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THE SURVIVAL VALUE OF CHRISTIANITY

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BY

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Let him who says when he reads my book, "Certainly I understand what is said, but it is not true," assert, if he pleases, his own opinion, and refute mine if he is able. And if he do this with charity and truth, and take the pains to make it known to me (if I am still alive) I shall then receive the most abundant fruit of this my labor.

AUGUSTINE, *De Trinitate*, I, 3, 5.

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To

HENRY STANHOPE BUNTING

Foreword

MEN are debating today as never before the origin, history, and enduring worth of the Christian faith. In offering the following pages as a possible contribution to this debate the writer is painfully aware of the difficulty, not to say the futility, of his task. There is first of all the diversity of belief, due to differences of temperament and tradition, which is all but insurmountable. There is secondly the deep aversion of the pious soul to the critical attitude in religion. The Fundamentalist reader will doubtless find the frank criticisms of his point of view unpleasant, but the writer must remind him that Fundamentalist leaders have not been particularly sparing of the feelings of their opponents. The New Testament scholar will perhaps be inclined to challenge many statements dealing with the exceedingly difficult questions as to the origin of Christianity. Finally, the strenuous application of the distinction between fact and fiction, which is the guiding principle of the book, has

lent to the pages that follow a negative tinge which was not intentional, but which, perhaps, is in a measure unavoidable.

The writer begs his reader not to be misled by the large title of this little book. It is no blast of the archangel's trump bidding to a last great assize. The writer is not so rash as to essay a final evaluation of a faith whose vitality nineteen centuries have failed to exhaust. The task he has set himself is much more modest. It is to determine the principles by which our age must revalue its Christian heritage. Such an inevitable revaluation is not the death-knell of faith as many imagine. It may be an indication of a new lease on life.

HANOVER, N. H.,
November 12, 1925.

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THE SURVIVAL VALUE OF CHRISTIANITY

Chapter I

THE CHALLENGE OF FUNDAMENTALISM

Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are somewhat too religious.—Paul

1. ORTHODOXY BY LEGISLATION.

ON MARCH 21, 1925, the following became law in the sovereign state of Tennessee:

"BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That it shall be unlawful for any teacher in any of the Universities, normals or other public schools of the State which are supported in whole or in part by the public school funds of the State, to teach any theory which denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals.

"BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That any teacher found guilty of the violation of this Act shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction

shall be fined not less than One Hundred ($100.00) Dollars for each offense."

This legislation resulted in the Scopes trial at Dayton, Tennessee, in July, 1925, a trial that attracted the attention of the civilized world.

A bill forbidding the teaching of evolution in the state-supported schools under penalty of a heavy fine and imprisonment was introduced in 1921 into the lower house of the Legislature of Kentucky and, only after a hot fight, defeated by a vote of 42 to 41.

In the same year a rider was attached to an appropriation bill in the Senate of South Carolina providing that "no moneys appropriated for public education or for the maintenance and support of state-supported institutions shall be used or paid to any such school or institution teaching or permitting to be taught, as a creed to be followed, the cult known as 'Darwinism.'" This did not become law.

In the summer of 1925 a similar rider was attached to an appropriation bill in the Legislature of Georgia and defeated.

In 1923 a joint resolution was passed by the Legislature of Florida stating that "it is improper and subversive of the best interests of

the people of this state" for any teacher in a state-supported institution "to teach or permit to be taught atheism, or agnosticism, or to teach as true Darwinism, or any other hypothesis that links man in blood relationship to any other form of life."

A similar resolution introduced into the lower house of the North Carolina Legislature in April, 1925, was defeated by a vote of 64 to 47. In January, 1924, the governor of this state, at the suggestion of the High-School Textbook Committee, caused to be stricken from the list of textbooks available for use in the state two works on biology because the public press had alleged that they contained references to evolution.

2. WHY FUNDAMENTALISM?

What inspires this attempt to enforce by legislation a uniformity of religious beliefs throughout the country? The answer is, Fundamentalism. What is Fundamentalism? For one group, whom Mr. H. L. Mencken represents, it is merely the religion of the Babbitts, which has suddenly added to its traditional obscurantism a militant program which it is trying to enforce by law. An-

other group, for which one of the faculty of an eastern university speaks, would dismiss Fundamentalism as a futile posthumous revival of issues settled long ago. For the Liberal, who bears the brunt of the Fundamentalists' attack, it is a struggle for power and control within the various Protestant denominations. Yet in reality the Fundamentalist movement is more than all this. It is a revolt of traditional Protestant orthodoxy against the spirit of modern culture. It is a sort of counter-revolutionary trend initiated by contemporary American medievalists to stem the tide of the revolution in life and thought effected by the two great engines of modern culture, democracy and science. Fundamentalism challenges the moral and spiritual values of modern civilization.

Fundamentalism and the Ku Klux Klan have much in common. Both profited immensely from the post-war fears which stampeded so many men and women back to ancient loyalties. The one hundred per cent Americanism of the Klan finds its parallel in one hundred per cent orthodoxy. Both movements, while apparently assuming a national significance since the war, have their roots in the past. The Klan is the logical continuation

of habits of thought and feeling that found expression in the Knownothingism of the middle, and the American Protective Association of the close, of the last century when the native American Protestants came into conflict with the prevailingly Roman Catholic alien immigrants.[1] Similarly Fundamentalism is an attempt by the traditional orthodox element within the various Protestant denominations to preserve its traditions and identity in opposition to the rise of modern culture which is creeping into the school in the guise of evolution and into the church as Liberalism.

The Klan is prevailingly a small-town movement and fails signally to gain any foothold within the larger cities and the industrial centers. The stronghold of Fundamentalism is found likewise in the small towns and countryside where the intellectual and religious life has been least affected by modern culture. Fundamentalism is strongest in rural communities. Tennessee, with its famous Fundamentalist anti-evolution law, is seventy-five per cent rural. In all that vast region stretching from Virginia to Texas and Oklahoma, together with a large section of the Middle and

[1] See Mecklin, *The Ku Klux Klan*, Ch. V.

Far West, the rural population far outnumbers the urban. Urban leaders in politics, education or religion are at the mercy of the rural mind. The "cultural lag" of the countryside is a familiar fact of history. "Pagan," a word derived from *pagus,* country, was the term applied by the early Christian church to idolaters, since the villagers, being those most remote from the cities and centers of Christian culture, were the last to adopt Christianity. The Klan and Fundamentalism are alike, finally, in their tendency to appeal to "direct action." The Klan seeks through its mask and clandestine political combinations to coerce men and women into one hundred per cent Americanism. The Fundamentalists, on a somewhat higher level, are seeking through legislation to combat science and to compel the people of a free country to retain the orthodox faith. It was hardly an accident that on his death Mr. Bryan was proclaimed as the greatest of all the Klansmen.

In great states such as Tennessee and North Carolina, where rapid strides are being made in education, the state universities and high schools have outstripped the masses of the people, who distrust and fear the newfangled ideas of science

which they do not understand. The attitude of an influential element in this area is well expressed in the following statement of a religious leader who is by no means a rabid Fundamentalist:

"It is an uprising of parents that they are having in North Carolina. . . . A few days ago, while I was a guest in one of the most devout Christian homes I have ever known, I saw a boy of twelve with a booklet which had in it a series of grotesque-looking pictures of what somebody imagined prehistoric man looked like. One page gave a landscape purporting to show how the earth looked one hundred million years ago. After that there was a paragraph telling how life began in the world. Here are a few lines of it:

" 'Close your eyes and think of some muddy gutter or frog pond full of stagnant water with a scorching sun glittering down on the green slime which floats among the bulrushes and swamp weeds. Those cesspools, geologists tell us, were the cradle of life on earth. This life, called algæ, was a very low form of plant composed of a jelly-like mass which floated on the stale, slimy, black water of the primitive swamps. Step by step scientists follow the evolution of this low, simple

plant into a soft, boneless creature, resembling a piece of liver, composed of a single life-cell . . .'

"This is a sample of the stuff some of our children are getting. No wonder that Christian people are rising up all over the land and saying that this sort of thing has gone far enough. . . . If our views of the separation of Church and State make it impossible to teach Christianity in our public institutions, they should make it equally impossible for any teacher to sneer at Christianity and to teach views that are anti-Christian. Our teachers ought to have the sense and the decency to see this, and we believe that the great majority of them do see it. If they fail to see it, then it may become necessary to forbid them to teach anti-Christian views and theories. It is a poor rule that does not work both ways."[2]

We have here the protest of an outraged and ignorant piety—outraged because it is ignorant—against the conclusions of science. Such a mind would prefer the fictions of the first chapters of Genesis or the theological speculations of the Middle Ages to the approved findings of the patient, unprejudiced scientist. From the veiled threat at the close of this statement, there is not

[2] *The Presbyterian of the South*, March 4, 1925.

the slightest doubt that where the alternatives are offered of loyalty to Genesis or loyalty to the tested conclusions of the laboratory, this mind would elect the former. To assert that life did not originate as the old Hebrew writers imagined, is "irreligion" and "anti-Christianity." Here we have the heart of the Fundamentalist challenge. It disputes the right of science to any autonomy or finality within its own sphere. The conclusions of science are always threatened by the charge that they are "anti-Christian."

It is significant that the following rebuke of this pious obscurantism is not from an ungodly scientist nor yet from a heretical Liberal, but from a Roman Catholic, Lord Acton, the late learned historian of Cambridge University:

"Whatever diverts government and science from their own spheres, or leads religion to usurp their domains, confounds distinct authorities and imperils not only political right and scientific truths, but also the cause of faith and morals. . . . A science that for the sake of protecting faith wavers and dissembles in the pursuit of knowledge is an instrument at least as well adapted to serve the cause of falsehood as to combat it. . . . *A discovery may be made in science, which*

will shake the faith of thousands, yet religion cannot refute it or object to it" (italics the author's).

The enunciation of Galileo's heliocentric astronomy shook the faith of the man of the Middle Ages far more than evolution has jarred modern orthodoxy. Orthodox religion objected most vigorously and tried to refute this "anti-Christian" doctrine of science; it ended by doing the only thing it could do, accepting it.

3. THE TYRANNY OF RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE.

A prominent New York paper, commenting upon Fundamentalism, says: "What we are witnessing in America today is an organized attempt at the domination of politics through certain theological sects. The plain truth is that the illiberal churches have gone into politics and have either terrorized the politicians or seduced them with the offer of votes."

The militant leaders of orthodox Protestantism have apparently lost all faith in the power of that sweet charity which they are supposed to preach, a charity that "is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own,

is not easily provoked, . . . rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." There is something paradoxical, not to say absurdly grotesque, in the spectacle of a faith, claiming the support of an infallible divine revelation, and yet appealing to the weak arm of human law to save it from destruction.

More amazing still is the fact that, among a people whose historic boast is religious freedom and tolerance, orthodox Protestantism is able to assume a truculent and tyrannical attitude without a parallel in any other great nation.

This is illustrated by the following ten resolutions adopted by the ministerial association of Charlotte, North Carolina, in April, 1925.

"In view of certain reported conditions in some of our state educational institutions in regard to antagonism to the fundamental religious truth held by the great body of the people of the commonwealth the ministerial association of Charlotte, an organization comprising the ministers of all the denominations of the city, adopts the following:

"1. Since God is the author of the Book of Nature as well as of the Book of Inspiration,

there can be no conflict between true science and the Bible. Evolution in the sense that man has been evolved from a lower order of creatures is not a scientific fact, but merely a theory [the American Association for the Advancement of Science with 14,300 members has stated, "No scientific generalization is more strongly supported by thoroughly tested evidences than is that of organic evolution"]; and we are uncompromisingly opposed to the teaching of this theory as a fact in our state schools, denominational schools, or anywhere else. Most cordially, however, do we welcome the findings of true science [that is, science sanctioned by the Fundamentalists].

"2. We would most strongly urge the citizens of North Carolina to be very careful in the selection of persons who shall represent us in the legislature; see to it that, touching all vital questions, we are honestly represented.

"3. That said legislators be very careful and discriminating in the choice of trustees of our state educational institutions.

"4. That a more rigid censorship be exercised in the selection of text-books to be used in our state-owned schools.

"5. That said trustees use all possible care and

discrimination in the choice of presidents and teachers in the aforementioned institutions.

"6. When the fact has been established that any president or teacher of our tax-supported schools is inculcating theories which tend to unsettle or destroy the faith of our boys and girls in the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, that such officer or teacher be promptly removed from his position.

"7. That it is greatly to be deplored that when some state institutions become large in numbers and resources that they become more arrogant in spirit and the officers and teachers lose sight of the fact that they are the servants of the people and not their masters.

"8. We are emphatically opposed to the publication of any paper or magazine by our state institutions which tends to create an immoral atmosphere and which involves a denial of the inspiration and integrity of the Scriptures as the Word of God.[3]

[3] A reference to the *Journal of Social Forces*, published under the auspices of the University of North Carolina. In a widely circulated pamphlet, entitled *Anti-Christian Sociology*, Rev. William P. McCorkle of Burlington, North Carolina, brands this excellent journal as "atheistic," "agnostic," "anti-Christian," etc., and gives the impression that a non-Christian sociologist is "ipso facto, an apostle of unbelief, the class in sociology a school of infidelity, and the text-books and periodicals used as auxiliary to the course

"9. That in our unalterable determination to make our state institutions safe places for our boys and girls we call upon the good citizens of North Carolina to join us in a fight to the finish. The victory for truth and right must be won if it takes years to achieve it. Shall we, the people, especially the parents of North Carolina, tamely submit to taxation for the establishment and maintenance of schools whose instruction and influence tend to ruin our children? Shall we through ignorance or indifference elect persons to represent us in the legislature who will advocate the appropriation of state funds to the support of such schools? In our deliberate judgment it is high time for our people to wake up to a realization of the subtle dangers which beset our boys and girls.

"10. The ministerial association of Charlotte respectfully requests the papers of the state to publish the foregoing resolutions."

In May, 1925, the Southern Baptist Convention, speaking for the largest Protestant denomination

the seed and stimuli of Ingersollism." One wonders whether the real trouble is not due to the fact that sociologists, among others, have crept into an orthodox Eden and given men to eat of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge. For intellectual curiosity the God of the Fundamentalist damned the major part of the race.

in the South, said, "We protest against the imposition of this theory [evolution] on the minds of our children in denominational or public schools as if it were a definite and established truth of science." Many other similar denunciations of evolution in Fundamentalist bodies, North and South, might be quoted, but this suffices to indicate the extent of this movement.

It would be hard to find anywhere a document more bigoted or more brutally insulting to the open-minded than the ten resolutions of the Charlotte ministerial association quoted above. There is in these resolutions a tone of aggressive holiness, a tang of moral ruthlessness and haughty intolerance that makes one wonder whether we are not to find within orthodox Protestantism some of the most unlovely and at the same time unchristian phases of modern life. This entire Fundamentalist controversy has been characterized by a bitterness, a theological blood-lust, and an intellectual indecency that make one almost despair of the future of the church.

It was just such an attitude on the part of an intrenched and bigoted church in the eighteenth century that created a Voltaire and gave him his slogan, *Écrasez l'infâme.* What is the history

of this attempt at religious tyranny in American life and how are we to explain it?

Much of the bitterness of the Fundamentalist movement must be attributed to the tortures of wounded pride. The Fundamentalist surrenders reluctantly the unchallenged authority which orthodox Protestantism has held since colonial days among the American masses. Of the four great avenues through which the spirit of man approaches the ultimate issues of life, namely, science, philosophy, art, and religion, it is religion which from the beginning has occupied the strategic position in the higher loyalties of Americans. The reasons for this are found primarily in the history of American society. Many interests undoubtedly influenced men to come to America, but next to the imperative pressure of economic needs, religion was strongest. Religion, moreover, of all the higher interests of men, was most easily transplanted to the wilderness. Science, art, and philosophy presuppose a more or less mature culture. Science requires for its successful cultivation expensive laboratories, tested methods of research, and a disinterested love of the truth. Such agencies and such a mental attitude were not encouraged by life in the wilder-

ness. All forms of art presuppose a more or less matured and self-conscious social order, a sense of social values, possibilities for leisure and an intensive humanistic atmosphere not found in America during colonial days nor during the period of westward expansion when a pioneer democracy was harnessing the forces of nature and laying the material bases of American culture. Philosophy is even slower in maturing than science and art, as it presupposes a rich and ripe social and individual experience over which the speculative imagination may freely play in the eternal search for the ultimate meaning of life. As Hegel has remarked, it is only at twilight that the owl of Minerva takes her flight. Aristotle, in whom the philosophy of Greece culminated, was the teacher of Alexander, who wiped out the political independence of Greece and introduced the period of slow decline known as Hellenism. Kant came as the ripe fruition of the intellectual turmoil of the eighteenth century enlightenment. Locke wrote with his mind crammed with the stirring memories of the Puritan Revolution. Jonathan Edwards, that curious blend of philosopher, mystic and saint, merely capitalized the long and intensive and barren wrestlings of the

New England imagination with the inscrutable mysteries of Calvinism.

Religion had no rivals in early America among the higher interests of men. She speedily pre-empted the legitimate spheres of science, education, art, and philosophy. They became her vassals. Even political status, as in Massachusetts colony, was conditioned upon church membership. In spite of our conventional claims to religious freedom and tolerance, orthodox religion has ruled the realm of higher loyalties among the American masses up to the close of the nineteenth century to a degree without parallel. One who would challenge this statement can find ample support for it if he will trace the history of literature, the stage, education, or public morals in this country.

The recent Fundamentalist protest against the teaching of evolution in state-supported schools is therefore merely a reassertion, in parts of the country least affected by modern culture, of the old traditional rôle of spiritual dictator which orthodox religion has long played at the higher levels of American life. In the light of history, one must be somewhat charitable towards the impotent sputterings of our ancient spiritual over-

lord, as he sees the reins slipping from his hands. He feels that Israel has gone a-whoring after strange gods.

The dominance of religion in the higher life of Americans is intimately associated with the nation's struggle of a hundred years and more with the forces of nature as it pushed the pioneer line slowly westward and carved out the material form of a great civilization. This period of unrestricted competition in exploiting natural resources, with its isolated, independent and ignorant pioneer democracy, shaped American character as nothing else has done. The frontier has registered itself in the American mind in "its restlessness, its preoccupation with the practical, its lack of interest in the esthetical and the philosophical, its desire for ends and neglect of means, its preference of cleverness to training, its self-confidence, its individualism, and its extreme provinciality."[4] The pioneer's lack of intellectual contacts made him singularly conservative and timorous in religion. As a result, "Where people have grown up under frontier conditions, they have fixed opinions in theology, opinions that have been received traditionally and

[4] J. T. Adams, *The Founding of New England*, p. 176.

retained unchanged from frontier days. . . . The farther West one goes, where frontier influence still more strongly abides, the more decidedly conservative church people appear to be in their theology and the more responsive to primitive and provincial ideas."[5]

The pioneers, furthermore, inherited highly developed systems of theology, of which Calvinism is typical. With little intellectual training or interest, and with few or no influences in his daily way of life that would lead him to challenge this theology, the pioneer surrendered to it abjectly with the result that in vast areas of this country, especially in the West and Southwest, least removed from pioneer conditions, the mental stereotypes of orthodox Protestantism still dominate men's religious imaginations. This is the secret of the strength of Fundamentalism in these areas.

When to this fact we add another, namely, that Fundamentalism is "the Religion of a Book," and when we realize that an intense, almost pathological piety tends to turn this Book into a fetish, we are in a position, perhaps, to appreciate the terrible force of the Fundamentalists' alternatives, either the Bible or Darwin, the son of God or

[5] H. K. Rowe, *History of Religion in the United States*, p. 88.

the son of an ape. Macaulay, in his essay on Milton, speaks of "the despotism of the imagination over uncultivated minds." There are millions of Americans for whom the poetic religious imagery of the ancient Hebrews still gives the last word, not only in morals and religion, but also in science.

The religion of the frontier, and hence that of orthodox Protestantism today, is primarily revivalistic and emotional. It is a religion that appeals to the heart rather than to the head. The history of American Protestantism during the first half of the last century is a history of an almost incessant turmoil of revivals, often accompanied by extreme emotional excesses. This revivalistic emphasis was continued by Finney, Moody, Chapman, and others, and has reached a sort of *fin de siècle* florescence in the Rev. Billy Sunday.

Revivalism was perhaps an inevitable outgrowth of the peculiar conditions of the isolated frontier life; and it undoubtedly had its value as an agency of moral reform and social solidarity. But revivalism has also helped to strengthen the dictatorship of religion over the higher life of Americans. Orthodox Protestantism exploits the

feelings. It does not teach men to think on religious matters. It discourages independent thought and subordinates the intellect to the emotions. Criticism and doubt are deadly to faith. Where a people have been educated to feel rather than to think, they become the easy prey of the controversialist or the religious mountebank who can skillfully play upon their religious prejudices.

This throws light upon the peculiarly discouraging nature of religious movements such as Fundamentalism. We have to deal with men and women who have never been taught to use their heads on religious matters. Effects of this antirationalistic, revivalistic religion are widely evident in American life. They appear in the headlong, uncritical, Crusader spirit with which Protestantism has championed prohibition and lent itself to moral tyranny. They are felt in the ignorant and bitter antagonism with which Fundamentalist leaders have challenged the conclusions of our modern culture. What are the results of such a mental attitude? "When theologians," says Lecky, "during a long period have inculcated habits of credulity, rather than habits of enquiry; when they have persuaded men that it is better to cherish prejudice than to analyze it; bet-

ter to stifle every doubt of what they have been taught than honestly to investigate its value, they will at last succeed in forming habits of mind that will instinctively and habitually recoil from all impartiality and intellectual honesty. If men continue to violate a duty they may at last cease to feel its obligation."[6]

The emotionalism of orthodox Protestantism is responsible for the blind appeal to authority and submission to the dictates of religious dogma. It has made it difficult, not to say impossible, for Fundamentalist leaders and their docile followers to adjust themselves to a new age. The situation is a tragic one, and yet the fault cannot be laid at the door of modern culture.

Revivalism in America has served religious tyranny in another, more subtle, fashion. We know well that ideas or doctrines that have been tinged with strong emotions, that are embalmed as it were in powerful sentiment, take on a reality and an authority in the minds of men entirely independent of the actual truth of these ideas or doctrines. The classical examples of this are found in cases of conversion such as those of Paul on the way to Damascus and of Augustine

[6] Lecky, *History of European Morals*, I, 101.

in the garden in Milan, or in the experiences of the great mystics. The immediate and engrossing reality of the emotional experience suffuses the ideas associated with this experience and serves to fix them in the mind. Revivalism, as is well known, bends all its efforts towards an emotional cataclysm known as conversion. Even the saner forms of orthodox Protestantism agree with revivalism in that they seek to arouse feelings and not to satisfy the intellect. Once these powerful emotional effects are secured, the ideas that are the vehicles of these emotions become at once tinged with the vivid subjective reality of these emotions. Thus do ideas or dogmas become part of religious convictions not because they have been subjected to critical analysis but because of the effect of the vivid emotional experiences with which they are associated.

Any one, therefore, who seeks to attack these ideas from the point of view of reason is always at a disadvantage. The appeal of reason and the effect of criticism are always foiled by the irrational barrier of this emotional "set" that has been previously acquired. One holding a religious belief acquired in this fashion is, indeed, usually unable to submit it to critical examina-

tion. What has been acquired uncritically will be defended uncritically. The extreme discomfort of the mind trained in Fundamentalist habits of thought when faced with the critical method of science is perfectly intelligible. It is due to something very like mental impotence, a sort of atrophy of the critical powers superinduced by the long and unchallenged reign of a revivalist religion that tends to make man a slave to his emotions.

Perhaps the most powerful ally of religious tyranny, however, is the habit of mind encouraged by the radical democracy of the frontier life. This is suggested by the argument universally used by Mr. Bryan and his Fundamentalist followers in defense of their program for securing orthodoxy through legislation. That argument runs something as follows:

"We tax ourselves to support schools and universities. What is taught in those schools and universities must be taught in harmony with the beliefs and desires of the majority of the tax-paying citizens. Evolution contradicts the belief of this tax-paying majority that man, according to the inspired record of Genesis, was created out of the dust of the earth by the immediate

fiat of the divine will. Therefore, evolution ought not to be taught in state-supported schools where the majority of the citizens are Fundamentalist in faith and this Fundamentalist majority has the right to pass legislation to enforce its will."

Of course this same divinely inspired record teaches that the earth is flat, that witches exist and should be put to death, that it is wrong to lend money. It sanctions both slavery and polygamy. Consistency suggests that the Fundamentalists should include these matters in their legislative program. But for reasons that are perfectly obvious, if thoroughly illogical, they prefer to confine the issue to evolution versus Genesis.

It is quite probable that a sovereign state such as Tennessee has a constitutional right to pass a futile and asinine anti-evolution law. The Constitution, within certain limits, permits both the state and the individual to play the fool, recognizing doubtless that this is part of the privileges and immunities of democracy. It is also perfectly obvious that when the ignorance and prejudice against evolution have been lived down in Tennessee, the law can be repealed. This is the only way in a democracy.

What we are concerned with here, however, is something far more subtle and psychologically dangerous to the welfare of the community than the purely legal phase of the matter. We are concerned with a tendency, frequently remarked by the students of American democracy, to yield to the pronouncements of the majority on all matters, even those of a special and scientific nature, as final and absolute.

As Bryce remarks: "When the number of voters is counted by many millions, the wings of imagination droop, and the huge voting mass ceases to be thought of as merely so many individual human beings no wiser or better than one's own neighbors. The phenomenon seems to pass into the category of the phenomena of nature, governed by far-reaching and inexorable laws whose character science has only imperfectly ascertained, and which she can use only by obeying. It inspires a sort of awe, a sense of individual impotence, like that which one feels when he contemplates the majestic and eternal forces of the inanimate world. Such a feeling is even stronger when it operates, not on a cohesive minority which had lately hoped, or may yet hope, to become a majority, but on a single man or small group of

persons cherishing some opinion which the mass disapproves."[7]

In a pioneer democracy, moreover, old aristocratic groups have been eliminated and with them have gone those points of vantage from which differences of opinion and cultural outlook might find a voice. American democracy, unlike that of England, has no group set apart by birth or rank. A great public-school system facilitates the wide dissemination of a common body of ideas and a similarity of outlook that level the mental horizon. The center of gravity on higher issues, such as politics or religion, passes from the individual to the community and the nation enabling traditional religion to strengthen its tyrannical hold upon the masses. Orthodox religious ideas take on the fatalistic finality of mass opinion. Even those indifferent to orthodox religious beliefs hesitate to criticize or oppose them because of ingrained fear of the tyranny of the majority. Thus religious beliefs once received and embodied in the popular mind, or the prevailing way of life, tend to take on in American democracy a certain absoluteness which is akin to the supernatural.

[7] Bryce, *American Commonwealth*, II, 348, 349.

The situation in the case of religion is complicated by the fact that, from the very first, religion in this country has not enjoyed the healthful check of rival spheres of interest such as science, art, and philosophy, to the same extent as in Europe. There were at first in America no great historic centers of learning, such as Cambridge and Oxford in England, the Sorbonne in Paris, and the ancient universities of Germany, dating often from the Middle Ages and always exercising a chastening influence upon religion. Institutions of higher learning in this country were from the very first the protégés of religion. As they grew in numbers and influence the transition to intellectual freedom has often been made only after severe struggles with orthodox religion, the scars of which are in many cases hardly healed. There are still large areas, especially in the West and Southwest, where state-supported institutions of learning receive their patronage and funds upon the tacit understanding of a surrender to the tyrannical rule of a hard-boiled orthodoxy firmly intrenched in the social traditions of the community. There have been few things more humiliating in the history of the intellectual life of America than the recent spec-

tacle of heads of great state universities appearing hat in hand before Fundamentalist legislatures, pleading for the right to teach evolution in their classrooms.

