-time; we can see life enormously more complicated, and the distance between the rich and poor drawn out like the vista behind a train on a prairie railroad; we hear of some débutante ball with hundreds of tropical butterflies fluttering helplessly and crushed greasily beneath the dancers' feet; we hear of many-million-dollar summer cottages and great universities growing like the gourd at Nineveh—but depending on richer sustenance than any to be found between the 'two rivers', waxing mighty, petroleum-nourished. We see splendid advance on one hand; and on the other there comes the cry of a six-year-old child at the coalpits, and the reek of the stock-yards that kills more than the beasts, and the crunching noise of the accidents of industrial negligence. Militarism stalks through continental Europe, and in America the socialist vote of discontent advances by leaps and bounds from presidential election to presidential election. The tenement house problem in New York demands a special municipal department, and the urban population in Massachusetts not only equals but quadruples that of rural districts. Crowded out of Europe the wave of immigration turns to the bilge-water of many a New World slum. And what of this? "The dark tenement, the unsanitary factory, the long hours of toil, the lack of a living wage, the back-breaking labor, the inability to pay necessary doctors' bills in times of sickness, the poor and insufficient food, the lack of leisure, the swift approach of old age, the dismal future, these weigh down the hearts and lives of vast multitudes in our cities. Many have almost forgotten how to smile; to laugh is a lost art. The look of care has come so often and for so long a period at a time that it is now forever stamped upon their faces. The lines are deep and hard. Their souls—their ethical souls—are all but lost. No hell in the future can be worse to them than the hell in which they now are. They fear death less than they do sleep. Some, indeed, long for the summons, daring not to take their own lives. To such what does it matter whether the doors of the Church are closed or opened? What meaning have the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man? Where is God? they ask; and what cares man, they say."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Stelzle, Christianity's Storm Centre, pp. 22-23.

That is the Social Problem. What has the Love of God to do with it?

## II. THE LOVE OF GOD AND ITS MEANING.

To answer this question, we should doubtless define our terms. What is the meaning of the phrase? Does it mean, let us first ask, love to God or love from God? Is it modelled after "the service of God," or after "the grace of God?"

The expression may reasonably be taken in either sense. But God's love to us is infinitely greater and more far-reaching than any feeling, any attitude, any act of ours; and in the end it may be found to imply our love to God. We shall therefore understand "the Love of God" in the sense of God's love to man.

### (I) THE CONCEPTION OF GOD'S LOVE AS ILLUSTRATED BY COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

It is perhaps worth while to pause on the threshold of this great theme. God's love! It is a commonplace to our theology, our sermons, our very system of thinking. It was the supreme message of John. It was fundamental for Paul's doctrine of law and grace. But whence came it?

We ask the question because this is an age of the scientific spirit, with its inevitable analysis and comparison, and its all-permeating historic sense. Thus on one side we take into our hands the field-glass of Comparative Religion and look abroad on the world's faiths; but we find they have not this conception. The God of Islam is no doubt a God to fear for His power and His strength; almighty, omniscient, a ruler—but not a Father. Islam teaches that God is great, but it forgets that He is loving. Confucianism inculcates the solemn dignity of our earthly relationship and our human society, but it knows not that in the midst of these we have a living help and a personal fellowship with the eternal God. The great Shamanistic and Fetichistic religions which the people of Africa follow, which the people of Corea have followed, which have constituted, so far as the Chinese may be said to have any religion at all, the actual religion of the Chinese people; in these, where there is no message as to man's origin or destiny, or his social relationship or the foundations of his moral life—how could these teach God's true nature? The very "terms for sin and love do not occur in many of the African languages."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the great revelation of Jesus as to the Father, viz., that God is Love, makes Christianity unique among present-day religions.

### GRAECO-ROMAN PHILOSOPHY.

How does it compare with the great conceptions of the Roman world into which Christianity was born?

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Students and the Modern Missionary Crusade, pp. 81-100, Addresses by T. F. Gailor, D.D. and R. E. Speer, M.A.

Like them, it sought an all-embracing idea or principle which should harmonize or encompass the apparent irrationalities of man's life. Unlike them, it was a revelation presented through an historic fact. It was no cosmological speculation. The Stoics in their intense individualism might attain to a spirit of resoluteness and constancy, by their faith in a transcendental realm of realities, of goodness and truth. But their system was an inevitable failure because it was but loyalty to an idea. Philo's great conception of the Logos might provide a bridge between the ineffably transcendent God and the realm of space and time; but unlike Jacob's ladder, though it reached to the heavens, it did not rest upon the earth. There was no real connection between sinful man and the God of whom no attributes could be predicated.

Jesus' revelation was therefore completely distinct from both Stoicism and Philonism, not only in the manner of its communication, but in its essential nature.

#### (II) BY HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

But further, as Comparative Religion has taught us to see in Judaism the last link in the chain of non-Christian faiths, the highest step in the ascent from the natural and ethical religions, so Historical Criticism has taught us to regard the religion of the Jews as itself developing from meagre beginnings till in the fulness of the times it burst its hard, dry husk and disclosed its true fruitage in the revelation through Christ.

#### JUDAISM AT VARIOUS PERIODS.

"In Israel," says Davidson, "the religious development is virtually a development in the idea of God." But the growth was one that took place through the gradual awakening of the consciousness of the people; it was practically an expanding, in ever widening circles, of a conception held by the gifted few. There is an ancient passage illustrating the deep insight possessed by some one thinker in very early times: "Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Doubtless "the religious progress appears in the form of a conflict, that conflict is manifested in the various stages, in which there is first the choice, 'If Jehovah be God, follow him'; and later the struggle by the prophets against the people for the recognition of His ethical character—a struggle expressed in Micah's notable words in 6: 6-8, 'What doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' In the last period 'new conceptions of God hardly emerge. The period was rather one of assimilation of the prophetic teaching into the individual mind and experience.'"

Yet with all this process of assimilation the prophets' messages were insufficient to transform the people. Amos had hurled forth

<sup>1</sup>Ex. 34, 5 sq.

his message of God's Justice, and it was understood, by a later generation at least, only as legal equity. Isaiah had had his vision of Jehovah's majesty and holiness, and the nation took it to mean transcendence. Hosea had told of the Divine grace and loving-kindness, but it had fallen on ears that were stopped and hearts that would not comprehend.

Judaism could not adequately synthesize this prophetic message of the nature of their God. Its devotees could not even realize each prophet's word; save among a chosen remnant, only deism remained to represent the prophets' enthusiastic monotheism. Can we wonder if the ethical and practical import should be missed, that the social implications of their teaching should be all but lost, when the very conception of God's nature had been marred, perverted, robbed of its essential content?

#### THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD AS LOVE.

Through Christ we *know*, what the world's choicest spirits only dreamed and hoped before, that God Himself is Love.

Think, Abib; or dost thou think  
The All-Great is the All-Loving too,  
And through the thunder comes a human voice,  
O, heart I made, a heart beats here;  
O, face I fashioned, see it in Myself,  
Thou hast no power, nor canst conceive of mine,  
But love I gave thee with Myself to love  
And thou must love Me who died for thee.

What is this revelation by Jesus of God's nature? "The key to His theology is the doctrine of the Father; His love to the Father is the motive of His life. He proclaimed love to God, absorbing all energies comprehending all activities, as the first, the great commandment, of which the second, love to man, is the direct corollary."<sup>1</sup>

Jesus' conception of God thus differed fundamentally from other conceptions. It differed from that of Confucianism, of Buddhism, of Hinduism, of Islam; even from that of Judaism; for to Christ's contemporaries, Jehovah was a God of justice and sternness, but not a God of mercy and love.

#### ITS NORMATIVE FORCE.

Now there is little doubt that the conception of God in any religion determines the nature of that religion. That conception is the supreme, normative fact for that religion; it is the spring, whence flows the stream of influences over men's lives, the dynamic which electrifies them into energy for worship and for service, the inspiration leading them on to shape their lives towards this ideal or towards that. For religion may be defined as man's life-relation towards God; and man's idea of God must needs control the nature of that relation.

<sup>1</sup>Hastings' Dict. Christ and the Gospels, ii 287 b.

### ITS IMPLICATIONS (I) LOVE TO GOD.

This is especially true of Christianity, because of the uniqueness of its conception of God. God is love. The Christian religion would be affected by that conception were God's love only an etherealized, passive and colorless thing. But it is not that. It is an active, operative love. This means that it reaches out and draws men in; for that is the very essence, the peculiar characteristic of love. So God seeks to bring men to Himself, and to make them like Himself, loving. But if God loves men, and they become like Him, then they will love men—other men—too. They will indeed love *Him*: for true love begets love. "The love of Christ constraineth us; He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them."<sup>1</sup> But more than that: our love, inspired by God, by His love to us, impels us to a wider love, a love to our brethren. "If ye love Me," John makes Jesus say, "Ye will keep My commandments."<sup>1</sup>

### (II) LOVE TO OTHER MEN.

And as the aged Apostle looks back over the vista of years, in the sunset of his life that message has become transmuted to the word which, tradition says, he would constantly repeat when feebleness had overtaken him, "Little children, love one another."

That is to say, God's nature woos men to Himself, and instils in them a love for Him and to one another. God's love to men implies a social love as its natural and logical consequence.