The unpardonable sin, therefore, that the leaders of Fundamentalism have committed against the moral and intellectual integrity of the nation is that they have stooped to exploit the fatalistic authority of this uncritical popular sentiment in support of their case. They realize that ideas gain power over the imaginations of men in American democracy, not in proportion to the extent to which they have been subjected to critical review and evaluation, but directly in proportion to the extent to which they have been accepted by the masses. They realize only too well that the average individual, including many college professors and college presidents, is filled with instinctive terror at the very suggestion of defying these accepted beliefs of the masses on religion. They know that, where there has been a general impregnation of the minds of men with a given set of religious beliefs, they have ready for use a weapon which in American democracy can be wielded with incalculable power to crush the heretic or to pry loose from a posi-

tion of influence "ungodly" scientists who may be spreading "unchristian" theories as to the nature and origin of man.

Tocqueville, who possibly more than any other critic grasped the spirit of American democracy, once remarked, "That democracy has spiritualized violence." That is to say, American democracy has substituted for the rack and the faggot and the halter the invisible spiritual weapon of an intolerant and uncompromising majority opinion with which to bludgeon the non-conformist into submission. Had Tocqueville written with the rise of Fundamentalism and its anti-evolution crusade before him, he could hardly have written more truly.

The sponsors of this tyranny, under the flag of Fundamentalism, would do well to consider the possibility of an "anticlerical" movement in this country similar to that in France. The Protestant ministry here have so far enjoyed the sympathy and confidence of all classes. They are thoroughly American in tradition and outlook. The great Protestant sects such as the Baptist and Presbyterian were forced at first to champion religious freedom to gain a foothold in this country. The orthodox Protestant minister has,

to be sure, largely lost the position of cultural and intellectual leadership enjoyed in days past. But the average minister is still considered a power for righteousness, and because of his moral sincerity, men overlook the fact that his zeal is often characterized by more heat than light. Can Protestantism afford to betray its great traditions and sacrifice the confidence and traditional good will of the cultured and progressive elements in the nation by yielding to Fundamentalism?

There is something exceedingly disconcerting in the taunt of the great Fundamentalist leader, Mr. Bryan, to his college audiences, "There are only two per cent of the population of the country who are college graduates, while the other ninety-eight per cent have souls." Do the Fundamentalists really wish to precipitate a fight to the finish between the representatives of culture and the forces making for religious obscurantism?

If such is their intention it would be well for the Fundamentalists to study the results of the conflict between religious reaction and modern culture in France during the last century. Democracy and science in France have always been

faced by a sinister alliance of clericalism and ultramontanism with political reaction. Gambetta's war-cry during the struggles of the Third Republic, "Clericalism is the enemy," still finds its echo in the recent fight between Herriot and the Vatican. Mediating movements like Catholic Modernism under Loisy, which strove to absorb the new knowledge and heal the breach between the church and modern culture, were blasted by the papal encyclical of 1907. The lines of theological orthodoxy hardened. The cleavage between the Church and modern culture widened. Today leaders of science in France no longer consider it worth their while to refute the dogmas of the church. Orthodox theology has purchased immunity at the price of isolation and intellectual dry rot. French culture, on the other hand, because it has been forced to win its independence in constant conflict with an obdurate orthodoxy in unholy alliance with political reaction, is non-religious, not to say anti-religious. It has been schooled to look upon traditional Christianity as its deadliest enemy. In religious crises the liberty-loving bourgeoisie have always appealed to the Voltairian tradition which again

and again has swept the intellectual life of France, stifling the tender flower of religious piety like a withering sirocco.

Do the champions of Fundamentalism wish to incur the responsibility of creating in this country a bitter antagonism between religion and modern culture similar to that in France? Do they wish science to take on a more and more irreligious tone? Can they contemplate with equanimity the possible rise of a situation in this country, parallel to that in France in 1830, when it was for months hardly safe for a priest to be seen on the streets of Paris in his clerical garb? It is no light thing to throw down the gauntlet to modern culture, distraught and discouraged though that culture has been because of the war. It will soon regain its poise and with the return of its old self-confidence it will not forget those who in the hour of its deepest humiliation and discouragement denounced its cherished achievements and damned its dearest loyalties. The Fundamentalist movement is bound in the end to prove a boomerang. When the smoke of battle has cleared away and bitter antipathies have subsided with the revival of the spirit of tolerance, the hold of the Church upon the loyalty of intel-

ligent men will not be strengthened by this unfortunate squabble.

4. THE HIGH PRIESTS OF OBSCURANTISM.

As the tabernacle neared completion we are told that the Lord Jehovah said to Moses, "Bring thou near unto thee Aaron thy brother . . . that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. . . . And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty." Only the "wise-hearted" were to work on these garments. And chief among these garments was a "breastplate of judgment" made of "gold, of blue, and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen" bearing four rows of stones set in gold, three stones to the row, and each bearing one of the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. "And Aaron," we are told, "shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before Jehovah continually." (Ex. ch. 28.)

The tabernacle with its barbaric splendor of purple and gold and fine linen is gone forever. Aaron and his breastplate of judgment are re-

ligious memories. But the holy of holies still persists in the hearts of men even in the midst of the hurly-burly of today. Who are the high priests entering that holy of holies now? How have they succeeded in reconciling our intimate religious hopes with the harsh demands of a world dominated by democracy and science? Have the "wise-hearted" labored on their mental equipment so that they may bear the "breastplate of judgment" intelligently and successfully? How, in other words, are the ministry mediating between religion and culture?

One beautiful Sabbath morning in May the writer recently found himself in a town in the Southwest. Palmetto palms studded broad lawns of homes, the low porches of which were often festooned with roses. A mocking-bird caroled in the distance. There was in the air a sense of material prosperity and domestic peace, quite belied by a bitter controversy over the Klan which was rending the town. As the writer entered the leading Protestant church, a modern brick structure not devoid of beauty, he was cordially welcomed and shown a seat. The church was packed with earnest, unsophisticated people for whom religion was evidently a vital matter. The pastor,

an officer in the Ku Klux Klan and an enthusiastic Fundamentalist, was short of stature with deep-set eyes behind huge tortoise-rimmed glasses. He looked the spiritual dictator and played the part well. Early in his discourse he made the sweeping statement that the teachers of our high schools and colleges are tinged with a scientific materialism which is undermining the faith of youth. This statement was received calmly by his audience of rural-minded folk, the tax-paying supporters of the town high school and the state university. Later he dismissed evolution with the amazing statement that all evolutionists are atheists.

Were this an isolated or unusual occurrence it might be dismissed as of little significance. But it is safe to say that in three-fourths of the Protestant pulpits of that vast region and in other parts of this country similar prostitutions of the pulpit in the interest of obscurantism are taking place. One gains a decided first-hand impression while traveling through these regions that the organized attack upon science by such Fundamentalist leaders as Mr. Bryan has had other results than the so-called "monkey-bills" designed to forbid the teaching of evolution in

state-supported schools. It has also aroused in the minds of tens of thousands of simple and unsophisticated people a deep distrust, not only of science, but of all forms of higher learning as inimical to faith and morals. In a democracy dependent upon an informed and tolerant citizenship this is a serious situation and the responsibility rests squarely upon those who bear the "breastplate of judgment" in these delicate matters of faith, namely, the ministry.

There is usually in these districts an absence of other forces, intellectual or religious, that can be depended upon to correct such dangerous teachings. Throughout vast regions of this country, which boasts of its public schools and democratic enthusiasm for enlightenment, a condition prevails closely approximating some of the priest-ridden sections of Europe or of the countries to the south of us. *La mediocrité fonde l'autorité.* Where a people are ignorant and uncritically religious even to the verge of superstition and where outstanding, informed, and independent-minded individuals are lacking, there we have the paradise of the priest.

There is one minister to every 514 of the population of the United States. Out of 110 millions

some 99 millions are members or adherents of churches. It will be seen at once that no other group can compare with the ministry in its opportunity for shaping the higher loyalties of the American masses. What is the character of the men being selected for this most important task? Statistics show that more than half of our Protestant ministers come from the homes of farmers or of ministers. That is, more than half the men in the ministry come from parts of the community that are frequently unenlightened and uniformly conservative in religious matters.

These men usually go to a denominational school or directly to the seminary of their faith. In the denominational school they are safeguarded from contaminating phases of modern culture, especially in science. They get a Presbyterianized biology or a Methodistized geology. They are not taught to cultivate the free critical attitude so necessary to leadership in our modern life. Once safely within the walls of the seminary this spiritual inbreeding is completed by an intensive process of vocationalization. Thus by means of the home that shapes them during childhood and adolescence, the denominational academy and college, and finally the seminary, a pitch of de-

nominational-mindedness is achieved that approaches the organic in its thoroughness. Fundamentalism becomes as integral a part of the minister as the color is part of the fabric of the oriental rug. For a man, subjected to such training, to question his faith is almost as impossible as to stop the course of his blood-stream. There are, of course, liberal-minded ministers to be found even in the remote villages, but they are a small minority, for perfectly obvious reasons.

What training do these men get in their seminaries? Are those "wise-hearted" who prepare them for their task of bearing the "breastplate of judgment"? The conclusion of a recent thorough investigation of theological education is, "Since most of the seminaries are expected to interpret the genius, and to train men to interpret the genius, of a certain denomination, the machinery of control is constructed with a view to securing this result."[8] The seminaries with some few notable exceptions train leaders for their denominations. That is, they train men to defend and to perpetuate a certain set of theological dogmas. This is vastly important for an understand-

[8] R. L. Kelly, *Theological Education in America*, p. 33.

ing of the seminaries as educational institutions. They are not, like our great universities and scientific foundations, laboratories in which men seek the truth for its own sake, independent of creed or sect. The seminaries train special pleaders; they seek those skilled in the defense of a truth that has already been gained through divine revelation. Except in the few liberal seminaries, intellectual conformity is always implied. Some even boast of this. "No seminary in any church," says one prospectus, "has a history more conspicuous for soundness in the faith, requires and enforces from its professors stricter vows of conformity in the teaching of the system of doctrine found in the unamended standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and has in its charter and constitution more effective steps by which, if any departure from orthodoxy should ever take place, immediate and effective redress may be had at will by the General Assembly of our Church."

The extreme of intellectual subservience is attained in the catalogue of another seminary: "Every student shall, in the presence of the Faculty, subscribe to a written declaration . . . that

he will not propagate any opinion in opposition to the principles of the United Presbyterian Church."

In pleasing contrast to this is the policy of the Divinity School of Chicago: "It is necessary that the Divinity School be conducted in accordance with the methods and ideals of the University in which is included freedom of teaching on the part of the instructors." The Harvard Divinity School has a similar provision.

There are in these schools of the prophets many teachers of rare scholarship with reputable earned degrees, but they are in the minority. It is the investigator's conclusion that in most of the seminaries the "faculty members possess few qualifications besides personal piety" and the long string of degrees they boast are honorary, the gift often of insignificant denominational colleges. Out of 123 American seminaries forty-two per cent have fewer than five full-time instructors. Under such conditions the standards of scholarship are low, much lower than those of the schools of law and medicine. Only 16 out of 123 seminaries require a college degree for admission and one seminary of a large Protestant denomination, having an enrollment of 503, men-

tions no requirements for admission whatever. Most significant for the educational product of the seminary is that, with a few exceptions, the seminary stands isolated from the great streams of culture. The seminaries are unrelated to each other as a group of professional schools and they are "virtually untouched by the progress and methods of science."

What are the products of these schools of the prophets? Obviously they will not be scholars, nor can they have any deep insight into life's complexities. The two things stressed in a theological education seem to be "goodness" or "piety" and "sound doctrine." With rare exceptions piety is preferred to scholarship and intellectual adventurousness. Seminary students are not usually admitted on the basis of scholarship. Their training does not presuppose familiarity with science, a knowledge of history, psychology and philosophy, or the attainment of critical habits of thought. Yet the minister, by the logic of events, must be a leader. People look to him for guidance in that uncharted realm where religion and modern culture mingle. He is ordained to preach the truth even though in so doing he "robs the altar of its sacrifice and the

priest of his mysteries." In the language of Matthew Arnold, he is to make "the truth and the will of God prevail." He is to undertake this mighty task in an age confounded by a welter of facts dug up by the scientist and a maze of ideals thrust upon the people by revolutionist and reformer.

The minister's task today is one of creation. He must help men to re-think their world. He of all the community has resting upon him the imperative "moral obligation to be intelligent." This demand for intellectual leadership need not be incompatible with goodness. The goodness of the seminary comes too easily. It is based upon an easy-going acceptance of the faith of the fathers, and upon the naïve assumption that this faith suffices unaltered for the solution of all this world's problems. The intellectual basis of this goodness is "sound doctrine." This is a naïve point of view worthy of the monk living in his cell. True goodness comes only through intellectual adventurousness; it is not an exotic reared in the hothouse of sheltered orthodoxy. Socrates taught long ago that moral integrity is gained only by straight thinking and that straight thinking is impossible without critical

thinking. Goodness based upon orthodoxy may be thoroughly amiable, but it is not the goodness that offers inspiration and guidance to men treading untrodden paths. If the orthodox minister today is more or less of a moral asset to the community, he is also more or less of an intellectual liability. He tends to become, often quite against his will, a high priest of obscurantism.

One is reminded in this connection of Lord Morley's characterization of the ministry of the Church of England the middle of last century: "Her ministers vow almost before they have crossed the threshold of manhood that they will search no more. They virtually swear that they will to the end of their days believe what they believe then, before they have had time either to think or to know the thoughts of others. If they can not keep this solemn promise, they have at least every inducement that ordinary human motives can supply, to conceal their breach of it. The same system that begins by making mental indolence a virtue and intellectual narrowness a part of sanctity, ends by putting a premium on something too like hypocrisy. Consider the seriousness of fastening up in these bonds some thousands of members of the most instructed and

intelligent classes in the country, the very men who would otherwise be best fitted from position and opportunities for aiding a little in the long, difficult, and plainly inevitable task of transforming opinion. Consider the waste of intelligence, and what is assuredly not less grave, the positive dead weight and thick obstruction, by which an official hierarchy so organized must paralyze mental independence in a community."[9]

It may be replied that the average minister is not and can never be an impartial expositor of science. He is the pastor of a flock whose spiritual, not intellectual or cultural, interests have been committed to his care. Furthermore, he is a devout and loyal member of a denomination, Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian, and has sworn to be faithful to that denomination's dogmas. His church, through its official declarations, has condemned evolution as anti-religious. What alternative has he to condemning evolution and all the other tenets of science which his church suspects as dangerous? Here is perhaps the most difficult phase of the whole question. The minister is indeed a special pleader; he preaches a doctrine which he must not deny nor

[9] John Morley, *On Compromise*, p. 26.

even criticize. Where that dogma tends to condemn science, he must yield his critical judgment, if he has any, to the superior will of his church. The church thus places its ministers where they may be compelled to stultify their intelligence, or brave a trial for heresy, or leave the church. This situation is unfortunate for the individual minister, for the church, and for the community of which he is the spiritual guide.

Time was when the church was strong enough to exact conformity from all. Quakers and Baptists were dealt with rather summarily under the God-fearing Puritan theocracy of New England. Today, thanks to the spread and influence of modern culture, such tyranny is impossible. The result is that conformity is exacted only in the pulpit. This latitude for the pew but not for the pulpit has curious results. The minister who does not dare dictate the beliefs of his congregation is bitterly intolerant of divergent beliefs in his fellow ministers. The same minister who threatens his unorthodox fellow minister with a trial for heresy does not object to the same unorthodox ideas if held by ministers of another denomination. But what is the sense of unfrocking a brother minister for doctrines which endanger the

souls of men when these imperiled souls have only to cross the street to hear these dangerous doctrines preached freely?

Furthermore, it may be asked, if heresy is so dangerous in one's own sect that it must be crushed, why not call upon the arm of civil law to put down heresy? Error is error and truth is truth, whether in one's own sect or outside it. Why be so bitter towards the heretic in one's own sect and so tolerant of one outside that sect? Is it for the love of truth as truth or is it because we have the heretic in our own orthodox sect within our power, while the outsider is beyond our grasp?

Assuming that our zeal in unfrocking our unorthodox fellow minister is prompted solely by a love for the truth, then we must look favorably upon the unfrocking of all ministers in all other churches whose doctrines differ from ours. Suppose this is carried out so successfully that all whom we call heretics are disposed of and all religious leaders are made to bow the knee to our dogmas. What then becomes of religious liberty? Are we to conclude that religious liberty can exist only where there is error, and that when the truth prevails religious liberty ceases? Or does

religious liberty imply an admission that there is no absolute and infallible truth in religion?

The existence of freedom in the pew beside the bondage in the pulpit creates a gap between pulpit and pew, and thus a problem for the Fundamentalist. The layman is free in his judgments and can adjust his beliefs in harmony with science. He can listen critically to what science has to say for evolution and what his Fundamentalist minister says against it and then draw his own conclusions. The minister has no such freedom. If the minister finds that the doctrines he once promised to believe and preach are not in harmony with science, he may do one of two things. He may dissemble his change of mind and continue to give external conformity while inwardly dissenting, or he may be honest with himself, sacrifice his position and his professional training, and at great inconvenience, not to mention possible opprobrium and misunderstanding, he may leave the ministry.

The psychological effect of this condition of affairs upon the ministry is most unfortunate. It encourages equivocation and subterfuge by the liberally inclined which his conservative associate rightly resents. It leads to men of bigoted faith

being selected for conservative pulpits or else men innocuous and amiable, who can survive in positions intolerable to independent thinkers. What is even worse, perhaps, it tends to discredit, in the mind of the intelligent and cultured layman, the intellectual leadership, and even the mental candor, of the ministry.

5. THE ISSUE.

Beneath the theological billingsgate of the controversialist, beneath the earnest and eloquent, and yet desperately ignorant, ejaculations of Mr. Bryan, beneath the nation-wide political campaign to set up a religious autocracy by means of anti-evolution laws, lies a real issue. That issue cannot be escaped. Until it is grasped, there is little hope of any settlement of the Fundamentalist controversy.

The issue turns upon the failure of the parties to this controversy to draw any intelligible distinction between the facts of science and the fictions of the religious imagination. The lamentable tyranny which orthodox Protestantism exhibited in the recent anti-evolution crusade is directly

traceable to ignorance as to the nature and limitations of the Christian faith.

Ever-widening contacts with modern culture based upon science are bringing home to the minds of men that in religion we are concerned primarily with values, not with facts. It is certain inner emotional attitudes towards the mysteries of life rather than scientific facts about life that make us religious. The symbols of the religious imagination by which we represent to ourselves these inner emotional attitudes refer not to outer reality but to inner reality. When we pray, "Our Father which art in heaven," we cannot give the terms "Father" and "heaven" a place in objective reality. Try to visualize God as an actual Father, or heaven as a definite place in time and space, and note the absurdities of your thought. These terms are true only as they help the religious imagination to symbolize certain inner emotional attitudes.

It is characteristic of the Fundamentalist, steeped as he is in the naïvely realistic language of the Bible, that he does not distinguish between objective and subjective reality. He mistakes religious fictions imagined by the semi-civilized He-

brews for facts even more trustworthy than those of science. When the writer of the first chapter of Genesis said, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind. . . . And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," he did not distinguish, in fact was not aware of any distinction, between the inner religious need to describe God as a creative force and the external reality of the mental pictures by which he represented that creative energy. The subjective and the objective realities are hopelessly confused. This naïve, uncritical mental attitude has been inherited by the devout Fundamentalist; he must accept it if he believes in a supernaturally revealed and inerrant Bible.

When this naïve uncritical religious imagination of the Fundamentalist, drawn directly from the religious experience of the semi-civilized Hebrews as recorded in the Old Testament, comes in contact with modern culture, imbued with the conclusions of science and familiar through psychology with the nature of religious experience, the situation at once becomes strained. The Fundamentalist is unable to draw any distinction

between the mental constructs of science, which find their test of truth in objective reality, and the fictions of the religious imagination which are true primarily for the subjective series of reality. He cannot accept Darwin's explanation of the origin of the species through natural selection without feeling he casts reflections upon the first chapter of Genesis in which God is pictured as having created every living thing by the immediate fiat of his divine will. Here then we have the very heart of the controversy.

The Fundamentalist has raised a question of vaster import than he imagines. On the surface he is protesting against the implications for religion of our modern scientific and democratic culture; he pleads passionately for loyalty to "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." In reality he is arguing the question as to the meaning of Christianity and its survival value for the modern world. This is frankly asserted by one of the ablest protagonists of Fundamentalism who says, "The liberal attempt at reconciling Christianity with modern science has relinquished everything distinctive of Christianity." The result is that "modern liberalism is not only a different religion from Christianity but belongs

to a totally different class of religions."[10] The issue between Liberal and Fundamentalist is really an issue as to fundamentals. It is, as has been suggested above, a question of the nature, the function, and the limitations of the religious imagination. The next chapter seeks to make clearer the meaning of this statement.

[10] J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 7.

Chapter II

THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION

Imagination governs mankind.—Napoleon

WERE it not for the imagination, the life of man would be, in the words of Hobbes, "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, short." It is imagination that emancipates man from the tyranny of the immediate, unpremeditated, and uncontrollable sequence of the sensations. It is through imagination that he constructs from the fragmentary data of the limited five senses a coherent and intelligible world. It is by imagination that he understands how the worlds were made, pictures the processes by which the rocks took shape, and follows the rise of life from its lowest forms up to man. It is by imagination that he spaces the stars in terms of light-years. Imagination provides man with an escape from the imperfections and defeats of this life, for through it he pictures the city of his heart's desire and puts it beyond death, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

Imagination provides the artist with the inspiration for his masterpieces, the scientist with his inventive ideas, the philosopher with his cosmic insights, and the seer with his divine revelations.

It is important, therefore, to understand the relation of the imagination to the other mental powers.

1. THE RÔLE OF IMAGINATION AMONG THE MENTAL PROCESSES.

In spite of the protests of the Fundamentalist and the objections of the philosophical idealist, the best theory of the origin of mind is still that which explains it in terms of function and presupposes the conclusions of biology. According to biology, the powers of the organism are the result of natural selection operating under the necessity of adaptation to environment. The entire nervous system is in the main a highly developed mechanism for registering, interpreting and reacting to stimuli from within or without the body. Mind is merely the last stage in this age-long process of the organism's development of agencies for adjustment to its environment. Even within the mind we can detect different

levels of evolution. In the reflex and the instinct there is an immediate and more or less mechanical reaction to a stimulus. The mental arc does not reach the higher brain centers, but is taken care of by the lower automatic centers. In the case of sensations, mental images, and concepts, the higher brain centers act. The mental arc at this level includes three factors: the sensation, the mental elaboration of this through reflection, and, finally, the act.

It is possible to show that the higher mental processes grew out of the weaknesses and inadequacies of the lower. The defects of reflex and instinct required the development of sensation and perception; the imperfections of sensation called for memory; the inadequacy of pure memory called for imagination; the limitations of imagination called for reason. And men are ever trying to remedy the defects of reason by falling back upon intuition and divination. In the case of pure memory it is obvious that we have at least a twofold advance upon sensation. For it is through memory that we can store up the past and anticipate the future. But memory is more or less mechanical. Had we only memory, it would be necessary, when faced with a new situa-

tion, to ransack the storehouse of memory for some mental image of a past situation that would fit the new one. Failing in this, we should be at the mercy of the new situation. It is through imagination that we are able to make new mental constructs, to synthesize past experiences into something that will fit the new situation. Hence the exceeding importance of imagination in the mental life. Imagination, however, just because of its free, creative power, especially needs some sort of check which will criticize and verify its findings; and this is the rôle of reason.

Thus imagination is the most intimate and vital, the most human, phase of the mind. At best the senses and their recorder, memory, provide us with an exceedingly fragmentary and imperfect reproduction of our world. Into the gaps of abysmal ignorance left by the transcript of the senses, steps the imagination and gives us a picture of men and things, imperfect, hopelessly colored by the subjective world of human needs, and yet intensely fascinating, just because of its thorough humanization.

In the child and in primitive man imagination runs riot, carried away by its own exuberance and unchecked by reason. Were it not for the chasten-

ing effect of the stern processes of nature and the iron hand of social conventions, primitive man would probably be swept wholly away by his imagination and live in a world of dreams. Even in our own age, the majority of men and women react to fictions of their imagination, pictures of men and things carried around in their heads, which have never been thoroughly criticized and bear only the remotest resemblance to reality. Napoleon said, "Imagination governs mankind."

It is the noblest spirits of the race that are dominated by imagination. Poets, seers, philosophers, reformers, the race's pathfinders, have always powerful imaginations. Especially for great spiritual leaders, who feel that science and common sense cannot solve life's problems and are often swayed by strong emotions, is imagination a last resource in their passionate efforts to point to better things. But just because they have repudiated science and seek to transcend common sense, they are particularly liable to the illusions that ever dog the imagination. Imagination is always ready, especially in religion and philosophy, to conjure up august "supersensible forms shrouded in awe," to which she seeks the assent of the human spirit now oblivious to

science and common sense. The prophet seeks sanction for the fictions of his imagination in supernatural revelation; the mystic, fascinated by the intuitions born of religious ecstasy, convinces himself of their objective reality; the philosopher, swept away by speculative imagination, ascribes ontological significance to the creatures of his own brain.

Shelley compares man to "an Æolian lyre" upon which the ever-changing winds of existence play, producing an "ever-changing melody." The magician who turns the jarring discord of brute reality into sweet melody is the imagination. That is to say, imagination is not concerned with a mechanical response to the forces of the external world, but transforms these into a melodious internal harmony, whether through poetry, philosophy, or religion, thus assuring to man's soul a beautiful, intelligible, reverent and therefore sympathetic universe. What we miss in the immediate brute facts of experience is provided by this supreme architect of the soul. It erects a world, fictional of course, but a world in which the eternal quarrel of good and evil is finally settled, in which the craving for beauty is satisfied, in which the devil is chained, and the

world of values is placed under the eternal custody of God.

Since the imagination is the arch-creator of fictions (fictions that are necessary that we may have a livable world), does it follow that imagination is the arch-deceiver? Is a fiction false simply because it is a fiction? The historian's picture of Napoleon is largely fictitious. Is the picture false? The scientific constructs underlying astronomy, chemistry, or biology are fictions, that is to say, they are the ways in which the trained scientific imagination pictures the situation in these phases of reality. Are they, therefore, untrustworthy? What differentiates the scientific fictions from poetic or religious ones? Why do we say that the scientific fictions of Darwin as to the origin of the species are nearer reality than the religious fictions of the author of the first chapter of Genesis, by which he too visualizes the origin of the species? These are vital questions, and on the answers to them hang all the pressing issues of the relation of faith to science and of the place of religion in our modern culture. Therefore, we must distinguish between the various types of imagination and their fictions.

2. THE PROBLEM OF THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION.

We have seen that imagination interprets and humanizes our world. It forms convenient mental fictions or symbols by which we represent to ourselves reality as a whole, the relations between parts of reality, or the sense of values generated by contact with reality. It follows, therefore, that the types of imagination will vary with experience. We may have the concrete mental fictions of the practical imagination, the schematic, semi-mathematical fictions of "big business" or banking, the vague symbols of the highly emotional or "diffluent" (the term is Ribot's) type of imagination as in music and the romantic sentimentalism of a Rousseau, the highly symbolic fictions of the mystical and religious imagination that refer primarily to subjective reality, the controlled and tested fictions of the scientific imagination that refer to objective reality, the concrete visual, tactile, or motor imagery of the plastic and mechanical types of imagination. It is possible to throw these types into two classes: those that refer to objective reality and those that refer to subjective reality. The practical, scientific and mechanical types are primarily external in ref-

erence, while the "diffluent" and religious types are essentially subjective. It will be seen that the religious and the scientific types of imagination are directly opposed. Halfway between lie certain phases of the esthetic imagination. For obviously the fictions of the dramatist or the novelist must conform to a certain extent to the facts of nature and of society while in the case of the lyric poet the fictions of the imagination must find their test of truth mainly in the inner subjective phase of reality.