### CORROBORATION FROM SCIENTIST AND SEER.

There is yet another standpoint from which we may view God and His love towards us—a viewpoint not only legitimate but peculiarly suited to this age in which for two generations men have been striving as never before to grasp the underlying unity of things and to relate the Divine Person to the Universe we perceive about us. For not only do we believe in a loving God, but we believe in a God of infinite wisdom, of definite purpose. This purpose, as it seems to us to-day, is seen in all His wonderful creation; most of all we trace it in the history of man—his creation, his evolution: a development that has lifted the race up as well as helped it on, till it has come to pass that some of mankind's seers, elevated above their fellows, have promised and pointed out to them what they themselves have dimly perceived through the rarer mists—that

One far-off divine event  
To which the whole creation moves.

But the individual—what of him? Man, the unit of mankind,

<sup>1</sup>Cf. an interesting passage in *Ecce Homo*, chap. xiv, p. 57: "As love provokes love . . . Christ lives in me." 2 Co. V. 14-15.

<sup>2</sup>Jn. xiv. 15.

is a pawn on the divine chessboard, a factor in the cosmic calculation, a member of the universal organism, an agent of God's purpose. Is it a small thing that he, one of the race of created beings, should be placed on earth to evolve there the glory of God in His Creation, to take a part in the consummation of an order in the world in which God's great intents shall be attained? But how attained? Not after the manner of the Lotos Eaters, for whom

The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

For the law of progress is strife, and struggle and stress; and the law of attainment is work; and man's chief end is not to be reached save through labor and toil—service to man, not as a duty only, not as a pleasure solely, but as growing out of a consciousness that "every human being is born to fulfil functions as definite in God's word-processes" as, let us say, the age-long creeping of a mountain glacier in the Rockies. Man's joy is in fulfilling his destiny: he is here, he exists, to be and to do; "not," as the Apostle says, "as though he had already attained, either were all already perfect."

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,  
Or what's a heaven for?<sup>1</sup>

But whether attained or not, God has a general purpose in creation, and our peculiar joy should be in fulfilling our part toward compassing that ideal. For His purpose is evident in creating a being with powers equal to illustrating His glory, and with attributes making him capable of growing like unto Himself.

#### THE CONCEPTION OF GOD AS LOVE; ITS REVELATION THROUGH CHRIST.

We have said that the revelation of God and of His love to men came in its supreme and completed form through Christ, and that this love implied a love by man of his fellow-men; in other words, its inevitable corollary was social service.

#### METHOD: THE LIFE OF JESUS.

The method of this revelation was two-fold. The first was the life of Jesus, the embodiment of grace to His fellow-men, and significant for mankind as affording them the means of redemption. He walked among men, His daily life an example of all that is best in social service because He loved them, and culminating in the death that constituted at the same time His supreme sacrifice and the ultimate revelation of His Father's love.

#### ( ) THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS.

The second form of this presentation of God's attitude to men

<sup>1</sup>Browning, "Andrea del Sarto."

and of their consequent attitude to one another was seen in the teachings of Jesus expressed or implied. This had two great aspects—the one, the side turned to God as the heavenly Father, and the other, the side turned to man. A child-like trust and reliance, an implicit and loving obedience, conditioned by a heartfelt penitence for sin—these were to regulate the disciple's relation towards his Maker. "Our Father . . . hallowed be Thy name" was to be their first thought in prayer, and the second was a cognate one—"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth." They were to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." Why? Because, to begin with, they were to feel that they were dependent on His free gift. "God be merciful to me a sinner" were the words that expressed the need of all; and further, they might rest on their Father with complete confidence: "He knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Let them lay up spiritual riches, and their affections will be set on things above. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." And the issue is natural; heavenly interests, godly lives. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Such is the attitude toward God inculcated in Jesus' teachings. He makes His first and great commandment "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." And the second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."<sup>1</sup> This is the social duty of Christ's followers.

#### JESUS' SOCIAL TEACHINGS IN RELATION TO THOSE OF THE PROPHETS.

There is no doubt, as Jesus Himself indicates, in the context of the passage just quoted, that His ethical teaching was in many ways a summing up of that found in the Jewish law and the Jewish prophets. His citation from Deuteronomy and Leviticus was one of which every Jew had a portion written on the doorposts of his house, and which any scribe of insight might read as the heart of the Old Testament legislation.

As we have seen, the disclosures made through the prophets of God's character, when taken conjointly, left little to be added except the confirmation of the personal revelation in God's Son. Similarly, the social message of the prophets needed to be supplemented for the most part only by the all-pervading certainty of God's love for men. "Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream," said Amos. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" was Jesus' message. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil;" "What mean ye that ye beat My people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor?" So ran Isaiah's denunciation. "Wash you, make you clean; cease to do evil, learn to do well. . . judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." "Woe unto you," says Christ, "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye make clean the outside

<sup>1</sup>Mt. xxii. 37, 39.

of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and the platter." "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me." "Let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth," Malachi bids the people. Jesus urges similarly the sacredness of the marriage vow. "I desired mercy and not sacrifice," says Hosea; Jesus more than once takes the word from his mouth. And in like fashion He deliberately borrows from the prophecy concerning the suffering servant the programme of the gospel.

#### HIS TEACHING *re* THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH.

Nevertheless Jesus' social teaching was different from that of the prophets. It was necessarily so; for He could speak with authority. Amos might say, "Surely Jehovah God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." But this meant infinitely less than the Christ's solemn assurance, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father." Thus it comes that while the prophets look forward to a golden age and depict its glories with the vagueness of poetic imagery, because they gaze upon it without perspective, Jesus can say, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand;" and though He thus begins His ministry by repeating the message of His great forerunner, yet it means far more than it could in the mouth of John. He knows the true nature of the Kingdom; He knows that it is not cataclysmic, but is to grow in the world; nay, it is already among them. And because it is to be like the mustard seed, He gathers together a society which shall embody and preserve His teaching and principles and go forth into the world to be the means and the medium whereby God may transform society and bring His Kingdom to its consummation.

That this is the proper interpretation of the passages in the Gospel there seems to be little doubt. Scant discussion is necessary in this place of the relation between the Kingdom and the Church. Without going into the question, it may be said that they are not co-extensive; the Kingdom is a wider term, and includes the "sphere of influence" of the Church. Yet because the coming of the Kingdom is a progressive thing, the Church cannot be said to be greater and more important than the Kingdom, but rather to be the means for its realization, not the end to be attained: it is of primary, but not ultimate importance.

#### THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS.

What were the social aims and the social teaching of Jesus? Again it may be said that any detailed discussion here is as unnecessary as it would needs be inadequate. Jesus' teachings—despite "Ecce Homo"—can scarcely be called legislation. Except in the single instance of the marriage relation, Jesus does not lay down rules or explicit precepts. He gives principles for men's guidance, not enactments for their obedience.

### ILLUSTRATION: THE FAMILY.

Such principles or central ideas are based on Jesus' "discovery of the individual," and his value in the divine sight. This may be illustrated by the familiar fact of the transformation of the family that has been wrought by Christianity. True, woman had a comparatively high place in Judaism, especially in certain great historic instances: Miriam, Deborah, Ruth, Esther, were memorable names. Yet women were of small consequence to the Judaism of Jesus' time. The woman taken in adultery was of interest to her Rabbinic accusers as a "case," not as a human being. It is His sympathy and tenderness for women that is one of the most unique features in His life and the Gospel record. The same thing may be said of His relations to children. He hears with pleasure their Hosannas. They come to His arms as to one they can trust. He makes it a heinous moral offence to lead "one of these little ones" astray, or rather to be a stumbling-block in their upward progress. And finally He bases the division between blessed and cursed on treatment accorded to the helpless and afflicted. Thus it comes that Christianity has evolved a new conception of the family. The modern American child-cult may be an exaggeration of a good tendency, but it illustrates the direction of the Christian advance from the life-and-death power held by the Roman father. It was Christ's teaching that has made possible the poet's summing up that

Woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse.

It was through Jesus' insistence on God's Fatherhood that we have not only reached a clearer conception of the Divine relation to men, but have attained a new idea of the nobility of human paternity.

### THE ROOT PRINCIPLE OF JESUS' SOCIAL TEACHING.

Not all of Jesus' teachings have been realized to such a degree in Christian society. But this example of the family, though a conspicuous one, exhibits the source and the tendency of the Master's reforms. He goes back from the special principle of man's value to God, to the underlying consciousness of God's nature as love. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." And on the other hand, this principle of man's value to God leads to that of the worth of the individual to the Christian. This fact once recognized, we must admit the strength of His contention that we are bound to care for the weak and helpless. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," as Paul put it; just as "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

But naturally man's social duties are not exhausted in the family. Our social service must be much broader than the innermost circle drawn about our personality. But just as all the social problems of to-day act and interact so that no one of them can be solved without the solution of all the rest, so in Jesus' teachings

the problem of the state and of the family, of the rich and the poor, all go back to the fixed basis of the love of God the Father, and the consequent recognition by us of the worth of the human soul not only to God but to us; he that is in need of our help is our neighbor: "Go, and do thou likewise." God loving us, yearns for our love to Him; God's love to man implies the Christian's love to his fellow-men.