The genesis of the religious imagination is largely shrouded in mystery. So far, however, as we are able to thread our way back into the jungle of religious origins, we find three factors either actually or potentially present from the beginning: an unusual or mysterious object or situation arousing a vivid emotional experience, probably closely akin to our feeling of awe or humility, and an attempt to represent this emotional experience by means of symbols. This emotional thrill appears to be ultimate and absolute so far as religion is concerned. The emotions deal with value. Hence religion is interested primarily in the value of existence, not in its rational explanation. Rites, symbols and later dogmas

and philosophical speculations arise, but they are dominated by the emotions. The proverb-maker was psychologically correct when he said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and hence of religion. Jesus in his discourse on the Mount placed poverty of spirit and meekness first. Benedict of Nursia in his famous *regula* that became the basis of monasticism put humility at the top of the stairway of the virtues. Neither humility nor awe is prominent in modern religious life. Does this mean that religion itself is undergoing a profound modification?

A sort of naïve and uncritical realism characterizes primitive religion and great creative periods in religion so that no clear distinction is drawn between the religious experience and the symbols of that experience. Loisy says of early Christianity: "Just as there is no abstract belief, so there is no pure symbolic rite, the material expression of such a belief. Everything is living, the faith, the rite, the baptism and the breaking of bread; the baptism is the Holy Ghost and the Eucharist is the Christ. There is no speculation about the token, no hint of physical efficacy of the sacrament in baptism, nor of transubstantiation in the Eucharist; but what is said and be-

lieved goes almost beyond these theological assertions. The worship of the primitive age might be defined as a kind of spiritual realism, knowing no pure symbols and essentially sacramental by virtue of the place that rites hold in it as the vehicle of the spirit and the means of divine life."[1] Religious feeling and the object that elicits the feeling, religious value and the symbol by which that value is represented, are fused in one undifferentiated whole. Reason has not yet had time to demand, nor is there any need felt for, the rationale of the religious experience.

The problem of the religious imagination arose when men were made aware through increased scientific knowledge of the difference between the scientific and the religious uses of the imagination. It arose when psychology enabled us to see that the fictions of the imagination may serve either to represent the relations of phenomena in the external world as in a law of science or to symbolize emotional states without any regard to external factual reality as in religion.

It is the fashion to gloze over this distinction and to assert that there is no conflict between science and religion. So long, however, as re-

[1] *The Gospel and the Church*, p. 232.

ligious fictions are made to carry the double burden of interpreting both external and internal reality, as the Fundamentalist makes them do, so long will the conflict exist. To complicate the problem the Fundamentalist is soaked in the naïve and uncritical religious realism of the Bible written long before psychology had given men any insight into the factors involved. In the Bible fact and fiction are confused. Its writers were ever unconsciously making use of fictions to describe matters of fact as well as of faith. To the writers of the gospels, for example, the miracles of Jesus were not felt to be fictions by which all men of that age described the activity of the chosen agents of God. There is an uncritical fusion of miracle with the immediate and indisputable reality of the religious experiences called out by the person and work of Jesus. The liberal scholar, by recognizing that miracle is significant only as it throws light upon the workings of the religious imaginations of the sacred writers, is relieved of the necessity of establishing or defending its historical truth. The orthodox scholar, on the other hand, must defend miracle both in the religious and the scientific imaginations. He is forced to claim not only

that miracle is real for the inner realm of religious experience, but that miracle holds true likewise for objective reality in history and in nature. Here, as already suggested, we have the very heart of the issue between Fundamentalism and modern culture. It is a problem of the nature, the functions and the limitations of the religious imagination.

3. THE SYMBOLS OF THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION.

Every form of thought is symbolic. The physicist takes motion as the simplest and clearest of the phenomena of nature and uses it to explain the behavior of matter. Similarly the atom and the cell are symbols for the chemist and biologist. The symbolic nature of thought is even more in evidence in psychology. For when the psychologist talks of a "clear" idea, a "highly colored" imagination, or an "iron" will, he is selecting from other spheres than that of the mind, objects or qualities which, by analogy, he uses to symbolize psychical processes. In philosophy symbolical thinking is indispensable. For since neither the totality nor the essence of reality is ever given in experience, we are forced

to fall back upon phases of existence which we use to symbolize existence as a whole. Thus the idealist takes the facts of mind and uses them as symbols to explain existence as a whole. The materialist uses the facts of matter in the same way.

Religious thinking is, however, most symbolic of all—for several reasons. In religion we are concerned with the feelings most intimate and vital to the person concerned. They are thus the most difficult to represent objectively. The classical example of this is the mystic's constant avowal of the incommunicable nature of his experiences. After one of his frequent visions, Paul said that he "heard unspeakable words." The religious sentiments are associated, furthermore, with the great mysteries of life that baffle scientist and philosopher, so that, in addition to the intangible nature of emotions, there is the inherent difficulty of the ideas these emotions evoke. The religious thinker has, therefore, to fall back upon the higher figurative language familiar in poetry while at the same time often claiming to use this language with an exactness found only in the sciences. Here we have a psychological difficulty which the Fundamentalist, with his claim of an

infallible revelation of divine truth, persistently ignores. It has been well said: "The idea that religion contains a literal, not a symbolic, representation of truth and life is simply an impossible idea. Whoever entertains it has not come within the region of profitable philosophizing on that subject."

A religious symbol is a sign or emblem, drawn from the external world of observation, by which we seek to represent to ourselves some inner experience too subtle to be grasped otherwise. The symbols of the religious imagination differ from the symbols of other types of imagination mainly in their highly symbolic character. A map is a symbol as is also a crucifix. It is obvious, however, that they differ widely in the uses they permit. One can take a map and find where a river runs or a mountain chain stands. A crucifix obviously throws no light upon the topography of heaven or hell. It gives us no knowledge of the religious world that can be called scientifically exact. It merely symbolizes phases of the Christian experience. It serves as an emblem of Christian piety. The earliest symbols of the Christian imagination are found on the walls of the catacombs of Rome. Future blessedness was sym-

bolized by the rose, paradise by flowery meads. A curtain slightly drawn symbolized entrance into immortality. A shepherd carrying a lamb on his shoulders, a figure adapted from the shepherd god Hermes, symbolized Christ. At this level of naïve religious realism, the feelings and the objects associated with them were so closely blended that there was little consciousness of the symbolic character of these objects.

A symbol may be drawn from the realm of ideas as well as that of things, and perhaps the most characteristic symbols used by the religious imagination at this higher level are myth, legend, and dogma. A myth is a story embodying a belief and is the earliest portrayal of the values of morals, art, religion, and philosophy. In myth the imagination tends to personify events or ideas, while in the legend the imaginative material deals with a person or persons. The legend, therefore, is apt to be closer to historical fact than the myth. Legend, or "that which is appointed to be read" (legendus), was the term used of the lives of the saints in the Middle Ages, compiled as Acta Sanctorum by the Bollandist Fathers in sixty folio volumes. There is scarcely a great figure of history that does not have its

legendary penumbra. Lycurgus in Plutarch's Lives is a typical example. A dramatic and fascinating personality dominates the imaginations of men and becomes a starting point for expansions of feeling or flights of the religious or moral fancy. The personalities concerned may become in time almost historical symbols. One needs only to think of the figures of Cyrus, Pythagoras, Plato, Alexander, Cæsar, Jesus of Nazareth. Since the myth grows by association of ideas it is apt to be more luxuriant, accidental and fantastic. The legend, taking its departure from a person, is apt to be more coherent. The legend is better adapted than the myth to the imaginative portrayal of religious experience. Myth predominates at the more primitive level of the Old Testament, while legend is more in evidence in the New, especially in the gospel narratives about Jesus. Legend has played a very large part in Christianity. If one eliminated from the gospel narratives and from the epistles of Paul the legendary elements and deprived the Middle Ages of the legends of the saints, the history of Christianity would be incomprehensible. Just as the vitality of Greek art is due to its symbols being so satisfying to the esthetic imagination, so is

the vitality of Christianity due to the perennial appeal of its symbols.

Dogma differs from myth and legend in this: before we can have dogma the raw material of mental images that prevail for myth and legend must be criticized and reduced to logical concepts. Dogmas are not purely theoretical; they arise mostly under pressure of the practical. The great dogmas of the Church result from a sort of dialectic between the slow-moving, irrational, powerful forces of group life and its leaders' desire for logical consistency. On the one hand is religious life as expressed in cultus with all its contradictions and crudities; on the other is the theologian with his logical refinements. It is ecclesiastical authority, voicing the imperative demand for continuity and integrity of group life, that compels these two forces to adopt some compromise. All dogmas are compromises between logic on the one hand and life on the other. At the beginning of his book, "The Common Law," Chief Justice Holmes remarks, "The law is not logic, but life." This dictum holds for dogma. When the dogmatic fictions cease to interpret religious experience, they wither and de-

cay. They can not be saved by "monkey-bills."

An ideal system of dogma would be derived immediately from religious experience, in a purely scientific spirit, undisturbed by passion or prejudice or party interest. But dogmas arise where the mental detachment and scientific spirit necessary for this ideal are impossible. Hence religious dogmas never have the clarity, self-consistency, and compelling power of the conclusions of science. They bear the imprint of many forces, partly accidental, partly logical, partly emotional, partly due to associations of the age or culture and partly due to group interest on ecclesiastical politics. The purest dogmas arose earliest and in close touch with the great creative religious enthusiasm of the early Church. The Pauline doctrines of sin and the cross are of this type, and so is the dogma of the deity of Jesus that arose spontaneously within the group of Gentile Christians who worshiped Jesus as their cult hero. Here the connection between dogma and the play of the legendary imagination over the person and work of Jesus is evident. Later we have a second group of dogmas that arose to reconcile the differences between the

dogmas of the first type. For example, the dogma of the deity of Jesus was bound to conflict with the traditional monotheism of the Jew on the one hand and the reality of Jesus' humanity on the other. The great Christological and Trinitarian controversies of the third and fourth centuries, with the several creedal statements of which the Nicene Creed is the most famous, were the result.

Finally we have dogmas that arose to assure the truth and authority of the dogmas of the first two types. The great dogmas of the infallibility of the Pope in the Catholic Church and of the inerrancy of the Bible among Protestants have their *raison d'être* as safeguards of the citadel of dogma. Since these dogmas of the third type occupy the strategic position, they are ever to the front when dogma is challenged. When they are overthrown it becomes difficult, not to say impossible, to defend the dogmas of the first two types. When the dogma of the infallible inspiration of the Bible goes, obviously a breach is made for an attack upon a whole group of dogmas such as miracle, the virgin birth, the resurrection, and the deity of Jesus.

4. THE DECAY OF DOGMA.

The slow decay before our eyes of the grandiose structure of Christian dogma is not the least interesting phase of modern religious imagination. Before the rise of modern culture, which is hardly more than two centuries old, dogma reigned supreme in the religious imagination. This tyranny of religious dogma over the mind of the western world for nearly seventeen centuries is amazing. It is well to remember, however, what made it possible. As early as Irenæus (d. 202 A.D.) we find this statement: "It is better and wiser to remain a fool and unlearned and through love to be nearer to God rather than to be learned and clever and be found blasphemers of the Lord." Why this tinge of intellectual defeatism which orthodox Christianity from Irenæus to William Jennings Bryan has never lost? In the answer to that question is found the answer to the other question as to the long reign of dogma.

When Irenæus wrote, men were living in a decadent age and had lost confidence in life. They sought escape from a world-wide pessimism. Terrified by the specter of a dying civilization,

men made Jesus the panacea of their desperate spiritual ills. The religious imagination clothed him with incorruptibility and fashioned out of his life and death symbols of life eternal. Then, closing the door in the face of discredited and distrusted reason, they surrendered their own critical powers to these dear fictions and gave up to religious dogma, backed by a militant church, the keys to heaven and hell. An uncritical and subservient acceptance of dogma has thus always gone hand in hand with a pessimistic attitude towards culture with its emphasis upon the self-sufficiency of reason. Intellectual defeatism lies deep in the traditions of Christianity. This is why it is so exceedingly difficult for orthodox Christianity to adjust itself to modern culture. For this adjustment calls for nothing short of a transvaluation of values so far as historical Christianity is concerned.

To understand how this yoke of dogma was broken we must remind ourselves of shifts in the attitude of the mind towards its own mental constructs. These mental shifts are suggested by the terms fiction, hypothesis, and dogma. All mental constructs are "fictions" (*fingere,* to invent, feign). In this broad sense we have used

the term up to this point. It is now necessary to take "fiction" in a somewhat more restricted sense. A pure fiction is one that is consciously a fiction, or a "make-believe." The "make-believes" of children and the delight they take in them indicate how deeply ingrained is the impulse to create fictions. But these "make-believes" are not limited to childhood. Every play, picture, poem, or statue is a "make-believe." Its artistic effect depends upon our coöperating with the artist and entering into his work and treating it as though it were real. "Make-believes" abound in science, even in mathematics. The fiction that parallel lines meet at infinity is a "make-believe" the mathematician asks us to accept as an aid to the elaboration of his science. Higher mathematics is based upon "make-believes" or fictions of the mathematical imagination that we are asked to accept as though they were true. Every science has its "make-believes." Their justification in science is found in the way in which they aid our thinking. They throw no light upon reality itself.

The hypothesis as distinguished from the fiction looks towards reality, for it is a mental construct we set up with the hope that it may in

time prove to be true. A fiction is a sort of scaffolding erected to facilitate thought or emotion and does not look to reality while a hypothesis points beyond the immediate exigencies of thought or feeling to something external. Hypothesis seeks to fill up the gaps in our experience of men and things through some comprehensive and reliable picture of reality. Fictions are tools the mind creates to help it do its work or live its life. In the case of a hypothesis, we seek for verification; in the case of the fiction, we are satisfied if it justifies itself as an aid to thought or feeling. Obviously the distinction drawn is of far-reaching importance for the relation of science to religion. The scientific imagination deals with hypotheses primarily, although it may also invent fictions. In the religious imagination we have fictions, usually unconscious "make-believes," used as symbols of experience. Hypotheses are of little or no use in religion apart from comparative religion or the psychology of religion, which are scientific. The religious urge is not towards an understanding of reality, but towards the satisfaction of inner needs. Here is the real test of the value of our religious fictions.

A dogma, as distinguished from fiction and hypothesis, is a doctrine one accepts as true on the authority of some one else without subjecting it to critical analysis. Now it is interesting and important that the mind is far more at ease with dogmas than with either fictions or hypotheses. The hypothesis implies more or less instability, a condition of suspended judgment. This causes tension and unrest highly irksome to the average mind. What we all want is a "Thus saith the Lord" or a dogma. "Every man," says Emerson, "must choose between truth and rest"; and the vast majority elect for the restful stability of dogma. The result is that the human mind has an almost irresistible tendency to turn all its hypotheses into dogmas.

There are two ways of turning hypotheses into dogmas, one of them legitimate and the other illegitimate. The legitimate way is found in science, where repeated testing and confirmation gradually harden a hypothesis into an approved dogma of science. The illegitimate and usual way is amply illustrated in religion, where habits of thought and life arise which in time demand the truth and reality of the belief they imply. Religious habits of thought and life built up

through use have always antedated the promulgation of great dogmas in the church. Use made it psychologically possible to claim for these supernatural authority. This is illustrated by the great dogmas of the immaculate conception and papal infallibility. In science a hypothesis is consciously held in abeyance until it can be subjected to critical testing. In religion the raw material for dogma is accumulated haphazard fashion through generations of religious use and then finds logical formulation in a bull of the pope or the pronouncements of church councils. Owing to their peculiar origin, religious dogmas are never safe from attack. The conviction that an idea is right because our habits of thought demand that it should be right is a conceit of knaves as well as of saints. The deepest-dyed villainy is found in one "who having unto truth, by telling of it, made such a sinner of his memory, to credit his own lie."

Many doctrines, accepted as the unchallenged dogmas in later times, were in the beginning fictions or hypotheses. The myths used by Plato in his philosophical speculations were originally fictions. With Plato they hardened into hypotheses by which he sought to explain reality.

Among the Neoplatonists, towards the end of antiquity, they were accepted as dogmas. The famous economic doctrine of Adam Smith that all men are actuated by selfish interest was a fiction. It is obviously contradicted by the facts of experience. Adam Smith invented it as a convenient means of ordering his thought on economic matters. It was speedily transformed into a hypothesis and then hardened into a fixed dogma of Ricardo and the classical economists and their modern followers.

Had we first-hand knowledge of the rise of the myths of the Old Testament, such as the story of the Fall or of the Flood, it is highly probable we should find that at first these were conscious myths. That is to say, they were fictions which were transformed, thanks to man's desire for a "Thus saith the Lord," into the dogmas of the Fundamentalists. Had we accurate and exhaustive knowledge of the life and thought of the early Christians, we undoubtedly should find a period, immediately after the death of Jesus, when they felt that the idea of the resurrection was a hypothesis of their religious imagination growing out of their passionate need for a continuation of the life and influence of their great teacher.

This speedily hardened into a dogma. Similarly, a first-hand acquaintance with the evolution of the thought of Paul would probably show a period when he felt that his doctrines of the cross and of the eternal preëxistent Christ were fictions made necessary by the problem of rendering the gospel acceptable to a gentile world. In reading the fourth gospel, where legendary elements are more in evidence than in the other gospels, one gets the impression, especially from incidents such as the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, that a discussion of these incidents with the actual author of this gospel, would have revealed that he was consciously using fictions to make vivid and appealing the religious importance of Jesus. Today, thanks to the hard, mechanical dogma of biblical inspiration, the original beauty of these gospel narratives is lost.

In spite of the tendency to turn all fictions and hypotheses into dogmas, it often happens, owing to the pressure of events, that dogmas undergo a process of decay, degenerating into hypotheses and fictions, or are discarded entirely. The dogma of the virgin birth is for the liberal theologian a hypothesis; for the radical critic, it is a fiction. This reversal of the natural tendency

of the mind is exceedingly instructive for an understanding of the decay of dogma. The degradation of dogma into hypothesis or fiction is usually brought about in one of two ways: the direct discrediting of the dogma through increased knowledge, or the atrophy of the dogma through disuse in altered ways of life. The latter is more deadly, although less spectacular than the first, which occurs in hot controversy often accompanied by bloodthirsty scalping of theological adversaries. The quiet growth in moral refinement and enlightened ways of life has discredited such dogmas as original sin or the blood atonement. Better command of the forces of nature and deeper insight into her laws have discredited supernaturalism. Miracle in our modern scientific life is less than a curiosity; it has become a piece of superfluous theological baggage.

It is where findings of science clash directly with accepted dogmas, as in the case of Galileo and Darwin, that the degradation of dogma takes place in the more spectacular fashion. The toppling of the walls of dogma at the blast of the scientist's ram's horn is not devoid of its tragicomic elements. Galileo was forced publicly on his knees to make the following recantation: "I,

Galileo, being in my seventieth year, being a prisoner and on my knees, and before your Eminences, having before my eyes the Holy Gospel, which I touch with my hands, abjure, curse, and detest the error and the heresy of the movement of the earth."

The church, rallying to the support of the dogma of an earth-centered astronomy, proceeded to crush the heresy, one theologian making use of this cogent argument: "Animals which move have limbs and muscles; the earth has no limbs or muscles, therefore it does not move." Finally a pope, using his infallibility, condemned the new astronomy, putting on the Index of the church "all writings which affirm the motion of the earth." This would seem to have settled the matter, Galileo, together with the sun and the earth, apparently having no alternative to obeying the infallible decree of the pope.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, however, we find this remarkable statement from a Jesuit mathematician: "As for me, full of respect for the Holy Scriptures and the decree of the Holy Inquisition, I regard the earth as immovable; nevertheless, for simplicity in explanation, I will argue as if the earth moves; for

it is proved that of the *two hypotheses* [italics the writer's] the appearances favor this idea." Dogma has so far degenerated as to become a hypothesis. The final stage, which has long been reached, is where the dogma of the fixity of the earth is considered as merely a religious fiction of the Middle Ages that has today only an historical interest.

The Fundamentalist opponents of evolution are careful to characterize it as an "unproven hypothesis." This is practically equivalent to admitting that the doctrine of special creation in Genesis is also a hypothesis, for if Genesis is absolutely and infallibly right, as the dogma of inspiration asserts, then evolution can not even be called a hypothesis. The final admission of the fictional character of the account in Genesis of the origin of life is only a matter of time, thanks to the irresistible impact of the facts. Even for the Fundamentalists, who now admit it as a hypothesis, it will degenerate into a useless fiction on a par with the medieval fiction of the fixity of the earth. If the Fundamentalist wishes to preserve these fictions of Genesis it must be upon some other basis than their scientific value.

As dogma falls into decay, especially where the dogma is undermined by criticism and the disruptive effect of new facts, it is faced by two alternatives. The dogma concerned may be so contrary to the facts, and its critical destruction may be so complete, that it is discarded entirely. The dogma of the fixity of the earth is an instance. Decaying dogmas rarely find a congenial resting-place as hypotheses, for a hypothesis is something that may be proved. Hence the alternative is to retain dogmas as symbolic religious fictions. In fact when once a dogma has been discarded as a doctrine whose truth is guaranteed by supernatural revelation, it can survive only as a religious symbol.

We are now able to realize the excessive difficulties of the problem of religion versus modern culture. The great classical forms of religion flourished in ages of faith when men did not know that their thought was made up of fictions. It could hardly have been otherwise. But now we are becoming increasingly aware of the extreme tenuousness of religious imagination. The conviction of its fictional and symbolic nature is growing. The Fundamentalist attributes the decay of dogma to the spread of the modern spirit,

which he characterizes as "rationalistic," "materialistic," or "skeptical." These epithets should not blind us to the operation of forces in modern life that are altering religion radically. The degradation of dogma is under way and is likely to continue despite the strenuous opposition of the orthodox.

5. THE DILEMMA OF THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION.

If constructs of the religious imagination be classed in the future as essentially fictional we shall face some interesting questions. Every hypothesis, as we have seen, implies suspended judgment. There is always the possibility that the hypothesis may find verification in the facts. Since it is not possible to subject the religious constructs to the factual tests of science, it would seem that in religion we are restricted to a choice between dogma and fiction. Dogma belongs to an earlier and less critical stage of culture when it was made to serve a double rôle. For a dogma was not only a symbol, but likewise a guarantee of the reality of the religious objects it symbolized. Dogma developed out of a stage of experience when men did not discriminate between

the symbolic rôle of the dogma and the religious realities for which it was thought the dogma stood.

As increased knowledge convinces men that the religious imagination can use only fictions or symbols, the inevitable effect is to weaken religious convictions. To ask the devout soul to use the petitions of the Lord's Prayer as symbolic fictions without any meaning for reality, but solely as a means of satisfying religious needs, is to demand a degree of sophistication far beyond the mental powers of the average man. It may be an illusion, but the Christian who prays "Give us this day our daily bread" must believe that a divine ear actually hears these words and that a divine will is actually influenced thereby. The religious imagination, therefore, faces a serious dilemma. It has to choose between an acceptance of dogma with its outworn accompaniments of supernaturalism and authoritarianism as necessary guarantees of the conviction so vital to faith, and a yielding to the trend of modern thought that relegates dogma to the fictions of the imagination but at the risk of a disillusionment that will undermine religious conviction.

It is a favorite argument of the conservative

that, when you have convinced men that their religious beliefs are only fictions of the religious imagination, religion itself will disappear. This is equivalent to saying that religion can not be based upon conscious illusions. This may be granted for the sake of argument. It does not follow, however, that religion in the past has not been based upon illusions, that religious belief today does not include illusions or that the religious beliefs of the future will be free from illusions. The story of religion is a story of disillusion. History's pages are strewn with tombstones of dead gods. The gods of Olympus, who were factual realities for Homer and Æschylus, began to be questioned by Euripides, and towards the close of antiquity were the subject of brilliant satires by Lucian. The Jehovah of the days of Judges was for men like the second Isaiah largely a fiction of an earlier, cruder religious imagination. Volumes have been written recording the gradual discarding of ideas, once firmly accepted as essentials of Christian faith, but now relegated to the limbo of fictions of a superstitious religious imagination. Men at any one period may be convinced that their religious beliefs correspond to eternal religious verities, but there is

only one inference to be drawn from the history of religion, namely, that the religious imagination has dealt and will ever deal with fictions.

In the Bible and for hundreds of years afterwards, men did not hesitate to look upon the symbols of the religious imagination as equally valid for objective and subjective reality. Allegory is the typical illustration of this habit of thought. In the fourteenth chapter of Genesis three short verses are devoted to the mention of a certain priest Melchizedek, who blessed Abraham on his return from the slaughter of the kings. Nothing more is said either of the previous or of the subsequent history of Melchizedek. The writer of Hebrews takes this accidental brevity of the Genesis record as symbolical of another high priest, Jesus Christ, who like Melchizedek is "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of years" (Heb. 7:3). That is to say, the Genesis record was held to be true objectively and historically with reference to Melchizedek and also symbolically and spiritually of the risen and glorified Christ. This allegorical doubling of reality reached absurd lengths in the monks' writings of the early Middle Ages.

The attempt to carry over this double rôle of the symbols of the religious imagination into modern times has proven more and more embarrassing to the Christian apologist. When Luke says of the ascension of Jesus, "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:51), it was easy for men of that day to take the record as it was intended to be taken, namely, that Jesus had gone to a definite place above the earth, called heaven. For the astronomy of the Bible pictures the earth as flat with four corners, heaven and hell being located above and below this flat surface. But according to modern astronomy heaven and hell would then change places every twenty-four hours. In order to save Luke's historical veracity it becomes necessary to say that he used this language symbolically. Jesus' physical ascension was only a symbol of his return to heaven, not the actual reality. Scientific criticism is making it increasingly difficult to hold that the virgin birth and resurrection of Jesus were originally true both for the objective world of fact and for the subjective world of value. More and more their objective historical value is disappearing and they are viewed solely as fictions of

the religious imagination aroused by the vivid impression of Jesus' personality and teachings upon his followers. Their value for us today is symbolic, not historical.

Granted that the constructs of the religious imagination must remain symbolic fictions, it remains to determine more definitely what sort of fictions they are. Obviously the term "fiction" may be used in a number of senses. The fictions of the poet, dramatist, or romancer are conscious fictions but, with the possible exception of the creations of the lyric poet, they can hardly be called pure fictions. The painter or novelist must regard the external series of reality in that he draws his raw materials from sense data gained from this world. To be sure, the element of fiction comes in when he synthesizes these sense data into imaginative wholes such as a Lorraine landscape or a character of Dickens, but even this fiction is checked up by reality in a larger sense. We demand of the painter or the novelist that his imaginative creation should not transcend possibility. We must feel that the character might have existed. There is a very real sense in which "the painter by his pictures shows us reality more truly" (I am indebted to my col-

league, Prof. Adelbert Ames, Jr., for this observation). Reality is so exhaustless, our fumbling senses give us such fragmentary elements of the pluralistic welter, that without the great stereotypes struck out by the artist's imagination much of reality would escape us entirely. The artist's stereotypes may even tyrannize over the popular imagination, forcing it for generations to see only certain phases of reality. The conventional faces and forms of the sculptures of the Gothic cathedral, the "canonical" figure of the athlete struck out from the marble by Polyclitus, and the figures of Donatello are cases in point. These great masters compelled the imaginations of their contemporaries to see only certain shapes, to love only certain ideals of beauty. Care must be taken, however, not to stress too much this affiliation of the fictions of the artistic imagination with those of the scientific imagination. How far, for example, did Turner in his marvelous skies and Corot in his idyllic landscapes seek "to show us reality more truly," and how far did they make use of pictorial symbols to further a richer expansion of the inner life? Certainly the mental imagery and the accompanying emotional satisfactions inspired by great music shade over

into the field of the religious imagination, for they give us practically no insight into reality. Their function is almost purely symbolical.

The fictions of the religious imagination are to be distinguished again from illusion and hallucination. A hallucination is seeing things that are not there or experiencing sensations and inner states that have no external cause. It is usually the accompaniment of a disordered state of the nervous system. When Luther, according to the story, lifted his eyes from his book, saw the devil standing in a corner of his room in the Wartburg castle and threw the inkwell at him, he suffered from a religious hallucination. When the Freudian suggests that the Christian who prays to his God is merely imploring an imaginative symbol created by the suppressed wishes of his subconscious self, he has taken a long step towards reducing religion to a hallucination.