#### THEIR EVOLUTIONARY SIGNIFICANCE.

This is the sense in which Jesus is a reformer. He is no revolutionist, seeing no good in existing society, and offering a panacea, ready-made, immediate. Often He will bring a sword before He brings peace. But He is an evolutionist. The author of "Ecce Homo" has made this much plain, that Jesus did organize a society with a purpose. And if that purpose meant on its obverse side the redemption of man from sin by righting him in his relation to God, then on its reverse side it included the freeing of man from misery by adjusting his relations with other men. Christ's society was for the healing and blessing of the human race. This blessedness was to be attained in the Kingdom of God; and the society was the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### III. THE HISTORICAL WORKING OUT OF JESUS' SOCIAL TEACHINGS.

The Church then seems to be committed to the work of social transformation, because its Founder brought God's love to the hearts of His followers.

As a matter of fact has the Church fulfilled this purpose?

There are two possible lines of answer to this question. One may point to the wonderful things accomplished in Western Civilization in the Christian era. Let the abolition of slavery and the transformation of the family stand as examples. Probably any fair-minded comparison between ancient and modern society, any study of such a book as Lecky's *History of European Morals*, is bound to issue in the admission that marvellous changes have been brought about through the agency of Christianity. But let us grant that Brace's *Gesta Christi* is right in its emphasis on the works of the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> Is this enough? Has the Church undertaken the work of social transformation?

#### EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL INTEREST.

We cannot of course say that the Church has not been interested in social advance. Augustine's noble ideal of the "City

<sup>1</sup>See reference in Rauschenbusch, p.147, to which I am indebted for the line of thought followed in this section.

of God" may stand as an illustration. The self-denying earnestness and genuine sympathy for the poor and unfortunate, displayed by Dominic and by Francis of Assisi, show a social interest. Jakob Spener's influence in Halle, and the founding of the Orphan-House exhibit the vital connection between a deep and spiritual piety and an active benevolence; and form an illuminating exposition of the social message of James. The history of the Quaker movement is probably the most striking evidence of the power of the Gospel of Christ in social reconstruction. Narrow they were, and literal, these Quakers; but the extraordinarily bigoted persecution which they suffered is in itself a testimony to their Christ-likeness; and it may well be that not only the work of men like John Howar<sup>d</sup> and Wilberforce, but the whole era of reform in the nineteenth century, are in no small measure due to the influence of Quakerism.

Yet granting the truth of these instances and many more, they are but incidental. The question still remains, Has the Church fulfilled her part as agent in the work of social reconstruction?

#### THE EARLY CHURCH.

It is clear that in the early periods of Church history there was no such task undertaken. There were many reasons for this. In an age when the speedy return of Christ and the end of this dispensation was expected, it seemed futile to attempt to reorganize society. Paul's counsel was, to the slave to remain a slave, to the married to stay married. It was the inner disposition that was important, not the outward circumstances. That was the reason why Paul was not an anti-slavery man. But even if he had been, there was no opportunity for popular agitation such as made possible the work of Wilberforce or William Lloyd Garrison. The Roman Government did not appreciate a freedom of speech that would threaten the institution of society. Then again, Christianity found its interest not in this world, but in the next. In the eyes of believers the Roman anti-Christian society was ruled by demons rather than by God. Heathen worship was the worship of demons. Moreover, paganism showed itself hostile to Christianity, and persecutions of Christians and the necessity of secrecy and caution tended to make them think of the Church as the only regenerate society possible. They were in the world, but not of it; such was their feeling. It was too hopelessly corrupt to be regenerated save little by little as it should come into the Church. Add to this attitude the fact of the low social status and imperfect intellectual culture of many of the early converts; add the further fact that "religion, by the very reverence which makes it noble, intensifies the conservative instinct," and in this combination of influences we have a historical situation strongly tending to neutralize the revolutionary force inherent in the religion of Christ.

## LATER CENTURIES.

It will not be necessary to trace these lines of influence through succeeding history. The causes operating against the social transformation in the first century were such as those outlined above; and each succeeding century till the present has had its own. The ascetic tendency, bearing fruit in monasticism, was a very considerable cause. True, the social instinct could not be killed even in the monastery; and the monastic life was in many ways a blessing—preserving, as it were in cold storage, the seeds of Jesus' social teachings, till they could be taken out and planted in a society over which the wave of barbarism had passed, leaving it richer than before. But during the millennium, let us say from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries, monasticism cast a blighting shadow over social progress. It branded life in the family—the real unit of society—as a second-best arrangement; it discouraged social improvement by its "other-worldliness," and by its formation of closed corporations of piety which kept as far as possible out of touch with the defiling world; and finally by its celibacy. "Monasticism," says Prof. Rauschenbush, "eliminated the morally capable, just as war eliminates the physically capable. God alone knows where the race might be to-day if the natural leaders had not so long been made childless by their goodness."<sup>1</sup> "A celibate ministry is perhaps more efficient for the Church; an equally good married ministry is of more service to the Kingdom of God."

## DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA.

Other causes came to the fore in the course of history. One was the development of dogma, and the central place it held in creeds and discussions of creeds. "When dogmatic and speculative questions absorbed the religious interests, less of it was left for moral and social questions." It has been the practical West rather than the subtle East which has brought social reform. Another cause was the emphasis placed on ecclesiasticism. "The Church substituted itself for the Kingdom of God, and thereby put the advancement of a tangible and very human organization in the place of the moral uplifting of humanity." More than that, ecclesiasticism is the foe of democracy in the Church; we have too many Bishops of Lancashire.<sup>2</sup> Any social work the Church attempts is apt to be carried out in the attitude of patronage, and therefore to no purpose. We can do no work for the poor except as we work with the poor.

It would be very easy to illustrate the operation of these forces in particular cases. It was, for instance, because of the "other-worldly" tendency of the early centuries that Augustine was able to depict a convincing substitute for the tottering Roman Empire. It was because of the ascetic ideals of the Church of their time that Dominic and Francis founded monastic orders. It is a

<sup>1</sup>Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup>Vide The Master in the House, by Charles Rann Kennedy.

striking instance of the inadequacy of such an ideal, that in the end these mendicant orders, instead of affording any social uplift to the masses, became notorious for their wealth, and one of them became a leading force in the Inquisition. It was because ecclesiasticism was so anti-democratic that Luther himself, bound up as he still was with his early training as a monk, urged the nobles to cut down the peasants without mercy when they resorted to force in their revolt against oppression; so that German socialism to-day holds Luther guilty of the blood of a hundred thousand fallen;—which is one of the ironies of history.

#### THE PASSING OF THESE FORCES.

Now it can scarcely be denied that these various obstacles in the way of social advance have one by one passed away. That is a curious fact and probably a deeply significant one. Asceticism is to-day a mere echo of a former time. The monastery is an anachronism. The right of public agitation, the freedom of the press, an almost unlimited liberty of speech—these afford every opportunity for airing views as to social reconstruction. Protestantism has largely wrecked churchliness. Subtleties of theological discussion have given way to active steps towards church union. The age is practical as never before. 'Organization and Efficiency' is the watchword of the civilized world. And besides this, modern research has developed a separate science, sociology, whose exclusive aim is the betterment of men in their relations with one another. Is there any reason why the Church should not awake to her duty and fill her place as the operative, efficient agent in the transformation of society?

#### IV. THE CHURCH AND THE SOCIAL CRISIS.

The Christian Church, it may be, is awaking to a realization of the problem which she is called to face. But being the oldest organized institution in our society, she is quite as cautious and conservative as any; and in the matter of the social situation she is rather last than first in being aroused to it. She is assuredly not first in seeking a solution of the social problem. It is not till social questions are in the air, till they have permeated the popular consciousness, as evolution did a generation ago, that the Church as a church begins to take notice. The social problem is fundamental in the *Zeitgeist* of to-day.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE PRESENT SITUATION.

Has the Church awakened too late? We have seen that it was committed by its Founder to the work of social reconstruction. We have seen that a series of historical causes have in succession proved effective barriers between the Church and her work. We have seen that those causes have been removed, so that the call of the Church seems clear. And now we see that the consciousness

<sup>1</sup>Cf. the quotation from Peabody on the second page.

of the time realizes keenly the existence of the social problem. But, in the meantime, rivals to the Church have arisen. There are agencies ready with proposed solutions of the great problem. It has become a race toward a common goal: is the Church already hopelessly out-distanced?

#### RIVALS TO THE CHURCH.

In the nineteenth century there were several forces that were formative in thought and effort. Some of these were the Idealistic philosophy of Hegel, Marxian socialism, modern science and the great humanitarian movement. Of these, the worship of the idea of humanity, while influential in many lines of thought, may be said to have expressed itself on the practical side through Marx's system; and the other two forces have likewise united so as to give us modern sociology and scientific philanthropy. These two great movements, Socialism and what we may call Humanitarianism, are the rivals to Christianity, as possible solutions of the social problem. Are they adequate? or must the Church take up the burden—is she to press onward to the goal?

#### (1). SOCIALISM.

At first sight, Socialism is simply a system of economics. It is not Communism, and it is not Anarchism, despite their frequent confounding; but like them it is one proposed solution of the social question.