An illusion differs from a hallucination in that its stimulus comes from the outside world but is misinterpreted by the mind, as when we mistake the sound of cannon for thunder. Illusion is a term which we apply to the realms of science and common sense. That is to say, it describes a situation made familiar to us in external real-

ity. Now, when we apply to the fictions of the religious imagination the same tests applied to scientific constructs we find the religious imagination has always abounded in illusions and doubtless will continue to abound in them. The gods of ancient Egypt or the witches executed at Salem were fictions of the religious imagination which from the point of view of history and psychology were illusions. The assumption underlying the anti-evolution law of Tennessee that the account in Genesis of creation corresponds to the facts is an illusion of the religious imagination. We may go further and say that there is not a great religious dogma which, subjected to strict scientific tests, does not become akin to an illusion. Immortality, God, freedom, eternal damnation, original sin, predestination, the Trinity, the dual nature of Jesus Christ, all these and many more, when thus tested, become illusions.

The great dogma of the Trinity is logically absurd and psychologically illusory. The theologians at the Council of Nicæa (325 A.D.) seemed vaguely aware of these difficulties. Arius's unitarianism, which was condemned and branded as heresy, is much easier to reconcile with the demands of logic and science than the trinitarian-

ism of Athanasius. The trinitarianism defended against the Monarchians by Tertullian (150–230 A.D.) and adopted by Athanasius (296–373 A.D.) is an abyss of contradictions. Tertullian, who did much to formulate this doctrine, says in his controversy with the heretical Monarchians: "I should not hesitate to call the tree the son or offspring of the root. . . . The Father and the Son are two, therefore, as root and tree are two. Hence the twoness of the godhead is not incompatible with its unity."[2] The Monarchians objected: "Now Father and Son are of the same substance and absolutely one so when the Father produced the Son we have the paradoxical situation that the son or begotten one being of the same substance with the father actually plays the rôle of being his own father. . . . In order to be a father I have a son, for I can never be a son to myself; and in order to be a son, I have a father, it being impossible for me to be my own father. It is these relations that make me what I am. . . . Now if I am to be myself any one or all of these relations (the Trinity includes Father and Son) I no longer have what I am myself to be: neither a father because I am to be my own

[2] *Ad Praxean*, ch. 8.

father; nor a son for I shall be my own son. Moreover, inasmuch as I ought to *have* (actually *be* in one of) these relations in order to be, if I am to be both together I shall fail to be one while I possess not the other. For if I must be myself my son, who am also a father, I now cease to have a son since I am my own son. But by reason of not having a son, since I am my own son, how can I be a father? For I ought to *have* a son in order to be a father. Therefore I am not a son, because I have not a father who makes a son. In like manner if I am myself my father, who am also a son, I no longer have a father but am myself my father. But by not having a father, since I am my own father, how can I be a son?" Upon which Tertullian with pious indignation observes, "Now all this must be the device of the devil."[3]

It is amazing that those using the fictions of the religious imagination seem unconcerned when reminded by critics that these fictions abound in logical contradictions. In spite of Arius and the Monarchians the dogma of the Trinity was accepted at the Council of Nicæa, 325 A.D., and still remains a central dogma of Fundamentalism. It

[3] *Ibid.*, Ch. 10.

is this phase of the religious imagination that seems to many scientists the very essence of obscurantism and little short of intellectual indecency. For science and common sense demand that the fictions of the imagination shall be free from logical contradictions and shall find substantial support in external reality. Harnack says: "The man [Athanasius] who saved the character of Christianity as a religion of living fellowship with God, was the man from whose Christology almost every trait which recalls the historical Jesus of Nazareth was erased." Furthermore, the symbols were so absurd and illogical that "there was in fact no philosophy in existence possessed of formulæ which could present in an intelligible shape the propositions of Athanasius."[4]

How then are we to explain why the church speaking through Athanasius insisted upon having these dogmas? Paraphrasing Chief Justice Holmes's dictum as to the law, one may reply, "Dogma (that is, real vital dogma) is not logic but life." The adoration of Jesus as the eternal preëxistent son of God had grown up within the use and wont of the church. The imaginative

[4] *History of Dogma*, IV, 45, 47.

symbols of Jesus as eternal divine son had become part and parcel of the cultus of the church. This pragmatic test decided the matter for Athanasius. He reasoned thus: "God alone is to be adored. It is of course heathenish to worship creatures. Jesus Christ has been worshiped by the church from the beginning as God. Christ therefore shares in the divine substance." There is but one inference to be drawn from the history of the rise of dogma and its hold upon the religious life of men. Dogma is a symbolic fiction of the religious imagination. It is not formulated primarily to serve the ends of logic, science, or even philosophy. It is not created as a means of interpreting reality or increasing our knowledge, though there may be misguided attempts to make it serve these purposes. Dogma is primarily a symbol and its vitality is measured directly in terms of the extent to which it makes meaningful the "mysteries" of religious experience.

6. SYMBOL AND REALITY.

The naïve religious consciousness assumes the external factual existence of religious beings such as God, angels, devils, or disembodied spirits,

certain definite religious localities, such as heaven and hell, certain historical events in the unfolding of the providential plan of God for the redemption of the world. The uncritical religious mind assumes that religion is a matter of direct experience of these external factual realities. Religious knowledge is a matter of an objective revelation from God. This knowledge is just as trustworthy as the knowledge gained through the most exact sciences, nay, it is more exact and trustworthy. What God tells us in the first chapter of Genesis as to the origin of living creatures is far more reliable than the conclusions of Darwin based upon accumulated data gathered during a long voyage and pondered for years. Men know more about God and heaven and hell, sin and redemption and the end of the world and what will happen during the endless lapses of eternity, than they do about atoms and germs and stars and states and business projects. It is naïvely assumed that, just as we build up our knowledge of our friends or contemporaries through personal contacts, so the Christian builds up his knowledge of God the Father, Jesus the Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost through personal contacts with them. In the light of the conclusions reached above, can we say the situation is as simple as this?

"Life," says Shelley, "like a dome of many-colored glass, stains the white radiance of Eternity." This beautiful poetic figure expresses a profound psychological truth, namely, the essentially human character of all our knowledge. The constructs of the imagination are all merely human ways of picturing to ourselves reality. The religious and scientific imaginations agree in this respect. They differ when we come to examine the nature of the realities with which they deal. The constructs of the scientific imagination have as their counterparts or correlatives external objects, the relations of things, sequences of events. The fictions of the religious imagination do not have any such accessible and measurable external reality to which they can be directly referred. The locus of religious reality is primarily in the emotional experience of the individual. It is perfectly legitimate to objectify the experience and postulate transcendental religious realties provided we recognize that this is a postulate of faith, not an immediate, measurable fact of experience. "No man hath seen God at any time." That is to say, granting the existence of the deity, the immediate data of experience of him are not sensations. But sensations of external objects are the raw material out of which are formed the

great constructs of the scientific imagination by means of which the scientist represents to himself external reality. There are no such immediate elementary sensations which the religious imagination can use. To be sure, we sense religious objects as in worship or perhaps in contacts with phenomena of nature that call out religious experiences, but we interpret the external situation in terms of the subjective experience.

The essence of the religious situation is not found in the cognitive data, but in the feelings of value, registered in the emotions. That is to say, while sensation mediates between the constructs of the scientific imagination and its objects it is emotions that mediate between the fictions of the religious imagination and its objects. Now it is a peculiarity of the emotions that they do not point beyond themselves, while sensations always imply an objective reality. There is, therefore, this very puzzling problem that arises when we come to deal with religious realities. Is the ultimate religious reality merely the emotional experience, that is to say, is religious reality essentially subjective and human, or is there outside of and transcending this inner emotional

experience an objective religious reality? Religious experience takes precedence over science perhaps in its immediacy and intensity and convincing power. Religious experience is among the most real of all our experiences. Science takes precedence over religion in the facility with which it can establish the external reality of its objects. There is no need of proof for the factual existence of the sun or of gravity, but libraries have been written to prove the factual existence of God. The constructs of the scientific imagination obviously point beyond themselves; the fictions of the religious imagination are not so obviously secondary, presupposing an objective spiritual reality.

The problem of the reality of the objects of the religious imagination is further complicated by a peculiarity of the emotional life. We have seen that religion is interested primarily in value. Value is a matter of the emotional tone of a given experience. Value is no more found as an independent entity than the color of a brick wall or of an oriental rug. It exists only as a component part of something else. That is to say, religious values, like the colors in the rug, presuppose some sort of objectivity, some sort of locus in space

and time. It follows, therefore, that we always tend to give to the values that lie at the heart of religion some sort of objectification. We can think of them objectively only as associated with a spiritual being such as a personal God. Thus it is that the objective reality of God seems to arise as an implication of our thought and experience, not as something that can be immediately experienced and proven. The only other alternative to this is to say that the real locus of religious values is found in our own human personalities. This would mean of course a complete humanization of religion.

An examination of the religious imagination thus brings us ultimately face to face with the problems of the philosophy of religion. It is permissible, therefore, to suggest in conclusion several problems, the solutions of which belong to metaphysics rather than to psychology. The first is that the symbols of the religious imagination apparently arise to meet the inner subjective needs, yet are ever being referred to sources outside the individual. Secondly, the forms of the religious imagination, whose primary use is symbolical, soon arrogate to themselves the rôle of the constructs of the scientific imagination and

become in the case of the devout believer the basis of his explanations of the phenomena of nature both animate and inanimate. Thus the special creation story of Genesis, a pictorial representation of the origin of living things by a deeply religious but semi-civilized people, is preferred to the hypothesis of evolution based upon a most painstaking examination of a vast body of facts, the very existence of which was never dreamed of by the writer of Genesis. Thirdly, the objective spiritual reality presupposed by the symbols of the religious imagination is not a proven but a postulated reality. The very nature of such realities is that they are objects of faith, not of scientific proof. To prove the existence of God as Newton did the law of gravity would destroy God's religious significance. Faith implies risk, contingency, the possible unreality of its objects. Finally, when a popularization of psychological facts has familiarized men with the essentially symbolical rôle of the religious imagination, interesting speculations arise as to the fate of traditional religious realities and the rôle of religion in the society of the future. This is the reason for the question, What is the survival value of Christianity?

Chapter III

JESUS OR CHRIST

Christ is God's last metaphor.—Bushnell

It may be worth while to apply to the figure which has occupied the central position in the religious imagination of the western world some of the conclusions reached in the preceding chapters. For the problem of fact and fiction in the Christian faith is nowhere so vital or so urgently debated as in connection with the life of Jesus.

1. THE JESUS OF HISTORY.

The great men of history have always enjoyed a dual personality. The one is real, the other is fictitious. One is the product of the scientific imagination of the historian, the other is a fiction of the popular imagination. Around such figures as Lycurgus, Plato, Alexander, Cæsar, Mahomet, Charlemagne, Luther, Napoleon, there is always a penumbra of legend. This is true even of the

men of our own time. There was a short period in the public career of Woodrow Wilson when the real man was swallowed up in grandiose fictions of the imagination of a war-torn world. He became merely a symbol, a symbol of hope to millions whose hearts were broken. The less men know about the great figures of the past, the more imagination seeks to fill up the gaps in our knowledge. When this process is stretched over centuries the real person is often lost beneath the accumulations of legend. This is strikingly illustrated in Plutarch's Lives, where fact and fiction are so hopelessly interwoven as to make the historian despair.

The figure of Jesus of Nazareth is no exception. We have in reality two persons, the historical Jesus, faintly visible beneath the legendary accumulations of the gospels, and the Christ of the fictions of the religious imagination. Which of these two personalities has played the most important rôle in the history of Christianity? If we examine the texture of our western civilization to detect the strands that unite it, the ideals that give it coherence and purpose, the loyalties that have bound together men of good will from generation to generation, we

should say perhaps that Jesus Christ is the most stupendous fact of history. So great is the hold of Jesus upon the imaginations of millions of Americans today that it is possible to pass laws making it a crime to teach in state-supported schools doctrines contrary to the supposed beliefs of Jesus. Yet what we actually know as to the life of Jesus could be contained in half a dozen printed pages. In the religious imagination of mankind Jesus bulks as vast as eternity itself. In the field of historical fact the position of Jesus is infinitesimally small. He was practically unknown to his contemporaries and facts gained by the most meticulous scholarly investigations are meager, incoherent, and fragmentary.

It is quite possible, then, to ask, Which is the Jesus men worship today, the Jesus of history faintly visible beneath the legendary accumulations of the gospels or the Christ of the fictions of the religious imagination? To many devout souls the raising of this question is little short of sacrilegious. The ready reply is, "I know in whom I have believed." Quite so. But to assert the reality of one's own inner religious experiences is one thing. To identify the symbols of the religious imagination by which we repre-

sent to ourselves the immediate reality of those experiences with the historic reality of Jesus is something quite different. The libraries of the world are full of beautiful prayers uttered by Assyrians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans to their gods. But where now are the gods of Arphar and Babylon and Memphis and Athens and Rome? What objective reality for the historian have Æsculapius, Mithras, Cybele, Hermes, or Vesta? Yet men prayed to these gods earnestly, confidingly, and, we may well believe, gained inner peace, though the objects of their devotions were pure fictions of the religious imagination. Is it not possible that the prayers of the men who pray today may in many instances have no more of an objective historic counterpart than did those of the men of antiquity? It is because this is possible that there is nothing sacrilegious in raising the question of the historicity of Jesus. The question has been raised for us by modern criticism and we are forced to answer it. How far is the Jesus we worship fact, and how far fiction?

Josephus (37–95 A.D), in the eighteenth book of his *Ancient History of the Jews,* says: "And about that time came Jesus, a wise man, if he may be called a man. He was a worker of miracles, a

teacher of folk who received the truth willingly, and he attracted many Jews, many also of the Greeks. He was the Christ. When, on the accusation of those who were the first among us, Pilate had sentenced him to the cross, those who had loved him from the beginning continued to do so. He appeared to them on the third day restored to life. God's prophets predicted this and ten thousand other marvels concerning him. Even today the sect named Christians continues to exist." This is obviously an interpolation and is so deemed by conservative scholars. It makes Josephus, a Jew, practically confess himself a Christian, for he concedes such cardinal Christian doctrines as the deity of Jesus, the resurrection, miracles and the fulfillment of prophecy. There was no good reason why Josephus should mention Jesus. His silence is not necessarily the silence of ignorance, but that of prudence and fear. Being a notorious flatterer and time-server of the Romans he would naturally refrain from all mention of one whose title "King of the Jews" might arouse suspicion.

The first indisputable non-Christian reference to Christianity occurs in a letter to Emperor Trajan written by Pliny the Younger about 105

A.D. while he was proconsul of Bithynia and Pontus. Pliny bears witness to the cult of a god *Christus,* though he does not mention the historical existence of Jesus. He possibly thought of *Christus* as merely one of the numerous cult deities that abounded in the Empire. Tacitus, in book XV, ch. 44, of his *Annals* (c. 116 A.D.), says in connection with his discussion of the burning of Rome under Nero: "In order to destroy the rumor that he was accused of the burning of Rome Nero supposed certain guilty ones and inflicted upon them excruciating punishments. They were those who, hated for their infamies, were called by the vulgar crowd Christians." Suetonius, the gossipy court historian and grammarian, writing about 121 A.D., mentions one Christus who was driven from Rome because of his agitations of the Jews. This is a possible reference to Christianity. With this we exhaust the non-Christian references to Christianity, and their value for establishing the historicity of Jesus is practically nil.

Turning from the silence of the pagan writers to the New Testament, we find that our oldest records are not the gospels which purport to tell the story of Jesus, but the letters of Paul. These

letters are the spontaneous outpourings of soul by a great religious leader and mystic, pulsating with his personal loves and hates, occasional in character, improvised in haste between journeys, and never intended to be historical documents. Turning to the earliest of these epistles, First Thessalonians, the oldest book in the New Testament, we find it beginning with these words, "Paul and Sylvanus and Timotheus, unto the *church* of the Thessalonians, which is *in God* the Father and *in the Lord Jesus Christ.*" What do these words imply? They imply first an ecclesiastical organization with officers and cultus and an organized and institutionalized body of religious sentiments. We are far removed from the simple atmosphere of Jesus and his disciples; the environment is that of a cult, the head of which is a divine being, "the Lord Jesus Christ." More important still we are moving in the atmosphere of a mystical religious imagination. The "church" is not a definite body localized in space and time, but is "in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ." The setting is transferred from external reality to an inner world of mystical enthusiasms, of communion with God.

Paul never leaves this world of inner mystical

enthusiasms, the world of the religious imagination, for the objective world of historical fact in dealing with Jesus. Jesus is for him always a divine transcendent being, "the eternal son of God," the Lord of glory, "the second Adam," the "Alpha and Omega" of the universe, all fictions of the religious imagination. Turn through the letters of Paul and you will never find an exact, realistic and historical picture of Jesus of Nazareth. There are evidences that Paul knew the chief facts of the gospel tradition. But he was not interested in the Jesus of history. His interest lay entirely in the grandiose fictions of his own imagination, the preëxistent, risen and glorified redeemer of the world. The most complete description of Jesus that Paul has given us is found in Colossians 1:15 ff., where he is portrayed as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things and by him all things consist. . . . For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." It would

be a bold exegete indeed who would seek in this noble language any of the lineaments of the actual historical Jesus. These lineaments were submerged and lost, being overlaid with the gorgeous mental imagery of Paul. Paul was not interested in their restoration. Out of the story of the life of the man Jesus loomed two things, the cross and the empty tomb. The shadow of the cross stretched, in the soaring imagination of Paul, from the fathomless abysses of eternity across the checkered page of history beyond the final judgment bar and was lost again in the eternity whence it came. The simple brute fact of a Jew crucified by Roman soldiers outside the walls of Jerusalem took on in his regal imagination cosmic significance. In the fierce white light of the tragedy of the cross as he saw it the simple facts of the life of Jesus were ignored, the simple ethical teachings couched in such matchless parables were superseded.

The liberal critics have sought to penetrate the veil of the Pauline imagination and reconstruct for us the real Jesus of history. They do not realize that the more distinct they make that Jesus the more they discredit the Christ of Paul. Their Jesus is after all a reconstruction of their scholarly imaginations, hardly more real than the

titanic figure of the preëxistent Christ of Paul. The critics label their fiction "man" while Paul labels his "God." Which is the more worshipful? Which makes the stronger appeal to the imagination? Shall we elect for the Jesus of the critics, "cribb'd, cabin'd and confined" though he be, and console ourselves with the thought that at least we have made ourselves masters of what there is to be had of historical facts, or shall we elect for the divine figure of the preëxistent Christ who is "without beginning of days or end of years" and be content to know that he does not belong to the realms of time and space, because he is the bloodless fiction of the Pauline imagination? This question must be answered before we can determine the place of Christianity in modern culture.

The oldest record of Christianity is found, as we have seen, in the epistles of Paul, dating approximately from 50 to 62 A.D. In this earliest record we find few or no traces of the historic Jesus. What we do find is the story of the reaction of a most powerful imagination to a few phases of the Christian tradition, especially the death and resurrection of Jesus. It will be surmised, however, that when we turn to the gospels

themselves, we shall pass from religious fictions to trustworthy history. Is this the case?

There are four gospels; the earliest, Mark, was written about 70 A.D., the latest, John, about 110 A.D. The last gospel differs so fundamentally from the others that it is usually considered by itself, the other three or synoptic gospels, Mark, Luke and Matthew, being considered as a group. We cannot say with certainty that any one of these, or in fact that any New Testament writing, is from the pen of a personal disciple of Jesus. Mark, the oldest of the three, is complex in origin, being based upon two main sources, the one a collection of narratives perhaps derived from the preachings of Peter, the other a collection or collections of *logia* or sayings of Jesus treasured and handed down at first by word of mouth and later in written form. A dozen years or so after its original composition the gospel of Mark probably underwent a revision, so that we do not have it in its original form. The other gospels of Luke and Matthew were composed from ten to forty years later than Mark, embodying the material from Mark and the *logia,* together with minor additions from other sources. Mark, then, served not only as the main source

of the other two synoptic gospels, but suggested both their plan and their purpose. Mark is then by far the most important of all our sources for the historical Jesus. How does Mark approach the problem?

To understand the purpose of Mark and the other gospels we must understand what the church was thinking and doing when Mark wrote. For it was the pragmatic needs of the church, at the time Mark wrote, rather than any historical interest in the life of Jesus that induced him to write at all. When Mark wrote, the church was faced with the problem of convincing the world of the importance of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. In other words, what we have is not history but missionary propaganda. Luke frankly states to Theophilus his purpose in writing his gospel, "That thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed." Similarly towards the close of his gospel John says: "These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name" (20, 31). Mark and the other evangelists were not trying to give an accurate historical account of Jesus' life. They do not

give us primarily the gospel *of* Jesus, though the teachings of Jesus are incidentally contained in their pages. What they do give us is the gospel *about* Jesus. For already the simple teachings of Jesus had been overlaid by the tremendous effect upon their imaginations of his death and empty tomb.

What the records give us, then, is not what Jesus actually was and only incidentally what he actually taught, but what he meant in the light of the religious experiences inspired by his worship. Certainly, in preaching the saving mission of Jesus, men had to connect up his divine mission with the facts of his life, for it would be natural to expect in the earthly life of Jesus some foreshadowing of his Messianic mission. This same missionary and pragmatic motive led to the emphasis of miracles by Jesus and the interlarding of accounts of his life with references to the fulfillment of prophecy and to the setting of Jesus above Moses as an interpreter of the law. All through the gospel narrative, therefore, we can detect the backwash of this missionary and apologetic interest which led to the stressing of certain events and the minimizing of others, to the reading into the words and

acts of Jesus ideas foreign to his own mind, but born of the immediate pragmatic needs of a church evangelizing the world. All the gospels are *tendency* writings, and this is what makes their use so difficult for the historian.

One who seeks in the gospels a history of Jesus is doomed to disappointment. The historian looks backwards. He seeks to free himself from the passions and prejudices, the hopes and the fears of the present. His task is to let the men of other days stand up and tell their own story in their own way. The writers of the gospels looked forward, not backward. They expected the immediate coming of the Lord, when the scheme of salvation they preached would be completed and human affairs wound up forever. Jesus was for them a living hope, not a dead historical fact. This burning hope selected from his words and works those things that seemed to confirm it and rejected those things that seemed to negate it. The consequence was that the very morning following the discovery of the empty tomb Christian theology was born, born of the religious imagination seeking symbolic interpretation of the passionate hopes engendered by the story of the empty tomb. Nay, even the

empty tomb and the risen and glorified Lord were creations of this imagination, fictions of the human heart demanded for the satisfaction of unforgettable impressions of the life and work of Jesus. Jesus must not die. He could not die. He did not die. He rose from the dead the third day and was seen of the brethren. *Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas.*

Jesus lived. He was a real fact of history. But he never left a line. He wrote only in the sand. He has lived in the devout imaginations of his followers and their very love and devotion to him caused them to overlay the facts of his life with subjective impressions of their own, so that the actual detailed life of Jesus is lost forever. In the gospels miracle, legend, symbol, prophecy, dogma, and lyrical expressions of intense religious mysticism have enshrouded the figure of Jesus in eternal mystery. Through rifts in these figments of the religious imagination we catch glimpses, like sunlit Alpine valleys seen through the mountain mists, of the inner life of Jesus. It is full of pastoral beauty and a peace born of singular unity of soul. But these glimpses do not suffice for a history of the life

of Jesus. The material from which such a life might have been constructed is lost forever. The very plan and outline of his life is a matter of surmise and speculation. What we have are scattered and disconnected episodes. The practical task of the critic is to reproduce these episodes with such measure of accuracy as is possible and thereby to gain, if not a complete life, at least a trustworthy idea of his personality and his teachings.

Jesus, therefore, is the eternal paradox of history. He belongs to two worlds, the world of time and space, and likewise the timeless and spaceless world of the religious imagination. Like a wandering ghost he slips from one world to the other and we are at a loss to know where to place him. As the centuries drew on, however, the world of imagination more and more claimed him as its own, a fact somewhat overstated in the following: "Though by his name and through his worship Jesus belongs to history, he is not a historical personage. He has no place in the generations of mankind. His existence is not of the order of visible things, neither is it included among possible facts. It is neither a

myth nor a symbol, but a spiritual reality, more real to the eye of faith than all finite existence. Believers alone must judge of it, and on condition that they remove it from the domain of the historians. We can no longer conceive the Absolute included in the development of possible facts, God as a historical personage: Jesus must renounce existence in order to preserve it. He is a divine being, knowledge of whom the Christian conscience has slowly elaborated. He was born of faith, hope, and love. He sprang from the human heart's need of consolation. He has assumed varying forms attributed to him by his worshipers. He was born as soon as he had a believer. He grew strong through all the followers who came to him, and from whom he took their inmost being, of whatever nature, subtle or material. He has lived all down the centuries and it may be that he will perish only with humanity. His sole reality is spiritual. Everything else is illusion. He will mislead those who follow him to the shores of the Lake of Galilee or to the steps of sorrowful Jerusalem. They will find there nothing but his followers. He is elsewhere, has been from the beginning. He dwelleth nowhere, save in human souls. He is not

to be found in religion's fabled dawn: he is religion itself. The whole history of Christianity —that is his history. But he has no biography."[1]

2. THE "SON OF MAN."

As has already been suggested, by far the most important factor in the creation of the fictions of the religious imagination that grew up around the figure of the historic Jesus was the pragmatic pressure of emotional needs. Imagination has always been the handmaiden of feeling and will. It pictures forth in fitting symbols the needs of the emotions as those needs arise under the pressure of events. The powerful emotions and loyalties centering in the person and work of Jesus were thrown into fearful chaos by the events of the passion week terminating in the crucifixion. The hopes inspired by contact with his masterful personality seemed broken and crushed forever by his shameful death. It is a familiar fact of psychology, however, that a tragic disappointment of cherished hopes through brute reality is, after a period of depression, often followed by a reassertion of these hopes. A defiant "Never-

[1] Couchoud, *The Enigma of Jesus*, p. 79.

theless" is hurled into the teeth of fate. The spirit of man passes from the "everlasting No" to the "everlasting Yea." It escapes from the hard, cruel immediacy of the brute facts of the world of external reality into the inner world of spiritual reality and borne up on the wings of imagination attains a pitch of enthusiasm where it is able triumphantly to assert that the impossible is possible. "All things are possible to him that believeth."

The followers of Jesus called on the imagination for some sort of escape mechanism, some reinterpretation of the facts, some new and soul-satisfying symbols by means of which they could turn defeat into victory. Here is the supreme rôle of the imagination and it is nowhere more nobly exercised than in the field of religion. The fictions the early Christian imagination threw around the figure of Jesus were not the results of cool ratiocination. They were not the speculative fancies of the philosopher nor yet the fictions of the theologian's brain. They sprang from life. They reflected universal needs of the human heart. To this they owe their perennial freshness and their truth.

In searching among the traditional symbols of

the religious imagination of the Jew for something that would fit their immediate needs, the little Jerusalem group of Jesus' followers would naturally be attracted by the fascinating story of the coming of a Messiah, upon which the purest religious hopes of the nation were based. The fictions of the religious imagination of the Jew associated with the idea of the Messiah were of two main types. The religious imagination of the masses pictured the Messiah as the "Son of David" who would come as a mighty prince, crush the power of the hated Roman, and establish at Jerusalem a kingdom of righteousness and holiness that would extend to the uttermost parts of the earth. Opposed to this crude and imperialistic picture of the masses was the more refined and spiritual ideal of the Messiah as a transcendental and other-world being, affiliated with the bright, celestial life of the angels, though never made co-equal with God, who in the fullness of time was to come to judge the earth. This latter more refined fiction of the religious imagination was called the "Son of Man."

The stern logic of events determined which of these two types of the religious imagination would best fit the emotional needs of the Jerusalem

group struggling with the problem of the life and death of Jesus. The manner of Jesus' taking off, not to mention other factors, precluded the application to him of the cruder form of the religious imagination. The pious imagination of the Jerusalem group, therefore, turned to the celestial figure of the "Son of Man" portrayed in Daniel and Ezra. The Christ of the religious imagination thus inherited at once the eschatological and catastrophic atmosphere surrounding the figure of the "Son of Man." The "Son of Man" was to come again in clouds and glory surrounded by all his angels and erect a judgment bar before which all peoples of the earth were to be assembled. They pictured his coming like a thief in the night for suddenness. The tension of this impending catastrophe engendered feelings that found expression in emotional excesses. Jets of flame sat upon their heads as they talked and communed together. Individuals spoke in unintelligible tongues. Many prophesied and performed miracles. These pneumatological phenomena, parallels to which are to be found in the emotional excesses of religious revivals such as the Great Awakening in this country, reached such a pitch that they had to be controlled. What

it is important to remember is the effect of this intense emotional environment upon the development of the religious imagination. It provided a congenial and stimulating setting for the play of this imagination over the life and death of Jesus in a search for symbols that would fittingly interpret present pressing emotional needs.

Among the fictions of the Jewish imagination associated with the term "Son of Man" was that of a pre-mundane existence. Here we have potentially contained all the tremendous rôle played by the Christ of the speculations of the theological imagination during the great Christological controversies of the first three or four centuries. It is interesting to note, however, that in the earliest tradition, as suggested in Mark, Luke, and Matthew, we have no clear-cut reference to a pre-mundane existence, the cryptic utterance of Luke 10–18, being excepted. This suggests that the memory of the earthly life of Jesus was still fresh in the minds of men so that the wings of the religious imagination were handicapped by a vivid sense of the historic reality.

Most important for the evolution of the religious imagination, therefore, is the fact that the Fourth Gospel, much farther removed in time

from the historical Jesus and thoroughly imbued with the speculative Hellenistic spirit and more or less under the fascinating spell of the fictions of the Pauline imagination, finds its orientation entirely in terms of the fiction of a pre-mundane being who "descended out of heaven," was "with the Father," and "abideth forever." This gospel begins with a hymn of praise to the eternal Logos who inhabits eternity and ends with the assertion that the book was written to prove that Jesus was the Christ, "the eternal Son of God."

In the construction of the picture of the "Son of Man," miracle played an important rôle. It is generally recognized that miracle is an integral part of the historical tradition as to Jesus. It occurs in the *logia,* or oldest sources, although the emphasis is laid more upon the moral and religious teachings of Jesus than upon his miracles. Jesus undoubtedly exercised a powerful psychological influence over the mentally deranged and it was perfectly natural that these acts, which permit of a scientific explanation, should have been looked upon as supernatural. In the religious imagination of the Jew, however, the coming of the "Son of Man" was to be accompanied by many supernatural phenomena. When the

historic Jesus became affiliated with this mental picture of the "Son of Man," with his supernatural accompaniments, it was natural that miracle should assume added importance. Everything that Jesus touched came to be suffused with the golden glow of the miraculous. For the more the imagination surrounded the figure of Jesus with this miraculous atmosphere, the easier it was to fit him into the celestial and supernatural rôle of the "Son of Man." Signs and wonders and mighty works became sign manuals of the promised Messiah. Miracle thus became a powerful means by which the post-resurrection imagination of the Jerusalem group shaped the gospel story of Jesus to meet their immediate pragmatic needs.

In its enthusiastic transformation of the figure of the historic Jesus the post-resurrection imagination of the Jerusalem community was in constant danger of being contradicted by the actual facts. The fiction of the celestial "Son of Man," whose earthly pilgrimage is filled with miraculous manifestations of divine power is contradicted, not only by his death, but also by his signal failure to convince his own people that he was the promised Messiah.

This difficulty is met by introducing into the picture of Jesus the much discussed Messianic secrecy. The writers of the gospels picture Jesus as being aware of his Messianic rôle, but concealing it from the people. They thus make him directly responsible for the failure of his own people to receive him. This seems not only to compromise his moral and intellectual honesty, but likewise to reflect upon the limits of his divine power. It is crude apologetics. But it was far more important to the Christian community that the historical Jesus should symbolize to them all the great religious values, for which as the "Son of Man" he had come to stand in the post-resurrection imagination, than that there should be preserved for posterity a scientific and historically trustworthy account of his life.

The world has gained thereby a vast and inestimable addition to its store of the symbols of the religious imagination, but the task of the historian of Jesus has been made so difficult as almost to drive him to despair.

The rôle assigned to the devils cast out by Jesus is interesting in this connection. The demons, as belonging to that supernatural world to which the "Son of Man" belonged, were endowed,

according to the popular imagination, with keener insight into spiritual verities than the masses. This fact is made use of in drawing the picture of the "Son of Man" and Jesus is represented as charging those from whom devils had been cast out to tell no one the truth about him. The apologetic motive thus introduces an element that actually distorts the figure of the historic Jesus. This element of concealment is foreign to the spirit of the real Jesus. To explain the lack of success of Jesus' teachings, he is also represented as purposely making use of parables, the true meaning of which he did not wish the people to get, but reserved for the inner circles of his disciples. Such intellectual duplicity agrees neither with the character of Jesus himself nor with the nature of the parables themselves. It was introduced to preserve the integrity of the fiction of the celestial "Son of Man" from the disintegrating effect of the facts of history, and particularly the failure of the teachings of Jesus to convert his own people.

Perhaps the most effective means used by the apologetic post-resurrection imagination to further its fiction of the "Son of Man," was the fulfilment of prophecy. From the earliest times

miracle and prophecy have been the evidences of religious leadership and power. The temptation, therefore, for the religious imagination of the early Christians, and especially the Jerusalem group, to seek in the rich storehouse of Old Testament prophecy confirmation for the fiction of the "Son of Man" was irresistible. Important and spectacular events in the life of Jesus, such as his birth, death, resurrection and glorified celestial existence, would naturally be forecast in prophecy. Early the pious imagination capitalized Isaiah's language, "For unto us a child is born, etc." Undoubtedly the famous passage in this same prophet, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel," profoundly influenced the formulation of the dogma of the virgin birth. Matthew acknowledges how it influenced his account of the nativity of Jesus, as he expressly states in chapter 1, verse 23, where this passage is quoted.

The influence of Psalm 110 is distinctly evident in the imaginative portrayal of the resurrection and glorification of Jesus. Psalm 2:7, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee," served not only to strengthen the dogma of the virgin birth, but helped to solve the later trini-

tarian problem of the relation of Jesus as a cult god to the one God of the Jew. Prophecy most of all things enabled the religious imagination to ennoble the shameful, disastrous death on the cross. The evangelists one and all preached that the "Son of Man *must* suffer and die and rise again the third day." The immediate basis of this "must" was of course the religious needs of the post-resurrection period. But Paul and later theologians projected this "must" into the very structure and purpose of the universe. There was nothing so effective in giving carrying power to this "must" as the fulfillment of prophecy.

Prophecies, too, are responsible for the filling in of details in the record of the life of Jesus. Psalm 22 undoubtedly suggested such details in the story of the crucifixion as the casting of lots by the soldiers for Jesus' clothing, the reviling of passers-by, and the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That there should have been so many remarkable similarities between the events of the crucifixion and incidents of prophecy is improbable. The pious imagination filled in the details of the dramatic death of the beloved leader and teacher, using the familiar

language of the prophets. Just where we are to draw the line between actual fact and the intercalations of the devout imagination, scholarship will perhaps never determine accurately.

Thus did the pious imagination of the early Jerusalem community labor ingenuously and with self-immolating devotion to perfect for all time the life picture of their Divine Master. It was an idealization, but the picture was of immeasurable importance, for it was to predetermine the history of Christian piety for two thousand years. It has been said, "What religion a man shall have is a historical accident." But it is an open question whether without this idealization, this transformation of Jesus of Nazareth into the Christ, "the hope of glory," he would ever have been heard of again in history. Furthermore, it is an open question whether, if we had all the earthly details of the historical Jesus in documented historical array, the Jesus of the synoptics, Paul and John, would ever have been possible. It would seem that great figures in the history of religion are never sure of immortality until they have been canonized as symbols of the religious imagination. Behind the canonizations of the saints by the Roman Catholic

Church lies a profound sociological insight, for this preserves them from the canker of time and the acid of historical criticism.

The Jesus of the Christian faith is safe from the critics. His citizenship is in a world where the historical critic is not concerned to take out naturalization papers. "It was first when the community placed behind the gospel of Jesus this figure of the celestial 'Son of Man,' the ruler and world-judge . . . it was first when the picture of the wandering preacher was sketched upon the golden background of the miraculous and woven around with the glory of fulfilled prophecy and invested with the charm of a half-concealed secrecy, it was first when they embodied in him a vast, divine story of salvation, and made him its crown and fulfillment that they succeeded in making the picture of Jesus of Nazareth effective. *For the purely historical is never convincing, but only the living present symbol in which the intimate illuminated religious conviction reveals itself* [italics the author's]. And an age which is unable to live upon the bare moral or religious, but requires all sorts of more or less fantastic eschatological expectations, beliefs in miracles and prophecies, an immediate and unheard-of inter-

vention of God in the course of nature and of history, in all sorts of ways of healing, in messiahs, in devils and demons and in the imminent triumph of God and his own over hostile powers . . . such an age needs such a picture of Jesus as the first disciples created, enshrining the eternal in the colorful shell of the temporal."[2]

3. THE LORD OF GLORY

The "Son of Man" of the Jerusalem group was an eschatological phenomenon and sprang from Jewish tradition. He was essentially a hope. His Jewish followers had transferred to Jesus the precious dreams of their race. He had disappeared into the mysterious and celestial realm of the "Son of Man" and with tense expectation they awaited his coming again on the clouds in glory to set all things to rights. We are still far from the conception of Jesus as redeemer and incarnated only begotten Son of God, co-equal with the Father in power and glory. We have now to trace the contributions made by the imagination of the gentile group to the figure of the

[2] W. Bousset: Kurios Christos: *Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christenthums bis auf Irenæus*, pp. 74 f.

Christ. Their spokesman and interpreter is the apostle to the gentiles, Paul.

Paul, more than any other figure, illustrates the paradox that lies at the heart of early Christianity. For Paul Jesus was a historic fact. The Lord of glory did actually take on himself human flesh and tabernacle among men. The Pauline doctrine of salvation through the cross imperiously demands the historicity of the cross and the humanity of Jesus.[3] Yet Paul's interest lies wholly with the risen Christ, the glorified Redeemer. He worships the Lord of glory, not the son of the carpenter Joseph. Paul, therefore, presents a most interesting paradox. He presupposes the real historic Jesus who died on the cross, and yet his whole attention is directed to the preëxistent and transcendental figure of the Redeemer. Paul's faith is rooted in fact and yet lives in the constructs of the religious imagination. Which for Paul was the real Jesus, the man of Galilee or the Lord of glory, the objective facts of history or the symbols of his immediate, vibrating religious experience? A candid examination of Paul's letters will convince any one that for Paul, as for all the great mystics, the

[3] Romans 8:3; Galatians 3:3.

real basis of religious realities lay in his subjective religious experiences. That Paul projected the symbols of this inner experience into the great beyond, that he pictured in vivid fashion a vast world-drama having as its center the cross of Christ, that he wove round that cross a cosmic philosophy embracing in its sweep the origin and destiny of man, angels and devils, that he made these tremendous fictions of his imagination the basis for distorted conceptions of human nature and society, need not blind us to the fact that he was always tirelessly seeking adequate symbols for inner verities, he was interpreting the spiritual drama within his own soul.

When Paul said, "I know in whom I have believed," he did not have in mind the objective facts as to Jesus, for his writings betray only the most superficial knowledge of those facts. He did not believe because he had exact scientific knowledge. Had he had such knowledge belief would have been unnecessary, even impossible. He *knew* because he *believed*. That is to say, the real basis of his belief was subjective, not objective, emotional and mystical, not historical and scientific. Paul thus becomes the great prototype of the Christian imagination. He forecast in his

own religious experience the path millions were to follow. He is the connecting link between the fragmentary account of the gospels and the vast superstructure of Christian faith, the house of many mansions, which the religious imagination was to erect during all the centuries to follow.

These vivid mystical experiences of Paul, including the revolutionary vision on the way to Damascus and many others, together with the imaginative symbols that grew out of them, could not have originated in a social or psychological vacuum. The development of the Pauline imagination presupposes some social milieu, some definite social setting that could provide the means for disciplining and shaping his ideas. The correlative of Paul's mystical faith in the crucified, risen, and glorified Lord Jesus Christ was the gentile Christian community with its common body of religious experiences growing out of the worship of Jesus, their cult hero.

Paul says, after the vision on the way to Damascus, "I went into Arabia." If we date his conversion at 33 A.D., this period of retirement in the wilderness lasted possibly two years. After his return to Jerusalem in 36 we have a long period of quiet growth and development, of some

ten years spent among the gentile Christians. During all this time the powerful imagination of Paul was playing over the vivid experiences of his conversion and formulating those symbols of the religious imagination, which later were to form the content of his message to the gentiles. The gentile group offered during this period the social reality for Paul's mystical imagery. Out of the worship of Jesus as the cult deity of this gentile group gradually took shape Paul's titanic conception of the prëexistent, divine redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The favorite title applied by Paul and the gentile group to the resurrected Jesus was "Lord" (Κύριος). The term "Son of Man" by which the Jerusalem Christians described the resurrected Jesus was unknown to the gentiles. It was Jewish. The term *kurios,* furthermore, was not taken from the Jerusalem group. In the oldest synoptic gospel, Mark, the term *kurios* occurs only once, and in a sense entirely different from that used by Paul. In Luke and Acts, where Pauline influence is in evidence, it is found more frequently. Whence did Paul and the gentile group get this term and why did they apply it to Jesus? The explanation of the selection by Paul and the gen-

tile group of the term "Lord" must be sought, just as in the case of the selection of the term "Son of Man" by the Jerusalem group, in the social background. When Paul wrote using the term "Lord" it had already back of it a long period of development, gentile and Christian. The risen Jesus had been elevated naturally and spontaneously by the gentile group to the position of a deity. The psychological and social correlative of the term "Lord Jesus" when Paul wrote was the very real, organized and institutionalized piety of the gentile Christians. The phrase "Lord Jesus" stood for a definite body of religious sentiments together with a cultus. What was there in the religious heritage of the gentile group which led them to apply to Jesus, after his elevation to the rôle of cult deity, the term "Lord"?

The traveler who studies the Roman Forum finds still in place the foundations of an ancient temple erected for the worship of Julius Cæsar. The cult of the reigning emperors, destined to play such an important part in the policies of imperial Rome, was an importation from the East. The vast gap between the oriental despot and his subject bred in the latter a spirit of religious veneration. The valleys of the Nile and

the Tigris abound in monuments showing that men thought their kings were incarnations of deities. Alexander as conqueror of the East fell heir to this worship of the sovereign. When Augustus ended the long period of bloody wars with a *pax romana* that was world-wide, it is small wonder that grateful nations dubbed him *divus* Augustus. Augustus cleverly capitalized this religious devotion to strengthen his power, so that worship of the reigning emperor was made part of "one hundred per cent" loyalty. Pliny says in his famous letter to Trajan in 105 that those Christians who stubbornly refused to offer sacrifices and pour out libations of wine to the waxen images of the emperor he ordered to be executed (perseverantes duci jussi).[4] The psychological effect of this widespread emperor-cult can hardly be overestimated. It accustomed men to seeing in outstanding personalities the incarnation of deity. It satisfied the heart-hunger for immediate and tangible contacts with the divine. It schooled the popular imagination to associate salvation and religious peace of mind, not with some remote and

[4] The writer has discussed this letter more in detail in a doctor's dissertation, *Hadrian's Rescript an Minicius Fundanus*, Leipzig, 1900.

transcendent being, but with a god present in human form and subject more or less to the physical limitations of human existence.

Kurios (Lord), Paul's favorite term for the glorified Jesus, was the term applied to deified rulers. It was used of the Ptolemies of Egypt, of the tyrant Tiberius, the fool Caligula, and the monster Nero. The Roman official who presided at the martyrdom of Polycarp was amazed that he would rather die than use the term *kurios* of the reigning emperor. It may be objected that this political use of the term can have little or no bearing upon the use of the term by the small struggling sect of Christians. This might be true if this political usage stood alone. But we find that the term *kurios* enjoyed a very general use in connection with deities who were in close and intimate contact with the daily lives of the masses. Thanks to the intermingling of cultures in the Roman Empire, a perfect welter of cults arose with their special heroes and heroines enjoying every phase of deification. The term was used of Artemis of Ephesus and the Great Mother Cybele, whose cult was widespread. It was used of Isis, Serapis, Hermes. It was applied to Æsculapius. In general, the history of the term seems to show

that it was reserved to characterize the most intimate and vital religious loyalties of the group.

This, then, is the setting through which we are to understand the meaning of the term *kurios* as applied by the gentile imagination to the Christ. We have to picture to ourselves the imaginations of these gentile Christians seizing upon a term, already enjoying a familiar religious and social significance in the gentile world, and using it to symbolize what the Christ had come to mean to them. At this stage it would be misleading to ascribe to the term *kurios* any definite theological connotation. It was not ex-cogitated from a theologian's brain. It was born of need. It was the adopted child of use and wont. The gentile Christians lived and moved in communities accustomed to cult gods and cult "lords." What more natural than that they should adopt this term to describe the deified Jesus to whom they prayed? Says Paul, "And if there are so-called gods, either in heaven or on earth, as there are many gods and *many 'lords'* so we have one God and Father and one 'Lord Jesus Christ.'"[5] Note that in this passage the "Lord" Jesus Christ is put in the same class with other

[5] I Corinthians 8: 15.

"lords," he is worshiped as divine, he is not made co-equal with the Father or the one supreme God. We have not yet Trinitarianism.

It is obvious, then, that we are to place back of Paul's mystical "in the Lord" the objective reality of a *kurios* cult with its rites and organization and group consciousness. Paul's letters show that this group life provided him with the objective reality through which he himself sought to visualize the mystical experiences suggested by the phrase "in the Lord." The little group of believers was the only tangible earthly manifestation of this transcendent and glorified fiction of Paul's imagination. Christ is the head of which the church is the body, says Paul (I Cor. 12; Rom. 12). Here is the concrete factual manifestation of the "in the Lord." To Paul's heaven-storming imagination groping after spiritual realities the phrase "in the Lord" was no figure of speech. It described a reality. Christ was factually present in the pious enthusiasms of the group gathered for his worship. The pneumatological phenomena that accompanied these gatherings were proof of that.

We can now state what was Paul's unique contribution to the religious imagination of early

Christianity. He hypostatized the symbols of group experience. He clothed the fictions of his imagination, shaped by the experiences of the Christian community, with eternal and transcendental thinghood. In so doing Paul laid the basis for that vast structure of Christian theology which during the next three or four centuries, after long and acrimonious debates, was to rise in stately splendor upon the shifting and yet eternally human basis of religious feeling and emotion. In these mystical creations of the Pauline imagination the historic Jesus seemed lost forever. It was not necessarily a loss. It was more of a gain. The mere fact of the crucifixion of Jesus outside the walls of Jerusalem would never have stirred the imagination of the pagan world. Paul lifted Jesus above the brutal reality, gave him a regal setting in a transcendental world, and transformed him into a symbol of hopes as enduring as the life of the race. The historic Jesus died and was buried. No one knows where. The Christ of Paul will never die and as often as the critics think that he is dead, he astounds and discomfits them by rising again from the grave in which the critics have laid him.

By dramatizing Jesus' tragic death Paul made him immortal. The picture of a suffering and dying and risen god was already familiar to the pagan world through the myths associated with the Babylonian Tammuz, the Syrian Adonis, the Egyptian Osiris, and the Greek Dionysus. Without this imaginative transformation of the cross Christianity would never have survived the shame of Calvary. By this stroke of imaginative genius Paul at once lifted Jesus out of his narrow Jewish environment and made him the possession of all time. He became the symbol of the dearest hopes of the pagan world. He symbolized the emancipation of mortal men from the hopeless cycle of birth, death, and oblivion. The God-man triumphing over the grave became symbolic of the struggle of every soul against moral defeat and spiritual death.

It is perhaps a thankless task to point out the elements of doubtful value introduced into the Christian imagination by Paul. His extreme mysticism tended to negate the objective series of reality. Whatever we may say of Paul the Christian organizer, Paul the theologian was conspicuously lacking in saving common sense. Since Paul's thought moved entirely in the at-

mosphere of the glorified Christ it was enveloped in a penumbra of crude supernaturalism that peopled the world with principalities and powers, devils and demons. Paul paved the way for two of the darkest pages of Christian theology. His doctrine of predestination is incompatible with the dignity and integrity of the human will and his dogma of original sin is a grotesque absurdity in the light of modern psychology. The logical results of these two doctrines would be a fatalistic pessimism. Finally, Paul split the world into a hopeless dualism which extended from the inner struggle between flesh and spirit to the cosmic contest between God and his angels and the devil with the world of demons. These elements of the Pauline imagination undoubtedly added to the dramatic power of his teaching. They are still used with more or less effect by popular evangelists such as the Rev. "Billy" Sunday. Paul's lurid picture of a universe filled with principalities and powers, with devils and demons, with angels and archangels, blackened and scarred by the unspeakable wickedness of human nature, menaced by the final judgment and the fires of an eternal hell, suited the

age in which Paul lived but no longer appeals to the modern man.

4. "AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US."

In the Pauline imagination fact is lost in symbol. The events of the life of the man Jesus are assumed and then immediately transcended. One fact is made central, namely, the cross. Around it the powerful imagination of Paul weaves a drama of cosmic import, drawing inspiration from his own rich mystical experiences and seeking his symbols in the life of the gentile group of Christians and his past rabbinical training. It is obvious that the Pauline imagination tended to strip Jesus of all factual reality. His short pilgrimage seems like a tragic dream, the earthly sojourn of a divinely lovely and suffering ghost. This was in fact taught by the first of the long line of heretics, namely, the Docetists. The writer of the fourth gospel, though profoundly influenced by the spell of the Pauline imagination, seems to have recognized its danger. He felt instinctively that the fictions of the religious imagi-

nation, to be effective, must be anchored in reality. That is to say, religious experiences must always find their best symbols in daily life. In some ways John was more spiritual, more subtly metaphysical and transcendental than Paul. But he possessed the power of clothing subtle religious values in the familiar dress of daily life. For him the events of Jesus' life were both facts and symbols.

The author of the Fourth Gospel had brooded over the events of Jesus' life until they had become suffused with the rich coloring of his own rare piety. So fascinated was he with the religious values here suggested that his mystical imagination deals very freely and uncritically with these events. They were molded to suit the exigencies of this mystically sensitive and poetic piety. The result is a beautiful prose poem in which incidents in the life of Jesus, some historical, others fictions of the poetic imagination, are made to be the vehicles of transcendental verities sensed by a delicately balanced mystical soul. "Thus it is that whereas the comparatively impersonal narrative of the synoptics has kept us the priceless record of a real Person who lives and grows within the world of time, here it is

a being at once personal and metaphysical—mysterious and remote, yet intimate and dear—whom the genius of John puts before us. It is the fruit of his own vision and meditation, his own first-hand experience of the divine which he pours into the evangelical mold."[6]

Here is a mental atmosphere which it is impossible for the modern critical and sophisticated mind to grasp. This beautiful epic, in spite of its poetry, its spiritual loftiness, its moving tenderness and depth of insight, strikes us as something almost too subtly and ethereally spiritual "for human nature's daily food," that is to say, it is too supernatural. The fourth Gospel is by all odds the most supernatural book in the entire Bible. The wonderful prologue, 1:1-18, like the blast of the herald's trumpet announcing the rise of the curtain of the drama, pictures the pre-existent beatific life of the eternal Word with God before the world was, "full of grace and truth." The first scene is the baptism where the dramatic figure of John the Baptist is entirely subordinated to the glorious personality of the son of God, quite contrary to the older synoptic story, and John is made to say, "Behold the Lamb

[6] Underhill, *The Mystic Way*, p. 225.

of God that taketh away the sin of the world." In the beautiful story of the marriage in Cana of Galilee the heaven-sent hero of the Johannine imagination proclaims his divine power by turning water into wine and we are expressly informed the reason for it. "This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested his glory." The very words and looks of Jesus were miraculous events. At the mere sound of this divine voice a whole "cohort of soldiers" (500!), and their officers were so confounded that they "went backward and fell to the ground." The trembling Jesus of the synoptics, who in unspeakable agony of soul sweated great drops of blood in Gethsemane, is gone, and the divine Son of God goes to his doom with godlike composure. When his enemies seek to lay hands upon him he eludes them with all the ease of an impalpable spirit. He reads the mind of the traitor Judas like an open book and with the quiet omniscience of a god says, "That thou doest, do quickly."

Nothing gives us a clearer insight into the subtle supernatural and spiritual atmosphere of this book than the idea that the mere sight of the incarnated Son of God assures eternal life. The narrative begins with the pregnant phrase, "And

we *beheld* his glory, glory as of the only begotten, full of grace and truth." It continues, "For this is the will of my Father that every one that *beholdeth* the Son and believeth on him shall have eternal life." The final consummation is suggested in I John 3:2, "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested we shall be like him *for we shall see him as he is.*" The wonder-working effect of the sight of the Son of God is that the believer shall take on the form of God himself and be endowed with eternal life. This idea is Greek in its antecedents. In the great mystery cults, such as that at Eleusis just outside Athens and in the later Isis cult, the culmination of long periods of preparation through fasting, purifications and penance was a face-to-face vision of the deity. In describing the cult of Isis, Apuleius says, "I trod the borders of death, I stood on the threshold of Proserpine . . . about midnight I saw the sun shining in translucent beam, I appeared before the upper and lower deities face to face and in intimate contact offered my prayers." [7]

Not the least amazing feature of John's narra-

[7] *Metam.*, XI, 23.

tive, however, is that its supernaturalism seems natural. There is nothing strained about it. The picture, miracles and all, is an artistic whole. We touch here a high point in the history of the religious imagination. So consummate is this art that we never get the impression of the magical or the ghostly. A mass of concrete situations are given with a realism that is surprising, even in the case of events, such as the raising of Lazarus, which are obviously fictions. This divine being thirsts and asks a wayward Samaritan woman for water. He weeps at the grave-side of his dead friend Lazarus.. He is actually tried, condemned, and crucified. He calls his followers friends, not serfs. John has accomplished the seemingly impossible. He has taken the Lord of glory of the Pauline imagination and given him a concrete setting in space and time, something Paul could not do or was not interested in doing. He has ushered upon the earthly scene a mysterious metaphysical abstraction, the eternal Logos, and yet he has done it with such realistic skill that we are almost inclined to forget the paradox and exclaim *ecce homo* and also *ecce deus.*

How was it possible for the religious imagination to have created this artistic synthesis of the

divine and the human? It would be impossible to draw such a picture today. We are too painfully conscious of the gap between the divine and the human. We are too sophisticated, too critically minded, too deeply imbued with the scientific spirit. The key to the enigma is that the integrity, the sincerity, and the truth of all great creations of the artistic as well as of the religious imagination are reflections of their age. One who studies the face of the Hermes of Praxiteles, the sole authenticated masterpiece from the great period of Greek art, is impressed with the blending of the divine and human that the sculptor has here accomplished. We feel that a being might have lived who united, as do the classical lineaments of this face, the frailties of a man with the mastery of a god. Such artistic creations are now impossible for the reason that the psychological prerequisites to such a masterpiece are gone forever. We no longer believe in gods who take human shape and mingle among men, as Homer and Æschylus believed. The sculptured face of the god with its subtle blending of divine and human is an artistic reproduction in marble of popular beliefs. It stood for a psychological reality.

The realism of the picture the Johannine imagination draws of the incarnated Logos is a reflection of the mental attitude of the age in which he wrote. He was surrounded by men and women who believed in incarnations of deities, who worshiped abstractions tabernacling in fleshly shapes. The imagination of the Johannine writer was not, therefore, consciously playing with fictions. Because that background is lacking for us the story of John, in spite of its unapproachable beauty, will always appear more or less remote and unreal. The orthodox apologist tries to preserve this background by means of the dogma of supernatural inspiration. The whole thing is a miracle. John and his readers did not need this orthodox theological prop. The writer of the fourth gospel would hardly have understood what is meant by the modern dogma of inspiration. It would have seemed to him superfluous and absurd. For the book was for its author and for his readers but the reflection of religious realities. And living religious realities do not need apologetics.