#### AS AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM.

Is it right? That is primarily a question of economic science. On the other hand, Prof. Rauschenbusch says of Henry George's book, "In his main contentions, he has never been answered." On the other hand, a book like "Orthodox Socialism" by J. Edward le Rossignol, which strikes one as a fair and a thorough criticism of the system, seems to prove that its main propositions are a series of fallacies.<sup>1</sup> Socialism is a faith rather than a science. Therefore it is popular, but it is not therefore true. Its devotees are enthusiastic to the point of fanaticism, but its doctrines are not correct to the point of verification. "With human nature as it exists at present, and as it bids fair to continue for an incalculable future, Socialism, if it were realized in practice would be the death-knell of economic advance and true social betterment."

#### THE NECESSARY MOTIVE POWER.

With the economic validity, however, we have little to do. As a matter of fact Socialism is really only a variety of machinery. Has it got the motive-power to make it go? Is it adequate? That is the question; and an impartial consideration seems bound to answer, No. It does not possess the impulse to self-sacrifice which

<sup>1</sup>For a criticism of the book see Charities and the Commons, April 6th, 1907.

in so marked a form is pre-supposed by it. That must come through the Church. And here is the latter's opportunity. Socialism is not necessarily opposed to Christianity or the Church, but will oppose both while it believes they are bound up with the capitalistic system. The Church, in its dealings with Socialism, must allow men the right to an honest belief in it as an economic creed; but it must also show them the necessity for Christianity as the means for supplying the driving-power it has need of. It must convince them of its own sincerity; it must show them that its interests are with all classes of society; and it must make the same demands for a real change of life among capitalists as it does among the laboring-men. The Church must be ready to recognize that there are good things to be found in Socialism; but Socialists must realize that their creed is an insufficient one, that it is inadequate as a solution of the social problem, that they need Christianity and the Church.

## (2). HUMANITARIANISM.

The other great force challenging the Church as a solvent of the social question is the widespread humanitarian movement. Both Socialism and Humanitarianism are really by-products of the Christianity the Church represents, both having arisen from that realization of the value of the individual which may be traced to Jesus: the one, tinged with Hegelian idealism and strongly democratic, the other, strongly practical and sympathetic. The past century has been remarkable for the movements toward social betterment which originated in it. Purely economic reforms were many,—the mass of factory legislation in England, the developed force of trades-unionism, the self-realization of democracy implied in the great political reforms beginning with the early thirties and culminating in John Burns' elevation to the Cabinet in the present Parliament. But there were other significant things. One was the peace movement. It may be said that the century which in the fifties thought it saw the dawn of a day when war should be no more, nevertheless closed with the black clouds of two great conflicts hanging like a pall over its evening sky. Yet the Hague Tribunal represents a vast advance in public sentiment over that of a century ago in the generation of the Napoleonic wars; and the horrors and sufferings of military life have been in no small degree mitigated by the Red Cross Society and the great medical discovery of anesthesia. The most characteristic movement of the period was the increase of institutional philanthropy, the systematic organization of charity, and the development of sociological science. These are in no wise to be depreciated; their ideals are high indeed. "To discover and remove causes of distress, to protect and deal sympathetically with the incurable in body or mind, to build up character and to encourage a spirit of honorable independence—these," says a speaker for the London Charity Organization Society, "have been the objects to which our

best efforts have been directed."<sup>1</sup> Such efforts are touching life at very many points, ranging from the feeding of school children, the inspection, regulation and improvement of tenements, public playgrounds and the like, to the advance in sanitary science and preventive medicine and the investigation of the weighty problem raised by immigration. Here too may be classed those movements avowedly Christian, but avowedly outside the Church. Such are the development of the Salvation Army and the related Volunteers of America, and the Y. M. C. A.

#### HUMANITARIANISM ALONE NOT ADEQUATE.

These influences are undoubtedly for good. But are they sufficient? Philanthropy is an excellent thing when it is undertaken with right motives and carried out so as to uplift the poor and not make for pauperization. But is it adequate? "Humanitarian enthusiasm alone," says a recent writer, "can never solve the social problem."<sup>2</sup>

#### PLACE OF THE CHURCH IN THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT.

This then is the point. These other agencies are excellent, but the Christian Church has its unique place to fill in the matter of social service." The greatest forward movement of all the ages is upon us. That movement is the saving of society, and that work the Church of Christ must undertake."<sup>3</sup> "What reason has the Christian Church for existing, many persons are now asking, if it is not to have a part in that shaping of a better world, which at the same time is the aim of the social movement?"<sup>4</sup> "The Christian Church has a vast responsibility in the solution of all problems of the social order."<sup>5</sup> "If the Church has not faith enough in the Christian law to assert its sovereignty over all relations of society, men will deny that it is a good and practicable law at all."<sup>6</sup> "What is needed, then, is the application of Christianity to the solution of the new social problems. Christianity unapplied is like water above a mill dam that is never turned to the wheel, like coal in a mine that is never raised and fired; practically, it does not exist. If this application, then, should be made, who should make it if not the Churches?"<sup>7</sup>

#### INSPIRATIONAL INFLUENCE.

What then is the place of the Church in the social movement? No one will maintain that it is to do all the work through its special machinery. Social reconstruction is not to be completed through

<sup>1</sup>Charity Organization Review, July, 1906, Constructive Charity.