Even more important than the social background for the understanding of John's realism was his mysticism. The fourth gospel is perhaps the most classical expression of religious mysti-

cism we possess. John, like all great mystics, shows a tendency to blur the objective reality familiar to common sense. The vivid and absorbing inner mystical experiences tend to distort or color all other phases of experience. Thus do the fictions of the mystical imagination become fused or confused with objective data of history. The mental pictures derived by John from oral tradition as to the life of Jesus or even pictures that were the pure creations of his mystical imagination surged up in his mind on the top of waves of mystical feeling and became themselves fused with these feelings and partook of their inner mystical reality. It is thus possible for John to describe with perfect ingenuousness and startling realism scenes from the life of Jesus that never took place at all. The story is only a pictured dream in which the loved presence of Jesus is made to speak words, perform acts, miraculous or otherwise, that are in harmony with the spirit of the dream or play of the mystical imagination.

The histories of the mystics abound in instances of this sort. An ignorant German nun, Anne Catherine Emmerich (died 1824), developed the power of describing, during her mystical experiences, incidents in the lives of Jesus or the Virgin

Mary in such a realistic fashion that they sounded like the accounts of an eyewitness. Describing the trial of Jesus she said: "The night had been extremely cold and the morning was dark and cloudy. A little hail had fallen, which surprised every one, but towards twelve o'clock the day became brighter . . . and when Jesus after the scourging fell at the foot of the pillar, I saw Claudia Proclus send to the Mother of God a bundle of linen," etc.[8] Did we not have means of checking this story it might be mistaken for fact. It is only a fiction of the pious imagination built up out of material gathered here and there and yet tinged by the vivid inner mystical experiences with a note of convincing reality.

The famous farewell address of John, 14–17, perhaps the best liked passage in the New Testament, is a masterpiece of imaginative description of how, according to John, the loved wonder-working Son of God would have talked to his intimate followers just on the eve of his separation from them to take his place in his Father's house of many mansions. There is no better illustration in religious literature of how the crude facts of life must be universalized, spiritualized, and

[8] Quoted by Underhill, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

freed from the shackles of time and space through the symbolizing power of a great religious imagination before they can most effectively appeal to men.

Perhaps the most realistic touch in the entire gospel is in the story of the resurrection of Lazarus where it is said that Jesus wept, apparently from human sympathy for bereaved friends. We have our choice of explaining this realistic touch on the basis of the historicity of the story or as a fiction of the mystical imagination. One who asserts that we have here an event of history and not a realistic fiction of the imagination is faced at once with the difficulty that this miracle, the most spectacular in the life of Jesus, is not mentioned by the other synoptic evangelists. It is improbable either that this miracle would have escaped them or that knowing of it they would not have mentioned it. The most obvious explanation is that it never happened. The question remains then, Why should John have introduced such a story into his narrative? The reason is suggested in Jesus' reply to Martha's lament that, had Jesus been present, her brother would not have died: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he

die yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25). This anchors the whole story to the central theme of the gospel announced by the writer in chapter 20, verse 31, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." The book is a spiritual portrait, not history, and this incident is introduced for artistic effect.

Suppose that a great artist were seeking to portray as difficult a theme as this, "He that believeth in me, though he die yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," what symbols must he select to convey this subtle religious value? "What better symbol could he select than the calling of his friend Lazarus from the grave? And shall he express it vaguely and obscurely because he does not believe that it happened, but merely wishes to arouse an idea in the breast of the observer? We would call him stupid indeed did he not paint in striking fashion Jesus standing before the grave, amid the strained expectation of the crowd, with uplifted arm crying out, 'Lazarus, come forth,' while behind the half-open door of the tomb shows the figure of the dead wrapped in a shroud. And

shall we blame the author of the fourth gospel when he uses his art, the art of painting with words instead of a brush, in equally vivid and effective fashion? Shall we blame him because we do not believe that what he paints really happened when perhaps he does not even believe it himself?"[9]

To introduce into such a picture tears of mere human sympathy spoils the artistic effect. It would be more natural for Jesus to rejoice, for he knew that the next moment by the use of his divine power he would turn her tears of sorrow into those of joy. The divine Son of God "was moved with indignation within himself" and wept because of the lack of faith both of Mary and Martha and of the Jews. The singular indifference of Jesus when he tarried two days upon receiving the news of Lazarus's sickness does not fit into the scheme of human psychology as we know it. It does fit the Johannine picture of the divine wonder-working Son of God who says, "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there to the intent that ye may believe." Every touch of the artist's pen is made to heighten the subtle supernaturalism of this incident. Hence the de-

[9] Schmiedel, *Das vierte Evangelium*, pp. 77 ff.

lay and indifference to the sufferings of the bereaved; hence the dramatic protest of the loving sister, "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days"; hence the prayer at the grave-side uttered not to get power to work the miracle but "because of the multitude which standeth around"; hence the spectacular, almost thaumaturgic touch, "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth"; hence the quiet God-like self-sufficiency of the final command "Loose him and let him go." This is the picture of a god, not of a man, drawn by a mystic and a poet.

What then shall we say of the enigma of Jesus? Are there any inferences which we may draw from this superficial sketch of the central problem of the Christian imagination, the problem of Jesus or Christ? In the first place, the facts amply show that the distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith is a legitimate one and corresponds to reality. It gives rise to a very real question, one that will be discussed in the next chapter, What is Christianity? Are we to find its essence in the Jesus of historical fact or in the Christ of the fictions of the religious imagination?

In the second place, the facts also justify the

conclusion that what we may confidently assert of the historical Jesus of space and time does not hold for the celestial being, the "Lord of Glory" of the Christian imagination. There may be and doubtless is a close connection between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. It is doubtful, however, whether the historian will ever be able to determine accurately just what that connection is. The data left to us are too meager, the factors entering into the problem are so many and so obscure that we are thrown back for the most part upon the surmises of the scholars.

In the third place, it is important to distinguish the immediate factual basis of the lofty idealizations of the Christian imagination, centered in the preëxistent and immortal Christ, from the remoter facts as to the historical Jesus. Between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith lie the vivid religious experiences of his followers aroused by his death and the empty grave. How vivid those experiences were may be inferred from the Pentecost story of the jets of flame, the speaking with tongues and the prophesyings. In Paul especially we can see that the immediate background of his picture of the Christ was not

the Jesus of history, but his religious experiences and those of the gentile group with which he was associated.

In the fourth place, it is well to remember that neither the historical reality of the man Jesus nor the psychological reality of the vivid religious experiences aroused by his career guarantee the absolute and final validity of the precious fictions created by the religious imagination as symbols of these experiences. The concepts of God the Father, Christ the Redeemer, the blood atonement, original sin, or the final judgment, are after all only symbols and must inevitably be altered or give place to other symbols that better express the religious aspirations of another age.

As one watches the kaleidoscopic changes that are ever under way in the pluralistic welter of reality, difference treads constantly upon the heels of identity in religion as in everything else. Perhaps it is just as well that it is so, for, "Certainty is the root of despair. The inevitable stales, while doubt and hope are sisters. Not unfortunately, the universe is wild—game flavored as a hawk's wing. Nature is miracle all. She knows no laws; the same returns not, save

to bring the different. The slow round of the engraver's lathe gains but the breadth of a hair, but the difference is distributed back over the whole curve, never an instant true—ever not quite."[10]

[10] William James, "A Pluralistic Mystic." *Hibbert Journal*, VIII, 758.

Chapter IV

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

Quid est, quod amo, quum te amo?—Augustine

1. THE PROBLEM.

THE conclusions of the last chapter show the large part played by fictions of the religious imagination in the origin of Christianity. They indicate that the controversy which the Fundamentalists would wage with modern culture is only part of a larger question which concerns, not only evolution and the Bible, but the very essence of Christianity itself. What is the real basis of Christianity, the Jesus of history or the Christ of faith? Are the facts actually known about Jesus so few, disconnected, and overlaid by the fictions of his followers as to be practically negligible? The central problem of Christian apologetics is now no longer miracle, inspiration, the virgin birth, or the resurrection. It is: What is Christianity? Is it a fact or is it a fiction or is it a blend of both? If it is a blend

of both, how are they related and what is their relative importance?

There are, generally speaking, four answers to the question.

The radicals, basing their conclusions partly upon the negative results of biblical criticism and partly upon the data of comparative religion, deny outright the historical Jesus and assert that Christianity originated in a Christ-myth similar to contemporary pagan myths of savior deities.

At the opposite extreme from the radicals stand the orthodox Protestant and Catholic groups, who do not distinguish sharply between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, but claim for both, thanks to the supernaturalism that sanctions them, equal historical validity.

Between these two extremes lie two other groups, the Protestant Liberals and the Catholic Modernists. They agree in their desire to mediate between Christianity and modern culture. They accept the conclusions of science and claim that they support rather than discredit the claims of Christianity upon modern man. They differ, however, in their points of approach. The Protestant Liberals, led by such scholars as Harnack and Bousset of Germany, insist that the histori-

cal facts as to the life and teachings of Jesus should be made the basis of Christianity. The later encrustations of doctrine and worship and ecclesiastical organization have obscured the original historical truth of the gospel. Their cry is "Back to Jesus," with his gospel of the kingdom, the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man, the law of love, and emphasis on the supreme value of the human soul.

The Catholic Modernist objects that this cry for a return to the gospel *of* Jesus as opposed to the countless gospels *about* Jesus, discounts the facts of history, ignores the value of a Christian experience continuous from age to age, and requires a break with tradition and a religious detachment possible for a scholar like Harnack, but unthinkable for the average conventional Christian. The religious symbols of one age can never be effectively utilized by another different age without being modified. The Modernists, therefore, falling back upon the idea of development, so attractively presented by Cardinal Newman, the spiritual father of the Modernists, assert that true Christianity is a living and growing organism whose vitality is evinced in the effective

way in which it adapts itself to the needs of succeeding ages. While the Liberal stresses *facts*, the Modernist is inclined to pin his faith to *values*. The Liberal minimizes the rôle of imagination in early Christianity and clings to the findings of the historian. The Modernist magnifies the rôle of the imagination, subordinating the facts to it.

2. THE FUNDAMENTALIST AND HIS MENTAL STEREOTYPES.

The most interesting and at the same time the most tragic phase of Fundamentalism is its singular helplessness in the face of modern culture. It is terrified and scandalized at the inroads of modern culture upon traditional beliefs, and yet it has no solution to offer. This inadequacy of Fundamentalism is to be traced to a basic weakness, namely, its inability to draw any intelligent distinction between fact and fiction in religion. The demand today is for clear thinking in religion, but what the Fundamentalist wants is "safe" thinking. But "clear" thinking and "safe" thinking are not necessarily identical. The vision of the Fundamentalist is blurred, be-

cause between him and reality there intervenes a mass of precious mental stereotypes, legacies from the past.

Plato, in his immortal allegory of the cave, describes its inmates as chained so that "they see only their own shadows or the shadows of one another which the fire throws upon the opposite wall of the cave." This illustrates one of the most universal and yet least realized phases of life. We all live in an unreal and often false mental environment composed of the fixed traditional conceptions we have of men and things. We inherit stereotyped symbols, traditional mental pictures by means of which we orient ourselves not only in our relations to each other but also with regard to God and devils, heaven and hell. The Fundamentalist reacts to his mental picture of evolution, not to the facts. Our creeds are composed of "sectarian artifacts"[1] which we have never subjected to critical examination. We are usually completely ignorant of their origin and history. We inherit them just as we do our language or social institutions. These mental stereotypes, especially when weighted with the inertia of mass opinion, so powerful in a democ-

[1] Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, p. 21.

racy, or when made sacrosanct by religion, exercise a tyrannical rule over the minds of men that few are able to throw off. The chief weakness of the Fundamentalist imagination is that it is highly stereotyped. For nowhere do our mental stereotypes escape beneficent criticism so easily as in traditional religion.

The most striking stereotype of the Fundamentalist imagination is supernaturalism. This stereotype has an ancient and honorable lineage. It is derived directly from the Scriptures. In the naïve supernaturalism of the Bible fact and fiction are uncritically blended and we have no evidence that even Jesus himself felt there was any problem. Miracle in the modern sense, the correlative of which is the scientific conception of law, did not exist for Jesus and his contemporaries. It was as natural to associate marvelous deeds with great religious leaders as it is for us to associate evolution with biology. When the Fundamentalist, however, makes this stereotype of supernaturalism basic for his religion, he closes the door to any *rapprochement* between religion and science. A miracle may be *believed;* it can never have scientific proof. By very definition it belongs to a realm in which scientific proof

is not possible. All attempts to prove it end in logical contradictions and absurdities. When we say that the historicity of the resurrection of Lazarus is evinced by the fact that it is part of a miraculously inspired record, we are proving miracle by miracle, which is arguing in a circle. The Fundamentalist is guilty of an inexcusable inconsistency when, after asserting that he believes in miracle, which of course he has a perfect right to do, he then seeks to defend it by arguments and proofs that can never be applied to miracle. To be perfectly consistent he should be content with simple belief and let scientific or historical proof alone. There is but one legitimate use for miracle and that is as a symbol of the religious imagination. Miracle has interest for us only as symbolizing the way in which men of long ago represented divine activity. Their symbols no longer suit the modern type of imagination but were perfectly natural and legitimate to them.

The stereotype of supernaturalism is directly responsible for the failure to distinguish fact from fiction in the Gospel narratives. Consequently, the Fundamentalist's picture of Jesus is a blur of contradictions and absurdities. The Funda-

mentalist insists that the Liberal does not stand in any religious relation to Jesus because he does not worship him as God. "Jesus for him is an example for faith, not the object of faith." [2] The Fundamentalist claims to stand in a religious relation because he worships Jesus as God. The Fundamentalist apparently is talking of the Christ of the religious imagination, while the Liberal has in mind the Jesus of history. The Fundamentalist, furthermore, claims that the Liberal has no right to say that Jesus should be imitated as the first Christian, for Jesus had two characteristics which make it forever impossible for him to be the ideal Christian character, namely, his Messianic consciousness and his sinlessness. Men are made Christians by what the divine God-man Jesus did for them and not by imitating him. To imitate him is impossible, for Jesus "was no more a Christian than God is a religious being. God is the object of all religion, he is absolutely necessary to all religion; but he himself is the only being in the universe who can never in his own nature be religious. So it is with Jesus as related to Christian faith." It follows, therefore, that "if we look for a complete illustration of the

[2] Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 85.

Christian life we cannot find it in the religious experience of Jesus."[3] Then, as though suddenly aware of the Docetic tone of this language, the writer adds, "Jesus certainly led a true human life" and as "our supreme and perfect example is worthy of imitation."[4]

Now here is confusion worse confounded. Apparently we have at least three Jesuses, the human Jesus of the Fundamentalist, who may be imitated but not worshiped; the preëxistent divine Jesus of the Fundamentalist, who may be worshiped but not imitated; and finally the Jesus of the Liberal, who, according to the Fundamentalist, is a sort of religious and moral monstrosity who can be neither worshiped nor imitated. The Fundamentalist offers the Liberal the following dilemma. If you worship Jesus, you have a religion, but you cannot do this since you deny he is God. If you imitate him, you get moral inspiration which, of course, is not religion. But since you must either worship or imitate Jesus, it follows that he can have no religious value for you whatsoever. It is to such absurd quibblings that the Fundamentalist scholar is reduced because his

[3] Machen, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

hard and fast supernaturalism prevents his distinguishing intelligently between the Jesus of history and the Christ of the religious imagination. There is but one satisfactory way out of this theological and metaphysical muddle and that is to recognize that the God-man Jesus Christ was a symbol of the early Christian imagination and should be interpreted as such, never as prosaic historical fact.

The Fundamentalist's mental stereotype of the supernatural is mainly responsible for his vain attempt to base religious realities on a book. "Christianity is based on an account of something that happened in the first century of our era." [5] That is to say, the validity of the Christian religion stands or falls with the truth or falsity of a record of certain alleged historical events. "Christian experience depends absolutely on an event." [6] "Christian experience is rightly used when it confirms the documentary evidence. But it can never possibly provide a substitute for the documentary evidence." Not what men felt or still feel Jesus to mean to them, but what the biblical record states about him is the basis of

[5] Machen, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

religion. "A creed is not a mere expression of Christian experience, but on the contrary it is a setting forth of those facts upon which experience is based."[7] "The narration of the facts is history; the narration of the facts with the meaning of the facts is doctrine."[8]

This curious theological hysteron proteron which exactly inverts the order of religious experience is directly traceable to an almost superstitious regard for a supernaturally inspired and hence infallible book. Misguided religious loyalty has turned the Bible into a fetish, with the result that men transfer the seat of religious realities from experience, where it belongs, to the dusty page of a printed document. Religion is life, not a book which is only an outgrowth of life.

The Fundamentalist apparently learns little from history. He offers us an "either-or"—either the "facts" of the New Testament record are true or Christianity is bankrupt. This is dangerous in the light of the past. In 1615 Pope Paul V and the Inquisition told Galileo that either his sun-centered astronomy was false or else the

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

whole Christian faith was shipwrecked, and placed on the Index every book that taught the motion of the earth. In 1724 John Hutchinson, a professor at Cambridge, claimed that belief in the Newtonian theory meant "infidelity." Calvin said the choice lay between Galileo and the Bible and asked "Who will venture to place the authority of Copernicus above that of the Holy Spirit?" The theologians who explained earthquakes, thorns and thistles, and the carnage among animals as due to the curse visited upon the earth because of Adam's sin branded the geologists and biologists, who explained these things in terms of natural forces, as "impugners of the sacred record," "infidel" assailants of "the truth of God." Geology was called "a dark art," "not a subject of lawful enquiry," "an awful evasion of the testimony of revelation." Geology is now quite a reputable science while religion seems to survive.

The church long laid it down as an indisputable fact that storms were due to "the prince of the power of the air." This was thought to be corroborated by the diabolical behavior of thunderbolts, and elaborate formulæ of exorcism, including the ringing of consecrated bells, were

used until Franklin, with his lightning-rod, forever laid the demons of the air without any visible evil effects upon religion. John Wesley said, "The giving up of witchcraft is in effect the giving up of the Bible," a remarkable parallel to the contention of William Jennings Bryan that to accept evolution is to give up the Bible. Witchcraft and special creation are now both discredited and yet the Bible is still held in high repute.

In 1875 a geologist, Professor Alexander Winchell of Vanderbilt University, taught that men lived before Adam and that the human race was not descended from Adam. The religious body in control of the University removed him from his position with the declaration: "This is an age in which scientific atheism, having divested itself of the habiliments that most adorn and dignify humanity, walks abroad in shameless denudation. . . . We will have no more of this." Hardly a year passes that we do not add to our knowledge of these pre-Adamitic races of men. Meanwhile Vanderbilt University has passed from under theological control and teaches these facts of anthropology to the young with no visible injury to religion. The whole history of science

is a story of one long retreat on the part of orthodox religion from its traditional conceptions of the factual bases of faith. Yet religion survives. Well may the scientist say to his Fundamentalist friend enamored of "facts" with supernatural sanctions that only "an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign."

It may be maintained, however, that this terrible dilemma of "either-or," which has proven so singularly impotent to dam the ever-widening stream of scientific knowledge, still holds for the origin of the Christian religion. In the light of the constant failure of theology's attempt to base religion upon alleged fact solely or mainly it would seem wise not to force upon Christianity the alternatives of establishing the historicity of certain events or of being discredited. Let us make this as concrete as possible. Suppose we ask a jury of the most capable and unprejudiced historians, men of unquestioned scholarship and intellectual honesty, to decide as to the relative historical trustworthiness of the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus and the assassination of Julius Cæsar. Does any one suppose for a moment that they would be able to reach the same

unanimity of opinion with regard to the resurrection that they would reach as to the way in which Cæsar met his death?

Furthermore, if we find upon reading a history of New Testament criticism, such as Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus,* that as scholars have mastered more thoroughly what is to be known of the life of Jesus their doubts as to the historicity of the virgin birth or physical resurrection have increased, ought we not to hesitate as to the wisdom of making the historicity of these events a condition prerequisite to the Christian life? Says Loisy, "The inhabitants of the earth, down to the present moment, experienced grace in a manifold variety of forms. Their slow progress seems to evolve in a field much wider than that which the theology of the past centuries would assign. The notion of salvation itself is not immutable; why then should its conditions be immutable? Shall we make the possibility for moral restoration for each man, and that of a progressive education of humanity in its different branches, depend on ideas and facts of which the reality cannot be incontestably established? Either I am much deceived, or we are committing a violent anachronism and are

strangely misunderstanding the prevalent temper of our time when we suppose that our intellectual attitude towards certain points of belief—for example, towards the resurrection of Jesus—either could or ought to have been that of the first Christian generations."[9]

All would agree that Christianity is "based upon an account of something that happened in the first century of our era," as the Fundamentalist contends.[10] But all turns upon what sort of facts are here presupposed. It is certainly a fact that the early disciples believed that Jesus rose in the flesh and ascended into heaven and on the basis of that belief started a great movement. But the fact of Paul's religious experiences and the fact of the physical resurrection are two different things. It is hardly convincing to say that to deny the factual reality of the resurrection is to base Paul's experiences upon an illusion and, therefore, to strip them of all religious value. Because the gods of Olympus or of ancient Egypt were, from our point of view, illusions, it does not follow that the symbolic rôle they played in the lives of men of old had no religious value.

[9] *Hibbert Journal*, VIII, 489.
[10] Machen, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

Similarly the twelve patriarchs who gave their names to the tribes of Israel are now held to have been legendary characters, but it does not follow that the value they had for the religious imagination of the ancient Hebrews was thereby destroyed. If it is recognized that the interest of the religious imagination lies and has always lain in the realm of symbols and that a symbol does not necessarily depend either upon its logical coherence or its scientific truthfulness, many of the difficulties of a factually minded Christian faith will disappear. Symbols of the religious imagination spring immediately from the social milieu and strike their roots into levels of experience that lie deeper than thought. They will vary with the group or the age.

The Fundamentalist then faces an *impasse,* the far-reaching implication of which he does not realize. He has inherited a naïve supernaturalism perfectly natural to the authors of the Bible, but singularly out of place in the modern world. This naïve supernaturalism was peculiar to an age that had no idea of the complexities of the problem of religious experience. It was ignorant of the psychological factors involved. In the heat of religious enthusiasms men slipped easily and

unconsciously from the realm of fact over into that of fictions of the religious imagination. They made use of religious symbols, not only as convenient means for representing inner religious experience, but likewise as instruments through which to get knowledge of men, nature, and God. An exact scientific knowledge of nature and of the workings of the human mind, which might have checked this uncritical use of symbols of the religious imagination, was lacking. The naïve, uncritical religious realism of the Bible is justifiable because inseparable from the age. It is not justifiable in the man who lives in the midst of our modern culture. By clinging to it the Fundamentalist is forced to live in two worlds, between which lie centuries of intensive political, economic, and intellectual development. When he prays to his God, he uses the language and presupposes the world-view of men who lived two thousand years ago. When he educates his child, combats disease, or develops his business, he appeals whole-heartedly to the latest and best achievements of the modern world. Such a vicious separation between the world of religious faith and that of contemporary life is impossible. It creates an *impasse* in the religious life that is

intolerable. By divorcing religion from modern culture, the Fundamentalist has made it impossible to draw any intelligible distinction between fact and fiction in the religious life. In so doing he has endangered the integrity of religion itself.

3. LIBERALISM.

Liberalism, as opposed to Fundamentalism, is inclined to overestimate historical fact and underestimate the rôle of the religious imagination. This is due to the forces that gave rise to Liberalism. It is an attempt to mediate between Christianity and the spirit of modern culture. In modern culture science is the determining factor, especially at the level of intellectual interests. Science has inherited the authoritative rôle once exercised by theology. Liberalism, therefore, seeks a reformulation of Christian belief in which the demands of science are not only incorporated, but are the point of departure for an interpretation of Christianity that will suit the needs of a factually minded world. This will be made clearer perhaps by a brief statement of the problem of religion and modern culture.

It has been suggested in a previous chapter

that religion is primarily an emotional reaction called out by contact, real or imaginary, with the ultimate forces of life. This reaction finds expression in ritual and symbol. When symbols have been rationalized we get creeds, doctrine, and religious philosophy. Along with this goes also a social technique consisting of forms of worship, church organization, and educational or missionary institutions, all of which look to the preservation and propagation of this emotional attitude. The fairly constant factor in all this is the emotional or evaluating attitude because it is rooted in human nature. It is obvious, however, that religious symbols and social technique must change from age to age, owing to the pressure brought to bear upon them by altered ways of life. Where there is a pronounced "cultural lag" between the old traditional forms, through which the religious need found satisfaction, and changes in ways of life, the religious problem emerges and there is a demand for a reformulation of religious beliefs.

Owing to the rapid and world-wide spread of industrial civilization, with its science and the machine process, there has arisen a need for changes in creed and social technique to bring re-

ligion into adjustment. This need is world-wide because all educated men of all nations think in terms of a common science and tend to see the world in the same way. Men may speak different languages, but they all ride in trains, use automobiles, telephones, and telegraphs, and are all familiar with similar commercial and manufacturing processes. The masses are in the grip of a scientific civilization which has little sympathy for, often downright hostility to, traditional religious beliefs and customs.

It is usual for the traditionalist to assert that only the few, namely, the intelligentsia, are infected with the virus of the modern scientific point of view. If this were true, the disturbing factors in religion might well be ignored. Ideas, no matter how brilliant, when restricted to the intellectual few seldom start a revolution. Profound disturbances in religious belief almost invariably presuppose radical alterations in the stresses and strains of social life. What the traditionalist fails to see is that modern culture, associated with democracy and science, and slowly forcing adjustments in religion, is part of the very texture of our life. The fundamentalist, therefore, in challenging the implications of

science and democracy, is really challenging the structure of modern culture. This makes his objurgations fatuous to one who grasps the problem.

In answer to this imperative and world-wide call for religious readjustment, two movements have arisen, one within the Protestant fold known as Liberalism, and one within the Catholic fold, called Modernism. Both alike are loyal to science and religion and insist upon the establishment of some friendly *modus vivendi* between them. Liberalism is Anglo-Saxon or Teutonic, Modernism is Latin. Modernism seeks freedom for the expression of the great religious consciousness of the church in harmony with the implications of modern culture. Liberalism seeks freedom for the individual to find God in the way best suited to his age and his temperamental needs. The freedom of Modernism is not iconoclastic, but merely insists upon the proper subordination of the external technique of institutionalized religion to the will of the inner life-giving spirit of the body of believers. The freedom of Liberalism is more than apt to be iconoclastic and tends to weaken ecclesiastical forms and authority. Modernism and Liberalism may be de-

scribed, then, as the forms which religion tends to take in the mind of the man of Catholic and the man of Protestant persuasion imbued with modern culture.

Liberalism is German in origin, or at least it is through the patient toil of German scholars that it has found its ablest presentation. Its classical statement is found in the fifteen lectures delivered by Professor Adolf Harnack to the students of Berlin during the winter semester of 1899-1900, and published under the title "What Is Christianity?" Two things have shaped the rise of Liberalism in Germany, namely, the rigorous application of scientific historical criticism to the sacred records and the subtle influence of German temperament and religious traditions. Harnack, faced with the alternatives of the Jesus of history or the Christ of faith, like the true historian loyal to science, chose the historical Jesus. In the gospel actually preached by Jesus is to be found the essence of Christianity.

But the teachings of Jesus are not so easy to define. If he taught the Fatherhood of God, he also taught with no less emphasis the speedy end of the world and a palingenesis in which the first should be last and the last first. There are, how-

ever, certain phases of Jesus' gospel, such as his ethical inwardness and especially the emphasis upon love and the intimate mystical oneness with God the Father, that have much in common with the spirit of German Protestantism. Luther and Calvin accepted the same system of theology, but stressed different phases of it. Calvin, with his legal training, his logical French mind and his genius for organization, gave to Reformed Protestantism a practical, militant and world-conquering character where the emphasis was laid upon action. Luther's deeply mystical temperament led him to stress purity of soul and the inner peace born of the redeeming act of God's love. This individualistic and mystical note was elaborated by such thinkers as Schleiermacher and Ritschl. Thanks, therefore, to exact historical method and the traditional mystical and individualistic piety of German Protestantism, we find Harnack restricting the essence of Christianity to the gospel of the Kingdom, the Fatherhood of God, and the law of love. Here, then, we are to seek the essence of Christianity.

The world owes the great Liberal scholars a debt it can never pay. They have taken a long step towards that adjustment of religion to mod-

ern culture so desperately needed. The pious ignoramuses who imagine that they are glorifying God by heaping abuse upon the heads of these scholars will be forgotten when the names of these scholars are remembered and honored. Good things, however, have the defects of their qualities. Out of the very excellencies of Liberalism come some of its weaknesses. Liberalism is characterized by its harmony with science and its insistence upon individual freedom. It is more than mere tolerance. It is a mental attitude, an intellectual way of life that is curious and experimental. The Liberal must to a certain extent be detached and impersonal in his views of men and things. To be a partisan is hardly compatible with Liberalism. Liberalism seeks to avoid the disturbing effect of unreasoned loyalties. Liberalism, in other words, is not a fighting faith. Here is a most serious handicap in a society which demands, especially in religion, that we take sides.

The mental atmosphere encouraged by the war fanned Fundamentalism into a flame which is now a conflagration, but it proved deadly poison to Liberalism. The war called for a state of mind that wanted action, that demanded results. The

critical mind, tolerance and the willingness to weigh all sides of a question were at a discount. "The true Liberal is one who, when he repudiates an idea, does so as one who knows what it is to believe it. And when he accepts an idea, he knows what it is to reject it." Obviously during the war and post-war periods it was impossible to cultivate any such mental attitude, and the men who insisted upon doing so were looked upon as either nuisances or possible traitors. Liberalism, in religion as elsewhere, has been fighting a retreating battle in this country since the war. It is this as much as anything else that has encouraged the militant intolerance of Fundamentalism.

Traditional Christianity has always been intolerant. It inherited this intolerance from Judaism, and because of its intolerance of other faiths was persecuted by the Roman Empire as a *religio illicita*. This intolerance was continued after Christianity got the upper hand, throughout the Middle Ages and since the Reformation. The intolerance of Fundamentalism towards Liberalism, though an anachronism in our modern world, is true to Christian tradition. Liberalism is in truth a radical break with historical Christianity.

Liberalism is handicapped by being forced to "bore from within." It must preserve at least an external agreement with the forms of orthodox Christianity if it is to accomplish its ends. This has necessitated the adoption of methods which to the conservative appear dishonest. He accuses the Liberal of surreptitiously pouring new wine into old bottles without changing the labels. The traditional doctrine of the Trinity is toned down into something very like Unitarianism. Miracle, the Liberal says, is merely the way men of old time described the creative power of God manifested through his chosen servants. The virgin birth and the resurrection are ways in which primitive Christianity expressed its appreciation of the supreme moral and spiritual importance of Jesus' life and work and its belief in the unbroken continuity of his influence. Inspiration, he declares, is merely the dogmatic formulation of the fact that the sacred Scriptures are a perennial source of religious stimulus and moral power.

The Liberal claims that he has retained the essence of Christianity and has discarded only the accidental forms through which it first found expression. The conservative claims that the Liberal has betrayed the faith of the church and

in all honesty should withdraw and set up a creed of his own. The Liberal, on the other hand, is aware that he needs the institution of the church to do his work and that if he tries to draw up a creed he will be merely setting up another type of Fundamentalism. The Fundamentalist gleefully recognizes the predicament of the Liberal and clamors for a "show-down." He scornfully accuses the Liberal of fighting under "conditions of low visibility." [11] His is a cowardly faith "that rejoices in the pious sound of traditional phrases, regardless of their meanings." The Fundamentalist is a clever fighter. He knows that in any such "show down" the advantages will be all on his side. He *knows* not only what he believes, but also what God wants him to believe. The Liberals are not quite so sure of their own minds or the mind of the deity. "They seek God if haply they might feel after him and find him" in a world that has to a very large extent lost the God of traditional theology.

To all this criticism the Liberal has an effective reply, namely, that history teaches us religion is life, not logic. If it were all logic, the position of the Fundamentalist would be stronger. But

[11] Machen, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

it may seriously be doubted whether any great controversy in the church's history has been settled strictly in terms of logic. Logic was all on the side of Arius at the Council of Nicæa, but life in the form of well-established religious use and wont was on the side of Athanasius and the majority, and they won the day. The creed adopted at Nicæa is full of logical absurdities, but as a set of symbols it satisfied because it met the needs of the religious life of that age. Every great creed adopted by the church is more or less a compromise between logic and life, with life speaking the last word. The Westminster Confession, probably the creed that best suits the Fundamentalist, is no exception to this rule. It is of course vastly easier to follow the propositions of a syllogism to their conclusion than it is to interpret life.

Now it is possible that the tentativeness and apparent timidity of the Liberal in the matter of a theological "show-down" may be prompted by a much more sensitive regard for the religious realities than is felt by the Fundamentalist. The seeming uncertainty of the Liberal may be due to a sincere search for a set of religious symbols that will faithfully interpret religious life as we

find it today. Certainly Liberalism is more than a mere rebel inclination to escape from the shackles of an authoritarian religion. Because of his closer touch with reality the Liberal realizes better than the Fundamentalist that the religion of the masses is a very simple and unreasoned affair. It consists of familiar traditional symbols that have become embedded in religious life. These symbols are not changed by argument. They become discredited only indirectly through the slow educative process of the prevailing ways of life. Here is the real danger to Fundamentalism. And here is where, for the intelligent Liberal, the real problem lies in religion. It is a question of formulating new religious symbols better suited to modern culture.

Just as Liberalism's emphasis on individual freedom exposes it to the Fundamentalist's criticism, so even more serious difficulties arise from its affiliations with science. The historian seeks facts; his method is to explain a thing in terms of its setting. Let us suppose the historian is applying exact scientific method to the history of Jehovah. He may tell us that Jehovah was originally the clan god of the Kenites who lived on the slopes of Sinai and that Moses became his fol-

lower by marrying into the Kenite clan after his flight from Egypt. He will tell us how this clan god was ennobled and dignified by being made party to a great covenant at Sinai, where the Hebrew nation was born. He will trace the gradual socialization and humanization of this crude god of the desert by the transition to the agricultural and urban life of Palestine until he reached the purity, the universality, and lofty ethical idealism of the God of Isaiah. When asked the meaning of this idea of Jehovah in the light of these historical facts, he may say that in reality Jehovah was the product of the religious cravings of the Hebrew people. The analysis of these cravings is then turned over to the psychologist, who may find that Jehovah is merely one of numerous "defense mechanisms" by which man escapes from the torments of an "inferiority complex." The scientific historian and the scientific psychologist have thus done their work so thoroughly that Jehovah and the religion of the ancient Hebrews, the most momentous phases of their national existence, have evaporated into scientifically rarefied thin air.

Lest it be said that this example is remote and not important for the problem of Christianity,

let us take the question of the historic Jesus upon the scientifically determined facts of whose life and teaching the Liberal bases his faith. Harnack, in the opening lecture of his classical presentation of Liberalism, says: "What is Christianity? It is solely in its historical sense that we shall try to answer this question here; that is to say, we shall employ the methods of historical science, and the experience of life gained by studying the actual course of history."[12] Liberalism is modern, scientific, factually minded. It wants to get away from the abstract, the theological, the metaphysical, the dogmatic. Like "certain Greeks" at the feast, the Liberals say, "Sir, we would see Jesus," the real Jesus, stripped of theology and the false fancies of men. Schweitzer in his brilliant work, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus,* has given us the long and fascinating story of the search of liberal scholarship for the real Jesus. What is the result? *Only an abstraction.* One puts down the book with the conviction that the ultimate, irreducible, historical, and factual Jesus is largely a construct of the scholarly imagination. This is borne out by the fact that these scholars, whose sincerity and

[12] Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* p. 7.

learning are beyond question, have the greatest difficulty in reaching any agreement about this historical Jesus. Historical science may give us a handful of facts about Jesus, but the essence of Christianity escapes it. Its historical Jesus is a mere fragment, a construct of the scholar's imagination, not the Christ to whom the Christian prays.

One cannot suppress the feeling that the Liberal has gone to science, especially historical science, asking for bread and has received a stone. Science did its best to answer the Liberal's question, "What is Christianity?" Why did it fail? May it not be because science can never solve the problem of religion? While rejecting the futile "either-or" which the Fundamentalist opposes to modern culture, the Liberal is in danger of capitulating to science entirely. Religion cannot afford to adopt either the methods or the problems of science. Science has no suggestions for the solution of religion's problems. Science may aid, but cannot direct the life of religion. That life is independent. Says a recent writer: "It is a serious question whether in the long run science is going to feel very much more at home with Liberalism than it does with Fundamentalism.

Liberals talk easily of the reconciliation of science and religion and there are many men of a simple and devout faith among the scientists. But the main currents of scientific thought reveal no unmistakable movement toward a spiritual interpretation of the universe." [13]

Liberalism, by leaning too heavily upon the scientific type of imagination, has impoverished the religious imagination. Following the cold, white light of science the Liberals have pushed their search back beyond the dogmas of Luther and Calvin and the Reformation, beyond the romantic tenderness and barbaric splendor of the religious imagination of the Middle Ages, beyond the cloud-capped theological towers erected by the speculative imagination in the great Christological controversies of the early centuries, beyond the preëxistent Lord Jesus of Paul and the eternal Logos of John, back to the absolute, trustworthy, historical fact. What happens? The Jesus, who as the effulgent Son of God has dominated the Christian imagination for centuries, dwindles into a simple Galilean peasant, about whose family and education we know practically

[13] J. R. Nixon, "The Evangelical Dilemma," *Atlantic Monthly*, Sept., 1925, p. 369.

nothing, the place of whose birth and the date of whose death are still matters of scholarly debate. We have his naïve monotheism, his famous discourse on the mount with its emphasis upon meekness and love, his eschatological dreams of the impending doom of the world, his intense ethical and spiritual inwardness. Can these simple facts be made to bear all the later stupendous superstructures erected during nineteen hundred years by the free creative energy of the religious imagination of the western world? Can this simple gospel of the Fatherhood of God, the kingdom of heaven, and the law of love provide complete satisfaction for the varied religious needs of modern culture? It may well be doubted.

In his zeal for a religion based on fact and made so simple and so free as to satisfy individual needs while escaping the shafts of scientific criticism, the Liberal has greatly restricted religion. He threatens, with the best of intentions, to deprive the modern man of all those rich and beautiful symbols, both theoretical and devotional, that are the tested creations of centuries of religious experience and in which are enshrined imperishable religious values. Liberalism, with its excessive yielding to a scientifically minded age,

threatens to clip the wings of the religious imagination so that it is no longer able to perform its ancient and legitimate rôle of idealizing and interpreting human life. In its eager desire to propitiate the world of scientific fact Liberalism is in danger of losing its birthright, the world of the imagination. It is quite possible to simplify and modernize and rationalize until all that is left of religion are the bare and empty doctrines of eighteenth century deism and the inspirationless platitudes of an ethical idealism. The gap is only imperfectly filled by a "social gospel."

In spite of their bitter quarrel, Fundamentalist and Liberal are closer akin than they are aware. Both make religion depend upon fact, not upon symbols of the religious imagination. The Fundamentalist, with his blanket-stereotype of uncritical supernaturalism, includes in the category of fact both the events of history and the fictions of the imagination. The Liberal, by pinning his faith to a minimum of fact established by the historian as to the historical Jesus and the gospel he preached, is forced to discredit the fictions of the religious imagination with the result that his gospel is vastly more poverty-stricken than that of the Fundamentalist. The Liberal, in spite of a

simplified creed, must still champion a system of dogma and a fixed and authoritative faith. The Liberal, therefore, is under the necessity, no less than the Fundamentalist, of developing an apologetic and all the heavy artillery necessary for the defense of a moral and religious absolute. Both seem to forget that compelling religious symbols need apologetics and assertions of moral and religious finality just as little as do great poetry or great art. Liberalism, therefore, no more than Fundamentalism escapes the nemesis eternally dogging the heels of every form of religious absolutism, namely, that later generations may discover its alleged "facts" to be mere illusions. If the history of religion teaches us anything it is that the faith of one age frequently becomes superstition to the next.

What is the inference to be drawn from the survival of religion in spite of the failure of religious beliefs to bear the test of fact? Is it not that the center of religious interest lies in the field of the imagination rather than in that of scientific fact? It is a cardinal weakness of both Fundamentalism and Liberalism that they fail to recognize the subordinate rôle of fact in religion. Shall we say, then, that religion belongs to those

self-imposed illusions by which the cynic tells us men live? This brings us to a consideration of the radical's reply to the query, "What is Christianity?"

4. CHRISTIANITY AS PURE MYTH.

Liberalism, as we have seen, differs from Fundamentalism in that it draws a distinction between the religion *of* Jesus and the religion *about* Jesus. The former belongs to the realm of fact, and the latter is a fiction of the religious imagination which devoted followers have freely attributed to Jesus, much as Plato made Socrates the mouthpiece for his philosophy. The Fundamentalist, thanks to his naïve supernaturalism, cannot separate the religion *of* Jesus from the religion *about* Jesus. A divinely inspired record guarantees for him the historical value of what the authors thought about Jesus as well as what he actually was. The Liberal critics, in their search for the historical Jesus and his teachings, tend to discredit as later encumbrances the gospel about Jesus. They regard the traditional history of Jesus as very largely legendary. Their task is to reconstruct the real

Jesus and his teachings out of the fragmentary gospel records. While never doubting the historicity of Jesus himself, the negative Liberal critic of the traditional account of Jesus has surrounded him with an atmosphere of skepticism. The liberal critics thus paved the way for a group of radicals who deny that Jesus ever lived and say that Christianity is a myth.

The negative effect of Liberalism is directly traceable to its affiliations with science. The presuppositions of modern science and natural law, accepted by the Liberal critics, are at variance with the presuppositions of the sacred writers. They wrote for an uncritical and miracle-loving age. They were unable to distinguish clearly between natural and supernatural, subjective and objective. They did not separate the symbol of the imagination from the thing symbolized. They had no regard for accuracy, but gave free reign to their literary inventiveness, and arranged their material to accentuate their belief in the divine nature and mission of Jesus. When we strip away all these assumptions, as is done by the Liberal critics, early Christianity becomes something totally different from the picture we

have of it in the record. The tendency of this is to make Jesus seem more unreal.

While searching for the facts as to Jesus' life and teachings, the Liberal, especially when influenced by the idea of evolution, tends to make religious values more or less relative. The factual setting of the past conditions the religious values of the past, hence these values can never be final for the present. The assumption of a final revelation of religious truth through Jesus can hardly be reconciled with the notion of evolution. This relativism tinging the Liberal's religious philosophy tends to weaken the religious authority of Jesus and plays into the hands of the radical.

The Messianic consciousness of Jesus, as it is portrayed in the gospels, is an insoluble enigma for the Liberal. To make the personality of Jesus intelligible he must seek another explanation. There are three possible ways of explaining the enigma of Jesus' personality in the gospels. We may take the view of the gospels and assume that in every thought and act he was guided directly by God. This would make him a supernatural being, and therefore a mystery. A second explanation is that he was mentally un-

balanced. A third theory, and that adopted by the critics, is that the picture we have of him is not historically true, but is the result of a confusion of actual history with later fictions of the religious imagination of his followers after they had begun to worship him as a god.[14] However, the fiction of Jesus as the Messiah or God-man is so inextricably intermingled with history that its critical elimination only heightens our uncertainty as to the personality of Jesus. It was, then, perfectly natural for the radicals to claim that Jesus never existed except as a fiction of the religious imagination. Thus the Liberal critics, even by their search for historic truth, unintentionally created an atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty which made it possible for the radicals to say that Christianity is based on a myth.

Curiously enough the facts accumulated by the student of comparative religion in antiquity appear in many ways to confirm the radical's negative inferences drawn from the Liberal's historical analysis of the sacred records. This is especially true of the mystery-cults which were the religion of the masses in late antiquity and which undoubtedly influenced Christianity. The secrecy

[14] Case, *The Historicity of Jesus*, p. 13.

surrounding these mystery-cults, together with the absence of trustworthy literary sources, make it difficult to say just what they were. The Christian references to them, while helpful, are obviously prejudiced by the intolerance of Christianity toward all rival religions. The mystery-cults are of interest to the student of the religious imagination because of their antiquity. In religion, as in no other phase of life, it holds true that *vetustas adoranda est.* The roots of the mystery-cults lie far back in the primitive religious reactions aroused by elemental phenomena of birth, death, spring, winter, sunrise and sunset. In an agricultural and pastoral stage the religious imagination struck out crude symbols which represented the religious values called out in connection with elemental and yet vital concerns of life. There were two main sources of the mystery-cults, Phrygia in Asia Minor and Thrace, from which came the cult of Dionysus, the god of wine, and of the regenerative forces of nature. By virtue of their intimate association with powerful instinctive drives of human nature, the mystery-cults have always been emotional and passionate rather than intellectual and reflective. This explains why they are a religion of symbol-

ism and deal with creations of the religious imagination.

With the maturity of ancient culture the mystery-cults grew in popularity among the lower classes and because of their intimate association with ways of life became the practical religion of the masses. As classical culture reached its prime, these mystery-cults tended to become small brotherhoods or sodalities which, to contrast them with the established religions of the city-states, have been called phases of "Hellenic Nonconformity," though in the characteristic tolerance of antiquity they flourished unmolested. The cult of Orpheus was typical of this stage, as were also the great Eleusinian mysteries. After the rise of the Roman Empire the mystery-cults, profiting by the world-wide *theocrasia,* or mingling of cults and gods, spread until they not only became the religion of the masses, but even enjoyed special favor of the emperors and practically supplanted the outworn Roman national religion.[15]

The mystery-cults are creations of the religious imagination. Theirs was a religion of pure symbolism. They sought a regeneration of the individual, a palingenesis. For this they used sym-

[15] Angus, *The Mystery Religions and Christianity,* p. 44.

bols of all sorts, an elaborate cultus with sudden alternations between thick darkness and brilliant lights, sacrificial meals, baptisms of blood, and secret and lonely vigils of mystic contemplation. The object was to induce subjective mystical states through which the individual became one with the god, shared his sufferings and his triumphs, became purified from sin, and in the beatific transforming vision of the deity gained assurance of immortality. The mystery-cults thus represent some of the purest and most typical creations of the religious imagination in the history of religion. This, apart from their influence upon Christianity, makes their study especially valuable as throwing light upon the religious imagination.

The mystery-cults were furthered by the forces at work after the conquests of Alexander which delocalized religion. The empires of Alexander and of Rome wiped out the city-state, which was presupposed in the national religions of Greece and Rome, and paved the way for a world-wide *theocrasia,* or mingling of gods and cults. This intermingling tended to get the gods discredited. No one god was given preëminence. The enforced equality of peoples brought an enforced

equality of gods. As the individual deities lost their outstanding traits or were blended with other deities, the tendency was to fall back upon the universal elements in religion. A cosmopolitanism and sense of unity among all peoples demanded as its counterpart the dropping of the peculiarities of creeds and gods and the emphasis of universal religious needs. This universal note is especially strong in the mystery-cults. They were invariably religions of redemption from sin. In all the varied cults of Dionysus, Mithras, Isis, Attis, and the rest, the redemptive note is strong. The religious problem was essentially the same as that of Paul, namely, the putting off of the Old Man and the putting on of the New Man. The Christian doctrine that there is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood, expressed in the Christian hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains," found a gruesome parallel in the famous blood-bath of the Attis cult which is thus described: "A trench was dug over which was erected a platform of planks with perforations and gaps. Upon this platform the sacrificial bull was slaughtered, whose blood dripped through

upon the initiate in the trench. He exposed his head and all his garments to be saturated with the blood; then he turned round and held up his neck that the blood might trickle upon his lips, ears, eyes and nostrils; he moistened his tongue with the blood, which he then drank as a sacramental act. Greeted by the spectators, he came forth from this bloody baptism believing that he was purified from his sin and 'born again for eternity.' "[16]

The mystery-cults also sought to satisfy the eternal longing for oneness with the deity, for salvation through a direct vision of the god that assured immortality.

The mystery-cults appealed because they were a religion of the emotions rather than of the intellect. This also was largely the result of the breakdown of local cults. The individual was thrown back upon his own inner life. The emotions that formerly were disciplined and institutionalized by means of long-established forms of worship were now left without objective support. They were precipitated as it were in the social solution due to the world-wide mingling of religions. The drama of religion was transferred

[16] Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

from the objective established national cultus to the inner life of the individual. The mystery-cults were especially adapted to meet this individualistic and emotional need. They were the religion of the masses and made their appeal through symbols, not through creeds or philosophy. Symbols alone suffice to meet the needs of the emotional life, especially after it has lost touch with the immediate concrete setting. For the emotions are free from the limitations of time and space; they do not lend themselves to the sequence of a logical proposition, nor do they admit of the strict conceptual definition necessary for a dogma. They can be effectively expressed only through symbols.

To the leveling effect of Macedonian and Roman empires and to the emotional individualism that rose upon the ruins of nationalism must be added a third factor that tended to encourage a religion of pure imagination, namely, the over-simplified world-view of the ancients. A note of naïve realism tinged the thought of the ancient world from Homer down to the close of antiquity. Antiquity, unlike the modern world, did not draw a clear line of demarcation between natural and supernatural, objective and subjective, symbol

and the thing symbolized, fiction of the imagination and fact of common sense. It was this more than anything else that made possible the inimitable freshness and beauty of Greek poetry and sculpture. The canons of art are easier to apply where reality is grasped as a whole, even though grasped superficially. With our accumulation of exact knowledge and deeper insight into the unfathomable complexities of the soul, of society and of nature, both poetic and religious imaginations can give us interpretations that are only halting, imperfect, and piecemeal. Men lack both the imaginative power and the symbols that can adequately body forth the many-sidedness of the reality they sense. There is much to be said for the contention that the most satisfying creations of the religious as of the artistic imagination lie in the past.

The mystery-cults thus presuppose a long period of development and refinement. Symbols derived at first from the crude worship of pastoral and agricultural peoples were taken up into the religious folkways of the lower levels of the population and purified and spiritualized by the secret religious brotherhoods and associations such as the Orphic cults of classical antiquity

until finally they attained in the days of Imperial Rome such a level of moral and spiritual refinement in the mystery-cults that they appealed to the purest and best spirits of the pagan world. The various popular mystery-cults with their cult-heroes, their savior-gods, their secret and elaborate liturgies and sacramental agencies for satisfying the universal religious needs, were the background out of which Christianity sprang. What more natural than that the radical critics, already convinced by the results of Liberal criticism of the paucity of the evidence for the factual existence of Jesus, should jump to the conclusion that Christianity was only one of many contemporary religions of pure symbolism, another fiction of the prolific religious imagination?

The mythical interpretation of Christianity dates from the beginning of the nineteenth century. It received its first respectable statement, however, towards the middle of the century from the pens of Strauss and Bauer, both of whom were influenced by Hegelian idealism. Bauer started with the Hegelian philosophical assumption that history is merely the unfolding of an idea. On the basis of this speculative position he asserted that no historical person, but an idea,

is the essence of Christianity. He stressed the absence of non-Christian evidence for Christianity during the first century, the obviously apologetic character and hence historical untrustworthiness of the writings of the New Testament, and claimed that Christianity can be explained by factors at work in the pagan world.[17]

Since the beginning of the twentieth century there has arisen another crop of writers seeking to prove the mythical character of Christianity. Most important among these is Drews, the author of *The Christ Myth,* though Drews acknowledges his debt to the brilliant American mathematician and philosopher Prof. W. B. Smith. Drews stresses five points. The first is that the great uncertainty among Liberal scholars as to the Jesus of history, even granting that he did exist, makes it impossible and unwise to base religious life of today upon such a precarious foundation. The second argument is based upon the rich material accumulated by the students of comparative religion and especially the evidence that goes to show how very widespread and popular were the various forms of the mystery religions with their cult heroes and savior deities. Drews and

[17] Case, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

Smith contend that before the rise of Christianity there existed among the Jews the cult of a Jesus-god, modeled after the prevalent pagan mystery-cults of dying and rising deities. It was this cult and not the historic Jesus that formed the basis for Christianity. Emphasis is laid, in the third place, upon the fact that for Paul, who chiefly shaped the destiny of early Christianity, a cult of Jesus is always presupposed in all he says, while there is no evidence of a Jesus of history. It is claimed, in the fourth place, that the actual gospel records do not give us the life of a man but of a god-man, who while portrayed in realistic fashion in a Jewish setting is really a Jewish counterpart of the widely prevalent deities of the mystery religions. Finally, it is contended that whatever cannot be fitted into this explanation is unimportant. All those factors of prime importance such as the crucifixion, resurrection, last supper, and baptism are all borrowed from the earlier Jesus-cult or suggested by the many popular mystery-cults.[18]

It is not the purpose of this discussion to argue the historicity of Jesus. But some pertinent questions can be put to the radicals who seek to

[18] Case, *op. cit.*, pp. 54 ff.

make Christianity a pure fiction of the religious imagination similar in nature and origin to the mystery-cults, with which it had many things in common. How are we to explain that these cults disappeared while Christianity grew in power? The answer is to be sought in the weaknesses of the mystery-cults and the elements of strength in Christianity. In spite of the long process of refinement the mystery-cults never stripped off the pagan naturalism that gave them birth. The religious and moral sensibilities of the Christian would never have tolerated the carrying of a symbol of the male organ of generation in a public religious procession as was frequently done in the mystery-cults. Christianity, furthermore, kept its skirts comparatively clean at first from the debasing magic associated with the worship of the rival cults. Christianity was at first, like the cults, a religion of an inner emotional attitude, but as time went on it secured a check against the danger of undisciplined emotionalism by assimilating, even though imperfectly, Greek thought. This the mysteries never did.

To its stern and lofty ethic and a reasoned belief must be added one other great asset of Chris-

tianity not enjoyed by the rival mystery-cults, namely, the incalculable compelling power of a great religious personality. "There never was a Mithra, and he never slew the mystic sacramental bull. There never was a Great Mother of sorrows to wail over Attis and to become a true mother to the sorrowing daughters of humanity. Isis, in all her splendor, was but the product, however idealized by the religious instinct, of Egyptian zoölatry. 'Come thou Savior' was addressed to Dionysus, a creation of Chthonism. Apollo, the special god of the Pythagoreans, who declared, 'I dwell with less pleasure in the resplendent heavens than in the hearts of good men,' was the lofty culmination of a cult which saw in the sun the image of the good. The Logos of the Stoics was a pure abstraction, the inspiration of which would touch only the enlightened, and of their ideal wise man Plutarch declared, 'He is nowhere on earth, nor ever has been.' The Logos of Philo was merely a Hypostasis, or, at best, never stepped beyond the limits of personification." [19] But the Jesus of the gospels really lived, and even through the golden halo of an eternal and pre-existent godhood which the pious imaginations of

[19] Angus, *op. cit.*, pp. 310 ff.

his followers threw around him one can still detect the outline of a real man and a rare religious genius. Against the impact of his powerful personality the bright creations of the religious fancies of men could not compete.

When we have thus paid our tribute to the historicity of Jesus, it remains true that Christianity never entered upon its career of world-conquest until, rooting itself firmly in this concrete background of historical reality in the person and work of the man Jesus, it launched into competition with these mystery-cults in the unreal and symbolic world of the religious imagination. In other words, it was not until the Jesus of history had been transformed in the imaginations of Paul and John and the rest into a symbol, that is to say it was only after the son of Joseph and Mary had been identified with the eternal Logos and the crucified Son of God, that he was able to make conquest of the hearts of men. Jesus' own words can be applied to himself, though in a sense he never imagined, "He that saveth his life shall lose it and he that loseth his life shall save it." Thanks to the play of devout religious imaginations, we have largely lost the real historic Jesus. But it was necessary that he should

be lost, caught up and glorified and set as a flaming symbol in the spiritual firmament of mankind, that he might enter upon that larger and fuller life that has been his for the best part of two thousand years. The insignia of divinity and eternity only befit the spaceless and timeless world of the religious imagination.