<sup>2</sup>D. S. Cairns, Christianity in the Modern World, p. 228.

<sup>3</sup>Jos. Strong, The Challenge of the City, p. 180.

<sup>4</sup>F. G. Peabody, Jesus Christ and the Social Question, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Chas. Stezle, Christianity's Storm Centre, p. 167.

<sup>6</sup>Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 316.

<sup>7</sup>Strong, p. 180.

the institutional church alone. The place of the Church in social progress is in some degree like that of prayer in the spiritual life; prayer is an essential thing, it has a distinct function of its own; but it must not take the place of all other effort. Some will say that the analogy is complete; that the Church has to do with the social movement only indirectly. The sane-minded Dr. Forsyth seems to take this position. "The Church has not to solve the social problem, but to provide the men, the principles, and the public that can."<sup>1</sup>

This carries weight, undoubtedly, and perhaps is especially true in England. At the end of the last century that was probably the common view on this continent also. Says F. G. Peabody in 1900, "What is it, then, to which we are brought as the special problem which presents itself to the Christian Church in the age of the social question? It is the problem of communicating to the social movement that social energy which the teaching of Jesus originates and conserves."<sup>2</sup>

#### RECENT CHANGES IN THE SITUATION.

This is undoubtedly true and of great force to-day. But during the few years of the present century great changes have taken place. Large forward movements have become prominent, sprung in many cases from the midst of the organized Churches. The Laymen's Missionary Movement is both awaking the Church at home and undertaking in earnest the work in the foreign field. The Student Volunteer Movement is making enormous strides towards supplying the men for service. The Young People's Missionary Movement has already accomplished much, and its promises for the future are almost unlimited. In Y. M. C. A. work the Bible Study Movement is making progress that is simply astounding. In the University of Illinois, where a few years ago John R. Mott could not get a single man enrolled, there are now more than a thousand names of men in Bible Study Classes. Among the working men in shop and factory classes there are said to be over a hundred thousand men studying the Scriptures—"letting Jesus Christ have a chance at their lives." A similar tendency is indicated by the phenomenal spread of Organized Adult Bible Classes and the growth of the allied Baraca and Philathea Movement. The union tendency among churches to-day is simply an expression of dissatisfaction with the old lines of cleavage, and a desire to get together for their real work in the world. Church and Labor are coming together as never before. Our universities are turning their attention to social settlements, and in some places already doing splendid work. Finally the problem which within a few years caused forty Protestant churches to move out of the district below Twentieth Street in New York City, while 300,000 people moved in—a situation typical of prac-

<sup>1</sup>P. T. Forsyth, *Socialism, the Church and the Poor*, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Peabody, *op. cit.*, chap. vii. p. 119.

tically every great city in Christendom—is meeting a solution in the Socialized Church.

#### THE NEW WORK.

Such is the recent change. Does it not mean that the Church is finding a new work to do in social service? Her task is not merely to point out the way to others, or to give indirect inspiration to the agencies that seek to uplift mankind. Nor is her work simply to rescue the individual soul in the city slum without changing the environment. For the person so rescued will simply go elsewhere, and his place be immediately filled; and we do not drain a river by dipping out the water a bucketful at a time. The Church must do more than these things. In this generation the world at large has learned the meaning of Sir Launfal's lesson,—

The gift without the Giver is bare.

The time has come when the organized Church also must reach down and lift up, when it must get on the level of the men about it—for every message to the poor must come through a brother-man. The Church is being called to grasp a great opportunity. Those who are its ministers are learning that it is theirs not to hold services but to serve. The Church also is finding out, slowly but surely, what it means to interpret the love of God into social service; it is discovering, for itself and its members, that for what it must live among men is the Gospel of Work.

#### THE GOSPEL OF LABOR.

Two generations ago Hood, in his *Song of the Shirt*, aroused some consciousness of the wrongs of toiling humanity. Later on, poems like *Flora McFlimsie*, and Lowell's *Sir Launfal* and *The Present Crisis*, awoke the humanitarian spirit. To-day the question is not one of sympathy for wrongs, but of methods of service. The Church confronts a great problem. How shall she grapple with it? It would be an inviting task to dwell in some detail on the difficulties to be solved, but this is really needless. Rather we should emphasize the spirit and ideals which must dominate the Church. Henry Van Dyke has well expressed it:—

This is the Gospel of labor—ring it, ye bells of the Kirk,  
The Lord of Love came down from above to live with the men who work.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"The Gospel of Felix," p. 26.