5. MODERNISM.

That section of Christianity represented by the Roman Catholic Church offers at least four points of contact with modern culture, namely, dogma, rites, policies and an inner spirit that is partly romantic and partly mystical. The Catholic Church, thanks to a long history, has developed a marvelous capacity for adjusting itself to its environment without surrendering its basic idea of an international theocratic autocracy. The autocratic organization and policies of the Roman Catholic Church, together with its ancient rites and dogmas, which are strongly tinged with medievalism, are obviously inconsistent with a modern culture dominated by scientific methods and democratic ideals. It is to be expected, therefore, that this wise and tactful politico-religious

organization would seek to avoid conflict with modern culture by not stressing either dogma or rites and by carefully smoothing over the fundamental incompatibility between its political philosophy and democracy. An apologetic of this sort is found in the scholarly and well-intentioned, but not entirely successful, studies by Ryan and Millar, *The State and the Church.* If therefore there is to be any effective *rapprochement* between the Catholic Church and modern culture it must be through the fourth and last point of contact, namely, the inner mystical spirit. As a matter of fact we find that this *rapprochement* did take place and finally developed into the movement known as Modernism, in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The homeland of Modernism is France, the most cultured of Roman Catholic countries, though it claims followers and sympathizers wherever intelligent Roman Catholics are to be found. Loisy, the scholarly historian and exegete, first gave something like a formal statement of the movement in his book, *The Gospel and the Church,* published in 1902. But the acknowledged leader of the movement, up to his death in 1909, was the English Jesuit, George Tyrrell, who, in

a series of monographs, the chief of which are *Lex Orandi,* 1907; *Mediævalism: A Reply to Cardinal Mercier,* 1908, and *Christianity at the Cross-Roads,* 1909, has given an eloquent and able interpretation of the movement. Modernism is the term applied by Pope Pius X to the movement in his lengthy encyclical letter of condemnation September 8, 1907, and it is asserted that he took the term "from the Jesuit Fathers in Rome, with the obvious purpose of discrediting tendencies of thought of which he understood neither the richness nor the depth."[20]

The movement, which threatened for a time to dismember the Roman Catholic Church, was suppressed with an iron hand; its leader Loisy was excommunicated; and a severely anti-Modernist oath was exacted from those under suspicion. Owing partly to the economic dependence of the clergy and partly, doubtless, to the lack of deep and vital interest in religion, especially among the Latin peoples, the movement has disappeared beneath the surface. Whether it has spent its force or will emerge again only time can tell. The genius of the Catholic Church does not per-

[20] Paul Sabatier, *Modernism,* p. 71.

mit of compromise in any form and this may force those of Modernist inclinations to find satisfaction for their religious needs outside the fold of a church still in the grip of medievalism. It is hardly an accident that Catholic communities offer the greatest extremes of belief and unbelief.

Modernism is an exceedingly complicated movement, but its central philosophical idea is that of "divine immanence" or the pantheistic notion of an indwelling, creative and directive spiritual energy. Neither Loisy nor Tyrrell were philosophers except in a loose and pragmatic sense. They absorbed their mediating philosophical ideas from the intellectual atmosphere of the time. They found many points of similarity between the traditional mystical and romantic Catholic idea of the Church, as the external manifestation of an indwelling spiritual energy, and the intellectual currents of the nineteenth century, such as Burke's conception of society as a living organism, Herbert Spencer's social vitalism of the evolutionary biological type, German idealism and even Carlyle's romantically pantheistic ejaculations on heroes and hero worship. Modernism

has affiliations not only with science, and especially organic evolution, but also with Hegelianism, the Pragmatism of William James, the creative evolution of Bergson and the romanticism which, Proteanlike, has permeated, in one form or another, our modern life.

Modernism's basic idea of an organic development, at first largely unconscious of its goal but becoming gradually more self-conscious and purposeful, can be traced directly to two thinkers, Caird, one of the ablest English champions of Neo-Hegelianism, and Newman with his idea of development laid down in his *Development of Christian Doctrine,* first published in 1845 and in a revised form in 1878, after the author's conversion to Catholicism. Newman, who is really the spiritual father of Modernism, thus states his central idea: "The increase and expansion of the Christian Creed and Ritual, and the variations which have attended the process in the case of individual writers and Churches, are the necessary attendants on any philosophy or polity which takes possession of the intellect and heart, and has had any wide or extended dominion. . . . From the nature of the human mind time is necessary for the full comprehension and perfection

of great ideas. . . . This is what may be called the *Theory of the Development of Doctrine.*"[21]

This development is the work of communities, not of individuals. For "it is carried on through and by means of communities of men and their leaders and guides; and it employs their minds as its instruments, and depends upon them while it uses them."[22] The test of the vitality of an idea is the richness and variety of its proliferations. "And the more claim an idea has to be considered living, the more various will be its aspects; and the more social and political is its nature, the more complicated and subtle will be its issues, and the longer and more eventful will be its course."[23] The idea, moreover, expands by virtue of its own inner, unreflective power. Citing the parable of the mustard seed, "which a man took and hid in his field" but which thrives by virtue of its own inner life "so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof," Newman says, "Here an internal element of life, whether principle or doctrine, is spoken of rather than any mere external manifestation; and it is observable that the spontane-

[21] *Development of Christian Doctrine,* pp. 20, 30.
[22] *Op. cit.,* pp. 38, 39.
[23] *Op. cit.,* p. 56.

ous, as well as the gradual, character of the growth is intimated . . . it is not an effect of wishing and resolving, or of forced enthusiasm, or of any mechanism of reasoning, or of any mere subtlety of intellect; but comes of its own innate power of expansion within the mind in its season."[24]

What, then, for the Modernist is ultimate fact in Christianity? It is not found, as the Fundamentalist asserts, in an inspired document nor are we, with the Liberal, to identify it with a body of historical facts as to the life and teachings of Jesus. It is to be found only in the unfolding life of a spiritual community, which, in the language of Tyrrell, "is slowly realizing the ideas and ends in whose service it was founded," a community which "through many fluctuations and errors and deviations and recoveries and reactions is gradually shaping itself into a more efficient institution for the spiritual and moral development of individuals and societies."[25]

If we take a cross section of this continuous unfolding life we shall find certain values or ideas which are permanent and the varying forms, symbols or whatnot through which a

[24] *Op. cit.*, pp. 73, 74. [25] *Mediævalism*, p. 145.

given age seeks to express these values. Christianity, then, seen immediately and from the point of view of one moment in its life, is a synthesis "not between the old and the new indiscriminately, but between what, after due criticism, is found to be valid in the old and in the new."[26] The very opposite of Modernism is Medievalism, or the traditional Catholic point of view, which "is only a synthesis effected between the Christian faith and the culture of the late Middle Ages."[27]

It would be hard to find a more scathing arraignment of the blunting effect of Medievalism, or the Catholic type of Fundamentalism, upon the intellectual sensibilities of men than is given by Tyrrell in the following passage:

> "The *idée-mère* of Mediævalism" is that it "gives the authority of divine revelation to a mass of untenable historical and scientific statements that belong merely to the primitive expression of revelation. One knows how even a single false premise will develop into a vast and complex system of falsehoods the further one pushes the argument that it vitiates. Bind men's consciences, then, to a

[26] *Op. cit.*, p. 143. [27] *Op. cit.*, p. 144.

whole host of such premises; forbid them to criticize them; force them to bring the results of their observation and reasoning into accord with them; compel them to defend such premises against all gainsayers, against all texts and facts and documents that may be adduced against them, and the result must be just what it has been—a profound inward skepticism begotten of the apparent conflict between truth and truth; an absence of anything that deserves the name of intellectual conviction; an inability to understand or respect such conviction in others; a readiness to think black is white when so commanded; a habit of controversial chicanery and dishonesty that strikes at the very root of candor and truthfulness." [28]

The Modernist's organic conception of life provides a congenial basis for mediation between the church and modern culture. For if the Modernist "believes in the Church as a Catholic, as a man he believes in humanity; he believes in the world." [29] To assert that the world is God-forsaken and worthless, that its progress in science, art, education and civic freedom is a godless prog-

[28] *Mediævalism*, p. 180. [29] *Op. cit.*, p. 147.

ress simply because it is secular, "seems to the Modernist the most subtle and dangerous form of atheism." The Modernist even goes so far as to say that "his faith in the world is more fundamental than his faith in the Church," an almost unbelievable assertion from the lips of a Catholic, because the world is "the living whole of which she is but an organic part; and the whole is greater than its most vital organ." The Church and the world are thus most vitally and inseparably united; "each must absorb the quickening forces of the other under pain of a monstrous and lopsided development."

This organic evolutionary note of Modernism, which is merely the logical expansion of Newman, enables it to make common cause with all the social, economic or political forces in the community striving for a larger and more human existence. It is not surprising, then, to find in France and other lands movements for social democracy and reform being instinctively drawn to Modernism.

Revelation is conceived by the Modernist in terms of this organic and evolutionary idea of society. "Revelation is divine," but not in the orthodox Fundamentalist sense of an objective, supernatural imparting of truth. It is "an ex-

perience that utters itself spontaneously in imaginative popular non-scientific form." That is to say, this indwelling and directing divine energy registers itself through the evolving religious experience of the community of believers. "Theology is the natural, tentative, fallible analysis of these experiences." Theology, therefore, is a human product. It is the result of the play of the intellect of man over the raw experience of the religious consciousness of the community through which contact is made with the divine. Therefore, theology is true and helpful just in the measure that it grows out of and ever returns to the collective religious experience of those who "live the life and breathe the hope of the Gospel preached by Jesus." [30] Theology, then, cannot be tied down to any "stereotyped statements, but only to the religious experiences of which certain statements are the spontaneous self-chosen, but at most symbolic, expressions." [31]

The implications of these statements are: (a) dogmas are not fixed but vary with the ever evolving life of the Church. (b) Dogmas are not exact statements of truth and reality, for religious reality is so intimate and subjective that it beggars

[30] *Op. cit.*, p. 129. [31] *Op. cit.*, p. 152.

exact scientific analysis. (c) The raw material of dogmas are symbols or fictions of the imagination which do not purport to give us truth or reality. Dogmas, therefore, can never be more than mere logical and critical refinements of fictions of the religious imagination. (d) The symbols of the religious imagination are "spontaneous" and "self-chosen," that is to say, they arise directly out of the exigencies of the given religious experience and are in no sense deductions of reason nor can they be safely made the basis for final deductions as to religious truth or reality. The symbols of one stage of religious experience may not satisfy the demands of a religious experience of a later period.

The attitude of the Modernist towards science is both frank and fearless. He demands "absolute freedom for science" and he would have it fettered only "by its own laws and methods." All experience, including the spiritual as well as the natural, belongs to the field of science. The Modernist, in fine, "has nothing to do with that sort of more educated and temporizing ultramontanism that shrinks from an inopportune pressing of principles which the world has unfortunately outgrown; that loves to rub shoulders

cautiously with science and democracy; that strives to express itself moderately and grammatically; that would make a change of circumstances and opportunities pass for a more tolerant spirit; and that is usually rewarded for its pains by finding itself between the hammer and the anvil." [32]

Finally, the Modernist has the courage of his convictions and when asked by the Fundamentalist what is to be the upshot of this world of organic and unremittent development, in which it must be admitted there is no place for a "finished theological system," he replies, "I do not know." What he does know is that "the whole world is in labor," and there is no prophet who can tell us exactly what the morrow will bring forth. Our vision reaches only to the horizon, not beyond it. Truth, like life, "is an unending process of adequation, not a finished result." [33]

It is not difficult to point out weaknesses in Modernism. Its very modernity doomed it to inevitable failure. Of all institutions, the Roman Catholic Church is the last that can comfortably accommodate itself to the basic assumption of Modernism. How is it possible for a church whose boast is *eterna non caduca* to make a place

[32] *Op. cit.*, p. 153. [33] *Op. cit.*, p. 157.

within its borders for the unbridled creative evolution of the Bergsonian type preached by Tyrrell? The encyclical letter of Pius X, September 8, 1907, that killed Modernism, was merely an inevitable move for self-preservation. Moreover, Modernism, or this curious potpourri of the organic evolution of Spencer, the social vitalism of Burke, the dynamic idealism of Hegel, the creative evolution of Bergson, the opportunistic Pragmatism of William James, all tinged with romanticism, is utterly at variance not only with the Roman Catholic Church, but with original Christianity and the ancient culture that gave it birth. The spirit of the Roman Empire still lives in the Roman Catholic Church. Modernism reeks with the spirit and the methods of modern culture. It is based upon theses utterly at variance with the Middle Ages and antiquity. The Catholic Church has always strenuously contended that it alone is the legitimate heir of Jesus and the apostles. The Modernist contentions would strip it of this leadership and make it only one of the various manifestations, both Christian and non-Christian, of the divine indwelling spirit of God in mankind. For both Catholic and Protestant of the orthodox type Jesus is the unique and eternal and final

embodiment of religious truth. According to the Modernist Jesus is merely a link in a chain, a part of a long process of religious evolution. Modernism, finally, is exposed to all those criticisms that have ever been leveled at the dynamic idealism of Hegel and the romantic intuitionalism of Bergson.[34]

It will not be denied, however, that of all the attempts to solve the problem of the relation of fact and fiction in the Christian faith, Modernism is the most interesting and suggestive. Modernism avoids the twofold weakness of Liberalism, namely, the undue narrowing of the essence of Christianity down to a minimum of historical facts as to the life and teachings of Jesus and the consequent discrediting of the subsequent creations of the religious imagination in historic Christianity. It also avoids the *impasse* of Fundamentalism whose naïve supernaturalism hopelessly obscures the whole question of fact and fiction in religion. Finally, its sense of historical values saves it from the subjectivism of the radicals who would make Christianity a pure fiction of the religious imagination. The dynamic idealism of Tyrrell, with all its weaknesses, does offer

[34] See Berthelot: *Un Romanticisme utilitaire,* III, pp. 324 ff.

a basis for a reconciliation between the eternal dualism of fiction and fact, symbol and religious reality. To be sure, he bridges the gap only by subordinating the world of fact to that of value. By placing back of the unfolding drama of life an immanent directive force which is spiritual, the hard world of factual realities becomes affiliated with that of the spirit. But it may very seriously be doubted whether we can ever bridge the gap between the facts of history and the fictions of the religious imagination without some such spiritual synthesis. In fact, it may be contended that some such synthesis is always presupposed by the great religious genius. For one, therefore, who is inclined to dispute this *a priori* assumption of dynamic idealism, the dualism, it is to be feared, will always remain.

In this connection it is interesting to note the differences between the scientific historian Loisy and the poetical mystic Tyrrell. They approach the problem of fact and fiction from different angles.

For Loisy the Jesus of historical fact and the Christ of faith are always separated by a gap he never succeeds in bridging, although he constantly seems to assume that the gap is bridged

in the evolution of the Christian faith. The Jesus of history, Loisy contends, is the proper object of exact historical criticism. Here conclusions are reached based upon a principle of historical probability akin to the theory of probabilities used in all scientific establishment of fact. Such a test could not possibly be applied to the Christ of faith. Hence the gap between them.

Tyrrell, on the other hand, approaches the problem not from the standpoint of historical science, but from that of the psychology of religious experience. Tyrrell presupposes that this experience necessarily conditions the historical fact. Thus for Tyrrell his own inner religious experience unconsciously bridges the gap between the Jesus of fact and the Christ of faith. Later, as his thought matured, Tyrrell sought to justify this religious intuition with a vague and uncritically romantic philosophy of history, the germinal ideas of which were derived directly from Newman and indirectly from Hegel. He erected into a loose metaphysical system the implications of a subjective intuitive experience. The mystic Tyrrell even goes farther and asserts that this intuition of reality may be more trustworthy than the exact and objective science of the historian.

In the plays of Shakespeare we have a deeper insight into reality than in the chronicles that suggested them. Similarly the gifted religious soul that enters deeply and intuitively into life may gain a firmer grip upon truth and reality than the coldly and critically objective scholar who deals only with externals while the inner life escapes him. For this reason Tyrrell contends that the deeply mystical insights into history attained by the devout Christian may be of more value than the results of historical criticism. Tyrrell here approaches the intuitionalism of Bergson on the one hand and the insights of the poet and artist on the other.

It would seem indeed that without some such intuitive synthesis as that presupposed by Tyrrell, the chasm between the world of science and common sense and that of the religious imagination can never be bridged. In the eternal religious problem there are three factors, the immediate religious experience, the symbol of the imagination by which it is represented, and the transcendental religious reality which experience and symbol seem to presuppose. The symbol arises primarily neither as a logical deduction from the experience nor as a scientific explanation, but

merely as an aid to its objectification. When we analyze the relation of the symbol of the imagination to the inner religious experience, we are on a basis of fact. When we raise the question of the relation of the fictions of the religious imagination to the transcendental religious realities, we leave the realm of psychological fact and enter that of metaphysics. Men of mystical temperament, such as Tyrrell, who assert that through an intuitive synthesis they have expanded the world of immediate religious experience with its symbols so as to include this world of transcendental metaphysical reality, can never make such assertions matter of scientific proof. They are convincing only to those who have had similar mystical experiences.

6. RELIGION AND MODERN CULTURE.

The foregoing discussion does not pretend to offer a final answer to the difficult question as to the place of religion in our modern culture. Its purpose is more modest, namely, to suggest along what lines the answer is to be sought. The status of religion in modern culture is being sharply debated. The disputants are still far

from agreement. The religious readjustment now in progress requires time and will not be hurried. There are, however, certain conclusions which would seem to follow from what has been said.

It should be clear in the first place that religion has certain necessary limitations which grow out of its very nature. Religion can not be trusted to give us that exact knowledge we get from science. Religion can not give us the insight into the nature of ultimate reality, which is the task of philosophy. The reason is that religion deals with fictions of the imagination, symbols whose function is not to give us exact knowledge, but to make possible the objectification of inner experiences of value. Religion has much to answer for because she has attempted and still attempts to usurp the rôles of science and philosophy. The result is that she has duplicated the world of fact and common sense with another world of Elysian fields, of smoking hells presided over by horned devils, of flocks of angels and demons. She has loaded the consciences of men with inexorable laws of harsh but unhuman deities; she has lent her supernaturalistic sanction to every sort of cruelty of man to man; she has preferred myth and legend to the finality of the tested principles

of science; she has mistaken superstition for the voice of God; she has prolonged the existence of obscurantism and intolerance by clothing them with the semblance of truth and finality. Her imaginative substitute for science can never be more than pseudo-science. Her supernaturalistic ethical sanctions can never be more than a fictitious makeshift for moral wisdom. Her metaphysics can never be more than "a bloodless ballet of logical categories," the theologian's refinements upon fictions of the religious imagination.

Religion in the past has assumed to give us absolute truth, but her instruments have been the intuitions of the mystic or the metaphors of the poet. These fictions of the religious imagination grew and hardened into established ways of thought and conduct until they became a world in themselves superimposed upon and often taking precedence over the hard empirical world of scientific fact, of moral wisdom or of human loveliness. The unpardonable conceit of religion is that while she springs from life and derives her symbols from life, she insists that they are not mere symbols, "but are rather information about experience or reality elsewhere

—an experience and reality which, strangely enough, supply just the defects betrayed by reality and experience here."

Religion in the past has dealt with imaginative absolutes, with infallible "thus saith the Lords." Hence religion is made singularly uncomfortable by the note of relativity that runs through modern knowledge. This growing sense of relativity is the product of the sheer complexity of modern society. It is no longer possible for one mind, like that of Aristotle in the simpler social order of ancient Athens, to compass the infinite ramifications of human knowledge and human relations. It is no longer possible for a master mind to reduce the tangled modern order to a clean-cut logical system as was done by Aquinas for the feudal order of the Middle Ages. Absolute law, absolute ethics, absolute authority, take on for men more and more the appearance of illusions. There is small room in such a world for infallible and final solutions for all the issues of life.

The note of relativity is still further strengthened by the conclusions of science. The great revolutionary principle of evolution, so utterly distasteful to the traditional religious imagination, makes it impossible for men to accept an

eternally fixed body of doctrines, a faith once for all delivered to the saints. It is possible to retain the old idea of a static God only by placing him outside the eternal flux as a sort of disinterested spectator so that he can escape the trail of the serpent of evolution which crept into our intellectual paradise in the middle of the last century. From another source, and that least expected, namely, in physics and astronomy, the notion of relativity has gathered strength. That the bright realm of the stars should likewise be bathed in an eternal flux jars the pious imagination, for is not the firmament also the handiwork of "the Father of Lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning"?

The traditional religious imagination is singularly lost and unhappy in a world given over to the idea of change. This is due in part doubtless to traditional habits of thought. It may be due also to the felt necessity for a stable background for the realm of religious values. Values seem to be safer in the hands of a changeless deity. A world of values in eternal flux is a strain upon the imagination. It demands greater faith, more spiritual and moral adventurousness, than is possessed by the average man or woman. It re-

quires an adjustment to an unaccountable element in experience. It assumes an element of contingency from which even the deity himself does not escape. The conservative faces this element of relativity with the familiar dilemma "either the acceptance of an infallible body of truth revealed by an unchangeable God or else skepticism and the shipwreck of faith." Compromise is not possible. Roman Catholic and Protestant Fundamentalist thus join "the agnostic in destroying a partial faith in order that they may drive believers to seek the shelter of a whole one."

A second inference which would seem to follow from the discussion of the preceding chapters is that religion cannot be trusted as a principle of social control. The reason for this is obvious. Social control is becoming more and more a question of the accumulation of a body of exact scientific knowledge which is wisely and efficiently applied to social problems. If, as has been shown, religion deals primarily with symbols of the religious imagination, it cannot be trusted either to gather, to evaluate, or to apply the exact knowledge demanded for problems of social direction and social control. It is hardly an accident that

the immediate, practical concerns of modern society are being more and more divorced from religion. Since the rise of modern culture, that is since the close of the 17th century, this process of secularization has been rapid. The state, business, science, education, art, have all emancipated themselves from the control of religion.

Perhaps the most thoroughly secularized and non-religious phase of modern life is business. This is undoubtedly due to the very real gap that exists between traditional religion and business, the most strenuously modern phase of life. Religion deals with the fictions of the imagination, business with the hard facts of the market, the laws of the machine process and the axioms of common sense. To be sure, religion and economics were closely related in the past. Basic in the thought of the Physiocrats,[35] to whom Adam Smith owed much, was the idea of God working through nature as the only source of wealth. Traces of this religious background lingered with Adam Smith, who thought that the individualistic, competitive, and profit-actuated members of the economic order were harmonized by an "invisible

[35] A school of French thinkers of the eighteenth century who taught that through obedience to natural laws men are to gain their highest well-being.

hand," a shadowy remnant of the providential idea of the economic order taught by the Physiocrats. But it would be hard to find a less religious book than Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation,* published in 1817. This book of three hundred pages, which dominated English thought for a half century and inspired a whole social and industrial philosophy, does not once mention the name of God.

Out of the union of the inexorable economic laws of Malthus and Ricardo and the impersonal mechanical forces of the machine process in the industrial revolution was born the non-moral, non-religious Frankenstein, Modern Business, which has defied religion more effectively than any other phase of modern life. Leaders of business respect religion and are often deeply religious themselves, but the successful business man never confounds religion with business. The one is factual, presupposing a body of exact knowledge applied to concrete problems, while religion deals with fictions of the imagination which may have moral and religious inspirational value but can not be made the basis for an economic program.

No vital concern of modern life in which there is a demand for a scientific mastery of fact and

a careful and unprejudiced application of tested knowledge to the problems concerned fails to suffer when controlled by religion. When great religious denominations prostitute their positions of honor and responsibility by waging an inquisitorial campaign to eliminate the teaching of evolution from state-supported schools, they make religion ridiculous. They create a situation in which, as at Dayton, Tennessee, the dignity and efficiency of the law, the facts of science and the values of education and religion become at once obscured in a poisonous cloud of ignorant and truculent bigotry. The most shameful phase of the Dayton trial was its intellectual indecency. The explanation is clear. Religion from its very nature deals with beliefs, fictions of the religious imagination, which may serve to orient precious hopes, but which, by reason of their removal from the realm of fact and common sense, can never be made the basis of effective social control or social ethics. Evolution is a question of fact that must be settled by scientifically trained men. But at the Dayton trial the issue was at once removed from the realm of fact to that of uncharted religious beliefs. The Dayton trial settled nothing

unless it be the utter incompetence of religion as a principle of social control.

In the third place it should be possible, in the light of the conclusions reached, to suggest the place and the function of religion in modern life. Religion belongs to the realm of ideals and values. Its affiliations are with poetry rather than with science or philosophy. The religious imagination is akin to the poetic in that it is a free interpretation, or, if you please, a transfiguration of the hard world of factual reality. The religious imagination, like the poetic, idealizes. The difference between the scientific and common-sense way of looking at things and that of the poet or religious seer is well stated by Santayana: "If meditating on the moon I conceive her other side, or the aspect she would wear if I were traveling on her surface, or the position she would assume in relation to the earth if viewed from some other planet . . . my thinking, however fanciful, would be on the scientific plane. . . . If on the other hand I say the moon is the sun's sister, that she carries a silver bow, that she is a virgin and once looked lovingly on the sleeping Endymion, only the fool never knew it, my

lucubration is mythical. . . . The elements are incongruous and do not form one existence but two, the first sensible, the other only to be enacted dramatically, and having at best to the first the relation of an experience to its symbol." [36]

Now it is a fundamental trait of the religious imagination that it takes objects, persons, situations, or events and turns them into symbols. They must undergo this transforming process before they gain that universality and that eloquent spiritual appeal which the brute fact never has. The classical example of this is the transformation by the Christian imagination of the Jesus of history into the Christ of religious worship. These great symbols of the religious imagination become in time weighted with moral values. They form a super-world in which the wrongs of this life are righted, the hideous failures made good, the shattered hopes realized. So powerful is the appeal of this super-world with its symbols of spiritual values distilled from brute reality, so congenial and human it is, so pulsating with human hopes, so warm with the very life blood of the race that it becomes vested with a sense of

[36] *Life of Reason*, III, 128.

reality that may even take precedence over the reality of the immediate world of brute fact.

In simpler and less critical ages religion thus was able to assume a dictatorial position in society. Even in the Middle Ages theology was called the queen of the sciences. This is now no longer possible. Deeper psychological insight into the nature of the religious experience, a clearer grasp of fact and fiction, the sobering effect of a mass of scientifically tested fact, an understanding of the vastness of the universe and the limitations of the human mind have combined in creating a situation in which we are no longer deceived as to the essentially fictional character of the symbols of the religious imagination.

What finally is the place of fact and fiction in the religion of the masses of men? A cross section of the religious life of the masses today, as in the past, will reveal the existence of what might be called a bookless religion. Few, indeed, in Protestant or Roman Catholic communions read and inform themselves on religious issues. Not a fraction of the members of a given church know what heresy is—or care. Very few can state the creeds of their churches. Only a minority follow the

squabbles of the theologians. This bookless religion of the masses has two poles. One is the immediate experiences of the religious values and the other is the traditional symbols by which these experiences are represented. These symbols are not criticized. The question is never debated as to whether they are logically consistent or harmonize with science. Galileo may overthrow the old earth-centered astronomy, Darwin may write his *Origin of Species,* or Einstein may advance his theory of relativity, and the masses with their bookless religion go their way undisturbed.

When the attention of the masses is called in some spectacular fashion, as in the Dayton trial, to a thesis of science such as evolution, these champions of a bookless religion decide invariably in favor of the orthodox position, for they fear the new and the strange which they do not understand. They cannot fit these newfangled ideas into their old traditional set of religious symbols. It is only when the ideas of science and modern culture become embodied, through applied science or otherwise, in the prevailing ways of life, that they affect the thinking and feeling of the masses on religious matters. Traditional religious symbols do in time become dis-

credited through the educative effect of altered ways of life. Of the masses of men, in religion as in other things, it is true that they live their way into their thinking; they do not think their way into their living.

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